



ahjubah

March 2022 | ISSN 1019-0767

No.328 | Monthly Magazine



Peace for All, Happy Spring

Lebanon 7000 LL
Morocco 36.00 DH
UAE 21.00DH

S.Africa 26.00R
France 4.50€
Italy 4.50€

Germany 4.50€
Turkey 5.50YTL
America 3.00\$

Kenya 250KSH
Qatar 20.00QR
Tunisia 3.70TD

Spain 4.50€
Mexico 65.00MEX\$
Kuwait 2.000KD



O Conqueror of hearts and sights,
O Planner of night and day,
O Transformer of power and circumstances,
Change our condition to the best of conditions.

Change Our Condition to the Best of Conditions



22

Spring of Nature, a Valuable Opportunity for Expansion of Cultural Relations



6

4



Nowruz and Cultural Convergence

The Mythological Foundation of Nowruz



12

35



Parvin E'tesami

41



Sa'di, Master of Poetry Describing the Human Conditions



28

Nowruz Celebrations



Nowruz in the Indian Subcontinent

17



34

FAQ



14

Training-related Rights of Children over Parents

*In The Name of God The
Compassionate The Merciful*



March 2022
Monthly Magazine
No.328
ISSN1019-0767

Managing Director:
Mohammad Assadi Movahed
Assadi101@yahoo.com

Editor-in- Chief: Mina Salimi

Co-Editor: Dr. Mohsen Shojakhani

Editorial Board:
Nayyereh Towhidi, Zahra Ibrahimi,
Mortaza Afradian,
Fatemeh Khaza'i

Public Relation Officer & Executive Manager:
Maryam Hamzelou

Art Director & Graphic Designer:
Omid Behzadi

Advertising Office:
Magazine of ITF,
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran
Tel: +9821-88934302
Fax: +9821-88902725
Website: www.itfjournals.com
Website: www.alhoda.ir
Website: mahjubah.itfjournals.com
Email: Info@alhoda.ir

Note: The views expressed by the writers/authors of the articles, published in "Mahjubah" do not necessarily represent the views of the Al-Huda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute, but are the personal views of the authors themselves. The Al-Huda Institute reserves the right/discretion to amend, revise, edit, delete or scrutinize any part or portion of the text as and wherever deemed necessary.



Editorial



Nowruz and Cultural Convergence

**Hojjat al-Islam Mohammad Asadi Movahed,
Islamic Research Scholar and Managing
Director of Al-Huda International Cultural,
Artistic and Publishing Institute**

As one of the ancient national festivities of Iranians, Nowruz, has been and is celebrated in Iran and all the lands to which Iranians have migrated, and while maintaining a deep connection with people it has become a clear manifestation of the extent of the influence of Iranian culture. The extent of this influence is so widespread that in addition to Iran, this great festivity is also celebrated in other countries of the geographical region of the Iranian culture including Central Asia, the Caucasus, Iran's neighboring countries in the west and east, including Iraq, Turkey, the neighboring countries of the Persian Gulf, Pakistan and even other regions such as the Balkans and the Indian Subcontinent.

Nowruz in Iranian Culture

The beginning of the new year is celebrated with certain special customs and traditions in all cultures, but in Iranian culture, the beginning of the new year is

not limited to the exact beginning of the year and, rather, the preparation for the new year begins much earlier and involves special traditions and customs, which, besides adding to the beauty of this festivity, are of influential features. One of the distinguishing features of Iranian culture, in particular, and the geographical domain of Iranian civilization, in general, is the holding of a series of celebrations, memorials, and ceremonies that take place under the title of “Nowruz Celebrations” and involve special arrangements and preparations.

Nowruz and Cultural Relations among States

Convergence is the formation of larger groupings of countries within the purview of which they move toward joint decision-making, and reach the conclusion that the practical benefits of joint decision-making over one or more issues outweigh individual decision-making and, thus, move from a low level of cooperation to much higher levels and this type of decision-making can start from the field of culture and cultural commonalities and eventually spread to economic and political areas. This ancient Iranian festivity that has survived through the ages, is considered one of the prominent cultural traditions that, with its long historical and spiritual roots, can be a serious factor for cultural and social convergence and improvement of relations between the nations of the region and become the basis of cooperative interactions between them (especially in the area of culture) and subsequently lead to the materialization of their common interests.

