Thank you so much for downloading the Guide to Persian Phrases - a PDF Guide with many of the words and phrases covered on the Chai and Conversation blog. Here you’ll find the words and phrases in an easy to follow format so that you can practice and understand them fully. Each word includes its phonetic spelling, and is also written out in Persian script. At the end of the guide, you’ll find a list of all nouns found in the phrases covered in this guide so that you can substantially increase your vocabulary.

We begin with phrases that have been translated literally into English. The following is a list of the Persian phrases we cover in this guide - try to guess what they signify in the Persian language before reading more about them. As always, please enjoy!

- **ghorbānat beram**: may I sacrifice myself for you
- **zameen khordam**: I ate the ground
- **zahré mār**: poison of a snake
- **saram kolā gozāshtan**: they put a hat on my head
- **moosh bokhoradet**: a mouse should eat you
- **bā namak**: with salt
- **jeegaret-ō bokhoram**: I will eat your liver
- **jeegaré manee**: you are my liver
- **jāt khāliyé**: your place is empty
- **havā-tō dāram**: I have your weather
- **khāk bar saram**: dirt on my head
- **chashm**: eye
- **deltangam**: my heart is tight
- **pedar sag**: your father is a dog
- **khasté nabāshee**: don’t be tired
- **na bābā**: no father
- **khar too kharé**: there’s a donkey inside the donkey
- **damet garm**: may your breath be warm
- **shākh dar āvordam**: I grew horns
- **dozāreet oftād**: your coin dropped
- **doret begardam**: I will circle around you
- **saramō bordee**: you took my head
common persian sayings:

ghorbānat beram
may I be sacrificed for you
قُربانَت بِرَم

This is a common form of tārof that when literally translated, means ‘may I be sacrificed for you.’ It can be used in many different scenarios, but ultimately is a sign of respect and a way to show affection. It is basically saying that you care for someone so much, you hope that you are sacrificed for their sake. It’s basically the most dramatic compliment you could pay to someone. It’s also often used as a form of goodbye on a telephone conversation.

Pronunciation Note: Sometimes this phrase is stated as ‘ghorboonet beram.’ They both mean the same thing, and are simply different ways of pronouncing the same concept.

saram kolā gozāshtan
they put a hat on my head
سَرَم کُلا گُزاشتَن

Although literally meaning ‘they put a hat on my head,’ this phrase is used to mean ‘they tricked me’. Either someone else can put a hat on your head, or you can do it to someone else- saret kolā gozashtam (I tricked you).

Note: Interestingly, the phrase kolamō var dāshtan, meaning ‘they took off my hat’, means the same thing as saram kolā gozāshtan, they put a hat on my head. So kolamo var dashtan is also used to mean ‘they tricked me’- so whether the hat comes off or gets put on, a trick has been played on you!

kolāmō var dāshtan
they took off my hat
کُلامُ وَر داشتَن
jāt khāli-yé  
your place is empty  
جات خالییِ

This is a very common Iranian saying, and it means ‘You were missed’. Anytime you speak of an event that was very enjoyable, but the person you are talking to was not present, you are obligated to tell them that they were missed in the situation. This way, they know you were thinking of them, and that it would have been better if they’d been there. Another way of saying this is jāt sabzé, which literally means ‘your place is green’, or there is green grass growing where you should have been. This means the same exact thing as jāt khāli-yé.

Example:
Sarah: I am at this really cool party right now.
Josh: How is it?
Sarah: It’s so fun, but of course, jāt khāli-yé.

dozāreet oftād  
your coin dropped (into the telephone booth)  
do هزاریت أفتد

This expression requires a bit of a longer explanation. A dozaree is a coin that was used to make telephone calls in public telephone booths (remember those?) in Iran. However, in Iranian telephone booths, often times after the coin was dropped in, it wouldn’t ‘take’, and it would come straight out. So people wishing to make a phone call would have to try dropping the coin in over and over again until it would finally be recognized by the phone, and they could make their call. So, over time, dozāreet oftād came to be a metaphor for someone finally ‘getting’ something. So, for example, if someone says a joke and the person they are talking to takes a while to ‘get’ it, after they finally understand the punchline, the jokester can say ‘FINALLY, dozāreet oftād’, meaning FINALLY you got the joke!’
jeegaretō bokhoram
I will eat your liver
جیگِرِتو بُخُرَم

This is another endearing statement in the Persian language, and means something along the lines of ‘I love you’ or ‘I'll do anything for you.’ You can say it to a lover, friend, or family member, but only to people you have strong feelings toward. It’s a way of expressing some intense love.

moosh bokhoradet
A mouse should eat you!
موش بُخُرَدَت

While literally meaning ‘A mouse should eat you’ in the Persian language, this phrase means ‘You are so cute.’ You’ll hear adults saying this to kids all the time (especially while pinching their cheeks). moosh bokhoré torō! is another way to say it. It’s also used when someone says something adorable- but beware, sometimes it could be used in a slightly demeaning way, or to belittle someone. The equivalent is if an adult says something in English, and another adult answers back ‘Oh, you’re so cute!’ Cute isn’t always the highest compliment in that context...

khāk bar saram
dirt on your head
خاک بَر سَرَم

This is a phrase that is in the not-so-nice category. It literally means ‘dirt on my head’, which is another way of saying ‘I should die.’ It’s hard to translate the phrase into English without using some not-so-good English
words. But basically, it's used when you've made a mistake or realized something terribly wrong has happened. You can also flip it around and say khāk bar sar-et, meaning dirt on your head, but remember this is very insulting.

