

Ifrane, 28 June 2025

To the Selection Committee for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies:

What a tremendous pleasure it is to have the opportunity to write to you on behalf of my colleague, Dr. Ashkan Bahrani, to recommend him as a candidate for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship. I have come to know Dr. Bahrani during his time here at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, where we both teach history and religious studies. In addition to working as colleagues, I have had the chance to work with him as a faculty mentor, collaborate with him in my administrative role as Coordinator of Studies for the School of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities, and to invite him as a guest speaker to share his work at the university's library, where I hold the directorship. As such, I feel confident in recommending Dr. Bahrani as a colleague, as a researcher, and as a teacher.

You will no doubt have been as struck as I was at his productivity as a scholar, translator, and teacher. To the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship Dr. Bahrani will bring remarkable energy as an academic, no doubt achieving the primary aim of the fellowship to support an early-career scholar in transforming their dissertation into a publishable work. It is a testament to his focus and drive that Dr. Bahrani has already produced so much over the past year even without such a fellowship, and I have no doubt that should the University of Toronto award him this opportunity, it will be pleasantly surprised at the results.

I should also add that UT would be winning an outstanding colleague and teacher. In the span of a single semester, I have watched Dr. Bahrani move from a new member of a committee to its chair, helping to guide the revision of existing humanities programs and work toward the creation of a new program in the Digital Humanities and Cultural Production. In the classroom, too, I have watched him engage with students of comparative religion, offering a fun yet rigorous approach to key concepts and ideas. While the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship may not require teaching or service, these are strong indicators of the dedication and seriousness that Dr. Bahrani brings to any role he takes on. He will be there at your departmental talks, he will offer questions and feedback at informal and formal gatherings, and he will prove an all-around excellent intellectual companion.

While I would be sad to lose him as a colleague here at AUI, I would very much look forward to seeing what he would accomplish should he be awarded the fellowship and given the space and resources to thrive. Please accept this enthusiastic recommendation of him for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies and should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me directly by email (p.love@aui.ma) or by phone (+212 06 38 80 81 59).

Sincerely,
Paul Love