Nowruz and its cultural traditions are of such characteristics that, if used properly and to their full capacities they would lead to the establishment of ties and increased cooperation in various fields. In other words, Nowruz can be considered a spiritual and historical context for cultural convergence among the

countries that are part of the geographical region of the Iranian civilization as well as using the existing capacities for promoting the expansion of cultural cooperation between them. Nowruz has deep value and spiritual roots and with its wonderful cultural and historical themes gives a logical meaning to the relations between nations and governments in the field of culture and civilization and, as the spiritual and intangible heritage of Iran, it is essentially full of the spirit of compassion and unity and can be considered a rich source for preserving the cultural identity of a large number of people. Furthermore, it is also one of the most important festivities and celebrations that have survived among the nations of the world and have preserved their social credibility and prestige since times immemorial. In other words, as an intangible historical heritage that has overcome many bottlenecks, hindrances, and obstacles during the course of time, Nowruz can, in addition to creating a cultural bond among nations, increase social and economic cooperation between countries. Common culture and customs are important and powerful factors that can prepare the ground for closer and more profound relations among the countries in a region. The common approach of people to a common heritage called Nowruz can pave the way for future interactions in various other aspects. People's belief in the celebration of certain historical days and festivities, such as that of the New Year, provides the necessary grounds for convergence, provided its tangible and intangible capacities and potentials are fully resorted to. As in the past, the Al-Huda International Cultural, Artistic, and Publishing Institute has, within the context of its mission for introducing the Iranian culture to the international community, undertaken to publish this special issue on Nowruz. It is hoped this special issue can be an effective step towards the promotion of this objective.

Spring of Nature, a Valuable Opportunity for Expansion of Cultural Relations

Mohammad Mahdi Esmaili

Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Islamic Republic of Iran



Spring is just in the offing and Nowruz is the manifestation of victorious life. Each new solar year, which takes place at the time of change in nature and after resisting the cold and hard winter and the flow of life in the fabric of nature is an opportunity bestowed on man to remember the Day of Judgment, to under-

stand the power of the Almighty Creator and to strive for evolving and reforming himself in all aspects of his spiritual, material, intellectual, personal, and social existence.

The supplication "O Conqueror of hearts and sights, O Planner of night and day, O Transformer of power and circumstances,

Change our condition to the best of conditions", which has its roots in the ancient and spiritual culture of Islamic Iran and is recited at the beginning of every new year (Nowruz), encompasses the most profound teachings (of Islam) for the desire of being transformed and indicates the lofty position of this ideal in the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle.

Nowruz, which is an opportunity for transformation and becoming a better human being, is an ancient celebration and tradition and is considered to be one of the components of the identity and the consolidating heritage of the culture of various Iranian ethnic groups, which, according to many writers, scholars, and orientalists, is greater than other world celebrations. The endurance and subsistence of Nowruz over the centuries is due to the fact that it has not been an artificial contract or an imposed political celebration. Nowruz is one of the manifestations of divine



power, the message of the newness and revival of the world and the day of happiness for nature and man, which is manifested in its best form within the Iranian geography and territory.

The passage of time and historical ups and downs have not diminished the status of this tradition and have, on the contrary, clarified the fact that Nowruz and its customs are of a close and inseparable link and provide an opportunity for human beings to distance themselves from vices and evils and take a step towards goodness and refinement.

The wise and learned Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, had once said in one of his Nowruz messages: "All evils and ugliness in the world and within the context of human life are rooted in the evils and ugliness in man. If human beings are good, life is good and

sweet. If the carnal desires and the inner devil fail to rule over human actions, the affairs of life will take place and flow in a way that is pleasing to the Most Merciful."

According to this wise advice, Nowruz will be a blessed start of the perfect year in which man can rebuild his soul and personality with faith in God Almighty, lofty Islamic values, sincere efforts, spiritual and physical vitality, and divine knowledge and enlighten his soul and heart by strengthening his relationship with God Almighty.

We thank the All-Merciful God that - by His grace - the coming Nowruz, too, will be an opportunity to witness the celebration of the evolution of nature and to praise the greatness of God Almighty. What is of extended importance during these days is to be able to get transformed side by side the evolution and repro-

duction of nature and to strive more steadily in the path of spirituality, servitude, and service to the people.