Though it literally means 'the poison of a snake,' this phrase means 'Shut up!' in the Persian language. Just as shut up is not a nice thing to say in English, zahré mār can be quite insulting in the Persian language as well, because if you follow the logic, snake poison kills, and this phrase basically is asking the person to die. However, it is not so insulting that it can’t be used in a joking context to mean 'Get out of here!'

This phrase means 'with salt' and is used to describe someone who is amusing or humorous. It's similar to the English phrase 'spicy.' Conversely, the phrase bee namak refers to a dry, humorless person.

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This comes from the phrase *bé rooyé chashm* which means 'I'll value it more than my eyes,' and it simply means 'yes,' or 'ok,' especially in the context of doing a favor for someone or completing a task for someone.

*Pronunciation note:* The word for *eye* in Persian is usually pronounced *cheshm*, but is pronounced *chashm* in this context.

**Damet garm**

May your breath be warm

*Damet garm* is commonly heard in the Persian language, and literally means 'may your breath be warm.' This phrase is used especially after someone's said something particularly thoughtful and clever, and you tell them *damet garm*, may your breath be warm, or in other words, 'may you live for a long time!'

**Zameen khordam**

I ate the ground

Although it doesn't literally mean 'I ate the ground,' *khordan* is a Persian verb that can either mean 'to hit' or 'to eat.' So when translated literally, this phrase could mean 'I ate the ground.' The phrase actually means 'I fell down.'
**deltangam**

My heart is tight

دِلتَنگم

This is a rather poetic expression which literally means 'My heart is tight'- the true meaning of *deltangam*, however, is 'I am longing'. So this phrase is used when you are feeling quite nostalgic or when you miss something or someone. So you can be *deltang* for your former lover, or for the country that you grew up in but haven't seen in a long, long time (a feeling many Iranians are too familiar with).

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**doret begardam**

I will circle around you

دُرِت بِگَردَم

*Doret begardam* is a sweet phrase that means 'let me do circles around you', and is used to mean something along the lines of 'I love you so much, I admire you, and I would do anything for you.' It is especially used when parents are talking to children.

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**havā-tō dāram**

I've got your weather

هَواتو دَارَم

Although literally meaning I have your weather or air, this statement is the Persian equivalent of the English 'I have your back.' So in other words, 'I'm there for you buddy!'
khar too kharé
there’s a donkey inside the donkey
خَر تو خَرَه

While khar too kharé literally means there’s a donkey inside a donkey, it’s a phrase that signifies chaos or disorganization. So, if you show up at a meeting, and everyone’s late, no one knows the agenda, and everything is in disarray, you can simply say khar too kharé!

jeegaré manee
you are my liver
چیگره مینی

Similar to ‘I want to eat your liver,’ one of the most loving terms of endearment you can direct to someone is to tell them you that they are your liver. While this may not sound romantic in English, it has quite an effect in the Persian language.

shākh darāvordam
I grew horns
شاخ درآوردم

Shāk dar āvordam is a Persian saying that literally means ‘I grew horns!’- similar expressions are heard in many other languages. In Italian, for instance, this would mean that your wife cheated on you. In Persian, however, it simply means ‘I was incredibly surprised!’ or ‘I couldn’t believe it!’

Pronunciation note: This word is also often pronounced jān. They mean the same thing and are both frequently used.
**na bābā**
no father

This is very commonly heard in the Persian language- when someone asks a question, and you emphatically want to say that the answer is no, you say 'Na bābā!'. This literally means 'No father!', but it's just a way of emphasizing that the answer is indeed NO.

**pedar sag**
your father is a dog

پِدَر سَگ

This is a not so nice term you can call someone as an insult. If you say someone is a pedar sag, you're literally telling them their father is a dog, and you are giving them a message that you think they are a jerk.

