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**Monticello, the
Home of Thomas Jefferson**

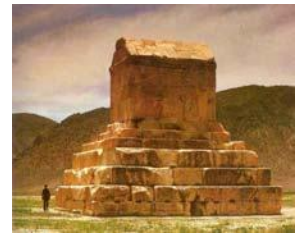


photo source: Bruno Barbey

**Mausoleum of Cyrus the Great
ca. 530 BC ***

JEFFERSON AND CYRUS

HOW THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF AMERICA, IN THEIR OWN WORDS, WERE INSPIRED BY CYRUS THE GREAT SYNOPSIS OF UPCOMING BOOK

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Though twenty-three centuries apart in time, continents apart in space, their systems of republican and monarchical government ostensibly diametric opposites of each other, the Founding Fathers of America and the founders of the Iranian state were close in the realm of ideas - ideas that underlie systems of governance vying to institute liberty and justice. America's Founding Fathers were avid readers of Cyrus the Great's biography, the *Cyropaedia*, written by a student of Socrates, Xenophon, being the masterpiece among his works. Leaders at any age stand to benefit from inspiration, which plants its seeds for later manifestation and realization. Such inspiration that the Founding Fathers drew from Cyrus, amidst all the ancient and modern sources they were exposed to, was because they found his ideas and aspirations resonating with their own, with their inmost beliefs, values and convictions. The *Cyropaedia* describes Cyrus's character, that made him into an ideal ruler. It is an exposition of timeless qualities of leadership. Thus it has since served as the World's manual of leadership, from Alexander, Scipio, Cicero, Caesar, Machiavelli who read and drew inspiration from it, so on to our times. In the estimation of Peter Drucker, widely recognized as the father of modern management science, this first book on leadership remains the best book. His biographer and student William Cohen writes: "Despite all the books published on leadership by well known academic researchers and successful CEOs, Drucker never altered his opinion. Xenophon was still the best."¹

There is perhaps no more fitting appellation for Thomas Jefferson than the *Apostle of Americanism*, which he has aptly been called. In characterizing the place of Jefferson in the American ethos the late Gore Vidal told NPR:

"If there is such a thing, which I think there is and others perhaps do not, as an American spirit, then he is it. . . . And it still goes 'round; it still inspires, and it is still the essence of whatever spirit we still have and that we once had, indeed."²