It should also be emphasized that many valuable Islamic-Iranian capacities and resources can be the basis for the expansion of cultural relations, and the spring of nature, as one of the ancient customs and traditions, can serve as a valuable opportunity for the expansion and extension of cultural diplomacy by resorting to the many commonalities with other countries and pave the path for the development and expansion of international cultural relations.

In the end, I pray to God Almighty for good health and felicity for the dear readers of this magazine and I hope that, by the grace of God Almighty, the coming days will be full of the "best of conditions" for them.

The Role of Nowruz in Promoting Coexistence and Synergy among Ethnic Groups and Nations within the Region of Iranian Cultural Civilization

By: Hojjat al-Islam Mohammad Mahdi Imanipour, President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization



the recommendations of the religious leaders of the Islamic denominations have caused this cultural tradition to take on a religious character and be of greater profundity among the Muslim nations and communities of this region.

It seems that all these elements and inherent attractions of Nowruz, which are based on delight, peace, and friendship, can be the basis for the formation of extensive cultural, political, and economic cooperation among the member countries of this ancient civilizational region. Besides spreading the spirit of empathy and peaceful coexistence within the countries of the region, the repetition of this ceremony, every year, provides a unique opportunity to deepen and strengthen relations between the countries of the region. Of course, holding cultural events and national, popular, and international festivals by governments and non-governmental organizations will be an opportunity for nations to know each other better and

Nowruz and its ancient customs and traditions have always been of special importance in the minds of nations and communities living within the ecosystem of "Cultural Iran", which includes the countries of the ECO cultural region, Egypt, Syria, some parts of the Indian Subcontinent and the Russian Federation. And over time, the celebration of Nowruz, this ancient human heritage, has come to be manifested as a per-

manent cultural behavior in the folklore and daily life of the people of these ancient lands.

Nowruz has the potential of forming a cultural-civilizational union in the politico-geographical structure of Central Asia, Caucasus, and West Asia region; an issue that has received less attention from this perspective over the years. Also, the bonds between this ancient festivity and the religious teachings and



to expand, spread, and establish lasting peace, friendship, and security instead of violence, war, and insecurity; something that we are, unfortunately, witnessing in some parts of this ancient region.

The desire and enthusiasm shown by families and their children to celebrate Nowruz in all these countries can be used as a common denominator to promote closer ties and bonds between the communities of this region and to resort to a particular lifestyle within the purview of the concept of New Islamic Civilization.

As a courier of peace and friendship in the cultural region of Nowruz, this periodical intends to make the most of the cultural capacity of this living

ancient tradition in the daily life of the people living in these

As a courier of peace and friendship in the cultural region of Nowruz, this periodical intends to make the most of the cultural capacity of this living ancient tradition in the daily life of the people living in these lands, to promote such commonalities that could serve as the basis of harmonization and cohesion among the nations of the cultural environment of Nowruz

lands, to promote such commonalities that could serve as the basis of harmonization and cohesion among the nations of the cultural environment of Nowruz. The nations that, although apparently and on the basis of conventional political boundaries live in different states but are of a rich, ancient, and common cultural background, which is of profound potential to create a better future earmarked with empathy, cooperation, and synergy in various fields of culture, politics, science, economics, tourism, archeology, common heritage of nations, charity affairs, and also religious cooperation and synergy towards the expansion of peaceful coexistence. Hoping for such a Day...



10

No. 328
March 2022

Nowruz is the Pillar of the Eastern Identity

By: Mr. Sarvar Bakhti, President of the ECO Cultural Institute

The breath of Nowruz is sweet unto the Rose;
The loved one's face is pleasant in the green garden;
Speak not of Yesterday, - I know it not pleasant;
Be happy, and do not talk of Yesterday, as pleasant is today.
(Omar Khayyam)

As the identity and intangible structure of each nation, culture is an inseparable part of people's lives and throws light on their beliefs, knowledge, values, and their way of life. The high importance of culture and its profound impact at national and global levels

notify us of the need for preserving it at all times.