**saramō bordee**
you took my head

سَرَمو بُردی

Saramō bordee literally means you took away my head, but this phrase goes to signify 'you talked my head off.' It's similar to the English expression 'You talked my ear off.'
terms of endearment:

aziz-am
my dear
عزیزم

This is one of the most common Persian terms of endearment, and simply means ‘my dear.’ You’ll hear Iranians say this all the time, whether to lovers, friends, or family alike, and even to people they’re not very close to.

joon-am
my life
جوونم

This is a slightly more extreme term of endearment and means ‘my life,’ but as we know, Persians are prone to exaggeration and have no problem using extreme language casually. So, again, this is a term that may be used with mere acquaintances as well as with more intimate friends. The word joon, while literally meaning ‘life,’ can also be used to mean ‘dear,’ and commonly follows the utterance of a name. So for instance, if you are talking to your friend Sarah, you can call her ‘Sarah joon,’ as a nice gesture of friendship.

jāné del-am
the life of my heart
جانِه دِلَم

This is a very romantic term (but again, can be used for family and friends) meaning ‘the life of my heart.’ A note here that the word jān is the same as joon seen above. These two words are the exact same and can be interchanged. So jōnē del-am, jānē del-am, either way is sure to ignite love and passion.

sheereen-am
my sweet
شیرینم

The word sheereen in Persian means ‘sweet,’ and this term is similar to calling someone ‘honey’ or ‘sweetie’ in English.

Example:
Sarah: I’ve been working all day at the office!
Josh: khasté Nabāshee!
Sarah: merci!

khasté nabāshee
don’t be tired
خَسته نَباشی

This is a very common saying in the Persian language, and literally means ‘Don’t be tired.’ It’s a nicety— you say it when you know someone’s been working hard, and you want to let them know that their work is appreciated. It’s a great way to begin a conversation— salām! khasté nabāshee! - or you can say it after someone’s completed any sort of work—be it housework, work at the office, sports, etc. There’s no direct way to say this in the English language, so we’re happy there’s an easy and concise way to say it in Persian.
hamsar-am
my equal head
هم سرم

This term falls more into the 'lover' category, as it is a common word for 'spouse.' However, hamsar literally means 'equal head,' so it stands for an equal partner, and is therefore a poetic way to point out one’s better half.

ātashé del-am
the fire of my heart
آتشه دلم

This is a good example of the fiery passion of Iranians. ātashé del-am is a common phrase to use for loved ones, and literally means the fire of my heart.

delbar-am
the one who has my heart
دل برم

Delbar is a term that refers to someone who has stolen or holds your heart, so delbar refers to a soulmate or true love.

moosh moosh-am
my mousey mouse
موش موشَم

What’s with Persians and using mice as the epitome of cuteness and desirability? We don’t know, but it’s common to call a loved one moosh, or little mouse. Just a little warning, saying it the way we have here, moosh moosh-am is definitely one of the cheesiest things to call someone, but also very sweet.

jeegar-am
my liver
چیگرم

Similarly, what’s with Iranians and liver? Calling someone your liver, or

jegar-am, is one of the most romantic of compliments.

nāzanin-am
my sweetest
نازنينم

Nāzanin is a word meaning sweet or dear, and is also a common Persian girl’s name. The word nāzi (pronounced naazee, not like the German word) is also a common word of endearment and has a gentle and sweet connotation.

omr-am
my life
عمرم

Similar to joon-am, the word omr in the Persian language means life, so when you call someone omr-am, you are calling them your life force.

nooré cheshm-am
the light of my eyes
نوره چشمَم

This term of endearment is pretty self explanatory. Eyes are the window to the soul, and this is a way of telling someone that they are the light of those windows.
The word āb in Persian means ‘water,’ so this word immediately conjures the depths of the ocean or the running of a stream.

Sabze is the Persian word for ‘greens,’ but it goes beyond even that. In Persian culture, greens are the life force. This is best represented in the wheatgrass placed at the center of the table during New Years to celebrate life, rebirth and recreation.
The word for face in the Persian language is *soorat,* so this word conjures the gentle and soft sweet pinkness of human skin.

This word is taken directly from the Persian word for ‘orange’, although the same is true for many other languages such as English and Spanish.

The *banafshé* flower is a very important one in Persian culture, and is the flower from which the name of this color is directly derived from.
Ghahvé is the Persian word for coffee - brown, aromatic, and energy providing.

The word for ‘ashes’ in the Persian language is khākestar- and that is where the Persian word for gray comes from.

Sormé is an old word for Kohl, seen here adorning the beautiful Cleopatra’s eyes.
Noghré is the word for silver in the Persian language, and also the name for this popular color in the Persian language.

Talā, or gold, is extremely important in Persian culture, and is where the word for the color ‘gold’ comes from.
**vocabulary list:**

The following is a list of vocabulary words from the words and phrases covered in this phrase book.

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| horn | shākh | horn | shākh | گلاب | گلاب |
| head | sar | head | sar | گلاب | گلاب |
| sweet | shereen | sweet | shereen | گلاب | گلاب |
| face | soorat | face | soorat | گلاب | گلاب |
| navy blue | soormé | navy blue | soormé | گلاب | گلاب |
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| poison | zahr | poison | zahr | گلاب | گلاب |
| ground | zameen | ground | zameen | گلاب | گلاب |