

Good evening ladies and gentleman, Shanah Tovah, Chag Samech , va Saleh Noeh Shoomah Mobarak. My name is Dorit Miller and on behalf of the board of the Women of Vision, I would like to welcome all of you here tonight and thank you for joining us for this important event about the Jews of Iran.

We have a great program planned for this evening, but before we start, allow me a few minutes to share with you some information about our organization. Many of you may already know about the Iranian Jewish Women Organization of Southern California, which was founded during the summer of 1976 by a group of Iranian women. The intention was to preserve ties with their Jewish and Iranian heritage as well as to have their own charitable, social and cultural role. Some of their activities through the years include financial aid and medical emergencies to help young needy couples and families, the annual Women of the Year and Mother of the Year presentations and donations to the University of Jerusalem, specifically helping Iranian students at the university.

In 2001 the IJWO decided to reach out to the younger generation. Dr. Nahid Pirnazar Oberman took charge of this task and put together a group of ladies to be founders of the various chapters. The three new chapters were then formed: The Women of Vision, Mothers of Tomorrow and the New Generation.

Over the last few years, our chapter, The Women of Vision organized and implemented various events and seminars. Our mission is to promote contemporary Iranian American Women in our endeavors, both professional and personal, while recognizing and addressing the unique issues that we face today. Our goal is to enhance our image and self-esteem by encouraging education, providing a network of resources, and offering support. We would also like to document the long overlooked past accomplishment of Jewish Iranian Women, and to ensure our present and future achievements.

Some of our past events include: a panel discussion on Issues of Acculturation and Iranian Jewish Women-Finding self-fulfillment through professional endeavors. We are also in the processes of documenting our Grandmothers Stories where we interview and film the older generation in regards to their lives and experiences growing up in Iran in the 1920s. So if you know of a special woman in your life in her 80s, that would like to be interviewed please let us know. You can always find more information about our organization on our website at IJWO.ORG

And this evening, we are honored to have these wonderful panelists from around the world that traveled long distances in order to share with us their expert opinions, experiences and knowledge. **Later this evening, you** will have a chance to ask your question from our panelist, so please keep those index cards and pencils handy for your questions.

And now, allow me to introduce to you our moderator for this evening, Dr. Sharon Nazarian Baradaran; board member of the Women of Vision.