The countries of the ECO region have profound bonds with each other in terms of the culture and cultural characteristics of their nations. History, cultural heritage, festivities, common customs, and great personalities in various fields of knowledge, literature, and art, are of great potential in creating a kind of synergy between the ECO nations.

Among the various symbols of culture, Nowruz is a purely cultural phenomenon that has emerged from the hearts of societies and has been preserved by people throughout history. Nowruz is the twin of civilization, it boils from the deepest layers of collective wisdom, it is the pillar of the eastern identity and whispers immortality and modernity to the world.

The auspicious occasion of Nowruz is accompanied by divine-human thoughts and ideals, and as a symbol of the unity among ECO societies, emphasizes moral values, promotes and strengthens human relations and altruism, and has been encouraging such important concepts as tolerance and coexistence.

Peace-loving peoples of the ECO region, who share a common ancestry, worldview, and similar customs, have cherished the wonderful and timeless phenomenon of Nowruz throughout their tumultuous history, as a precious blessing, and have passed it on to future generations with greater glory.

Many attractions of Nowruz, such as “Khaneh Takani” (refreshing the atmosphere of houses), arranging the “haft-sin” and “haft-

shin” tables, reciting Nowruz songs, “gol gardani” (moving around in a group while holding flowers), wearing new clothes, giving gifts to each other, cooking a variety of sweets and cuisines, participating in games and competitions such as horse riding and Buzkashi and many other customs that have their roots in the ancient and wise traditions of the people of the ECO region.

Nowruz has a special place in the written heritage of ECO nations. It may be possible to say that after love, spring and nature are the most fascinating topics in the history of poetry and literature. Composing poems in praise of spring is one of the oldest and most pleasant practices among poets and has been giving people the opportunity to seek happiness, love, and closeness.

Nowruz, this long-standing offspring of the culture of the oriental nations, which is more than three thousand years old, has been recognized as an inter-

national occasion and intangible heritage of the world. Nowruz has no spatial or ethnic boundaries and has historically been identified in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and other Asian countries and has been appropriately accepted as the common foundation for promoting coexistence and peace in the world. The first day of the month of Farvardin (coinciding with March 21) being named as the “International Nowruz Day” by the UN General Assembly, is the proof of this claim.

Aiming at strengthening cultural diplomacy and utilizing the existing capacities of the member states the ECO Cultural Institute has been making every possible effort to recognize, introduce and facilitate the exchange of the cultural values of ECO nations and is proud to have shouldered the mission of promoting the region’s ancient cultural commonalities by promoting the cultural treasures of the region.

The celebration of the International Nowruz Festivity, which is held every year with the full participation of member countries at the ECO Cultural Institute, will narrate the deep identity, cultural and historical bonds of the ECO nations to the enthusiasts of love and friendship.

It is hoped that the coming Nowruz, which will mark the beginning of a new century, resonates the idea of growth and prosperity more audibly than before, such that future generations will step into a world full of joy and compassion.



The celebration of the International Nowruz Festivity, which is held every year with the full participation of member countries at the ECO Cultural Institute, will narrate the deep identity, cultural and historical bonds of the ECO nations to the enthusiasts of love and friendship.



The Mythological Foundation of Nowruz

By: Dr. Yaghoub Yasna, Research Scholar and Faculty Member of the
Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan



Nowruz festivity can be considered as the outcome of three important mythological foundations the understanding of which could be quite enlightening. These three mythological foundations include creation or genesis, time, and agriculture. Nowruz is a symbolic form of the unity between these three important issues and man has been able to present and narrate them in the form of Nowruz festivity.

Nowruz represents a kind of genesis for human beings, be-

cause the world moves out of the atmosphere of winter silence and stagnation that had slowed down the movement of life, made some plants take refuge in their roots and seeds, and a number of animals go into hibernation. With the arrival of Nowruz, plants blossom and animals come out of numbness, and life begins to flourish again. And in what better way can one experience genesis and the process of creation.

Nowruz makes man feel a sort of oneness with the world and this makes him feel the glory of divine creation and genesis of the world. This experience makes it possible for man to present the process of creation in the form of narration. The origin of time is different for the contemporary man and an-

cient and mythological man. Contemporary man sees time as arising from the change in things, which is a physical phenomenon, but ancient man considered time to be something that was independent of other things. Based on this understanding of time, he formulated a strategy against time that allowed ancient man to understand creation and time. This is because understanding the creation in the absence of understanding time and vice versa is somewhat incomprehensible. Nowruz is a symbolic form of the return of time to the beginning of creation. By returning time to the beginning, the man of the past could reduce the power of the passage of time over himself and things, and by eliminating the role of time, he would feel eternal



and immortal.

But contemporary man is doomed to time and space. Doomed to linear time that just goes and does not return. Thus we can distinguish between ancient man and contemporary man by perceiving the ancient man's understanding of time vis-à-vis our understanding of time.

The ancient man was not bound by history and did not know anything called history. Everything was repeatable for him. Contemporary man is bound by history and what is nothing is repeated in his life, every human being is himself and not a repetition of someone or something.

The realization that a seed could sprout after sinking into the soil and staying in it for a while, was perhaps a great and surprising understanding for human beings. Mythologists consider this human understanding of the relationship between grain and soil as a major event in human social, economic and intellectual life. This is because, after this understanding, man was able to cultivate. It made human agriculture dependent on the specific location and geography of the land. With this dependence, man was able to start rural and urban life and enter a different area of social life than before.

Nowruz is not unrelated to human understanding of the relationship between seed and soil. This relationship is naturally established in every spring season. Growth and procreation allow man to reach an understanding about creation, and with that understanding, he begins to understand time, but not a linear time and rather a rotating and repetitive time; in the sense that in every Nowruz, time completes its



repetition and returns to the beginning of genesis and eternal creation.

But the question is, what is the need to celebrate Nowruz and why do we celebrate it? The answer is: firstly, Nowruz is our culture, and our cultural heritage is reflected in

Nowruz is a symbolic form of the return of time to the beginning of creation. By returning time to the beginning, the man of the past could reduce the power of the passage of time over himself and things, and by eliminating the role of time, he would feel eternal and immortal.



Nowruz and we have a cultural and human responsibility to preserve and protect Nowruz. Secondly, our age is the age of machines, industry, technology, and technology and machines have somehow taken nature out of human reach, or rather have manipulated the relationship between man and nature. This manipulation has caused man to not have a direct, lively, and dynamic relationship with nature and to forget the importance of his relationship with nature. Celebrating Nowruz, with its connection to nature, can make man aware of this forgetfulness, and with this attention, man may take action to eliminate the distance and forgetfulness between himself and nature. This step can be a respect for the human environment and other animals. Therefore, the Nowruz celebration in our time can be interpreted as a celebration for the protection of natural habitats.



Training-related Rights of Children over Parents

Elham Salimi

As we all know, one of the dimensions to the essence of human beings is their learning, which should be taken into account in the process of training and educating children. Thus among the children's rights upon their parents is their receiving proper social training by their parents so that their talents and potentials can adequately

develop in the arena of social life, enabling them to live fruitful lives as active and successful members of not only their own society but of the broader society of the world of human beings.

According to Islam, children should be taught and trained on the basis of Divine rules, moral values, and humane manners, so

that they learn to be responsible human beings: taking care not to violate the rights of other human beings in any condition and to do their best to fulfill their duties towards all.

Islam urges parents to train their children dutifully; to teach them "taqwa" (being careful about one's duties to Allah), chastity, and noble



manners including respectful behavior and generosity. Certainly, if children observe that their parents always speak the truth, talk politely and try to help anybody who needs their help, they will never grow up to be liars, stingy or miserly persons.

Likewise, self-control, self-discipline, and accountability can and should be taught to children in the family environment and by the parents. In this regard, the father's role is of particular significance, since they can make great impressions upon their children's character through involving them in decision-making and finding solutions to various problems. The Holy Prophet of Islam (pbuh) has been quoted saying: "Children are (to be treated)

as obeyed and cherished (as far as possible) darlings till the age of seven and during the next seven years, they should be instructed and educated and during the third seven years of life, they are aides (and can be consulted)."

Obviously, asking the youngsters for their views and help regarding various situations and letting them express themselves freely will boost their self-confidence and help them find out about the immense talents and abilities God has granted them. This way, they will become capable of dealing with numerous problems they will face as adults in society and also in their personal lives.

Also, it is the parents' duty to help their sons and daughters with selecting friends. Imam Sajjad (as) had advised his offsprings thus: "My dear children! Avoid the friendship of certain groups of people, do not keep company with them and do not travel with them: The liars, for like a mirage they present false pictures to you; the carefree sinners, for they will sell you for even the pettiest price: the people who are lacking in benevolence, for they will deny you help when you need it most; the silly, because they unknowingly harm you when they want to give you benefit...."

Accordingly, parents need to train their children in such a way as to make them feel obliged to respect others. Imam Ali (as) has advised his followers thus: "Speak to the people in a good manner as Allah has commanded you to.", and "Guard yourselves against getting afflicted with self-centeredness, self-conceit, bad temper, and impatience, because such qualities drive

friends away from you and make the people reluctant to communicate with you.", and "Avoid humiliating anyone you meet, for if he is older than you, then you should regard him as your father, and if he is your age, then he is as your brother and if he is younger than you, then you should look upon him as your son."

Likewise, the Infallibles (as) have stressed the fact that anyone who behaves arrogantly will suffer disgrace, and also that arguing with others unnecessarily is not only useless but also breeds enmity.

In just the same vein, our Divinely-guided leaders have advised us to rush towards doing good. Imam Sajjad (as): "If you decide to do a good, benevolent action then try



"My dear children! Avoid the friendship of certain groups of people, do not keep company with them and do not travel with them: The liars, for like a mirage they present false pictures to you; the carefree sinners, for they will sell you for even the pettiest price: the people who are lacking in benevolence, for they will deny you help when you need it most; the silly, because they unknowingly harm you when they want to give you benefit...."





to do it immediately, for you do not know what will happen tomorrow.”

Also, parents should share their own experiences regarding life problems with their children and should through gradual training and guidance prepare them for dealing with the challenges they will inevitably face in adulthood, thus preventing any nervous breakdown in the face of social life which is the fate of those who in their childhood and early youth do not get adequate training and/or who are spoiled due to too much ease and luxury. And in this direction, parents should also teach their children to get themselves used to thinking deeply about the consequences of actions; just as Imam Ali (as) has advised his son: “Foresight and thinking deeply before an action will guard you against remorse.”

As for selecting companions and associates, the Infallibles (as) have also presented very il-

luminating guidelines, including the following. It is quoted from Imam Ali (as), “The companionship of the learned will bring dignity to the one who chooses to enjoy their company.”, and “Take the advice of the sagacious persons and think about their judgments.” Also, it has been

“Islam urges parents to train their children dutifully; to teach them “taqwa” (being careful about one’s duties to Allah), chastity, and noble manners including respectful behavior and generosity.”

narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (as) advised his infallible son, Imam al-Kazim (as) to, “Visit the good people and not the evil-doers, for the latter’s association is totally useless.” And most importantly, it is the parents’ duty to teach their children religious teachings and Ahadith. Imam al-Sadiq (as): “Teach your children Ahaith before the deviated succeed in leading them astray through perverse views. From the authentic accounts on the life and manners of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) of Islam and his Infallible successors, we can infer that one of the most effective ways of giving children proper Islamic teaching is to let them and, in fact, encourage them to ask questions freely and try to give adequate replies with patience and care, in words plausible to the children and suiting their age and level of understanding. And likewise, parents should let their children express themselves regarding the matters which concern them directly or even indirectly and should allow them to attend the gatherings of adults too. It is advisable for parents to let their children have some share in the activities and works, which entail hardships because in this way children will be better equipped with abilities needed for the future life. There are certain Ahadith pointing to this view: Too kind parents will not breed successful children. And it is mostly at home where children learn the principles of peaceful coexistence, cooperation, and sympathy towards their fellow human beings, and a sense of responsibility.

Nowruz in the Indian Subcontinent

By: Masoumeh Mahmoud, Ph.D. student of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

The ancient Nowruz festivity, which entered the Indian Subcontinent from Iran and intertwined with different cultures of this land, is celebrated among many communities of this Subcontinent; involving special customs.



History of Nowruz Celebrations in the Subcontinent

During the reign of Islamic rulers in this land, Nowruz was celebrated as a national festivity. Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar (1542-1605 AD) played an important role in the spread of Iranian culture in India. In 992 AH/1584 AD, he abolished the lunar calendar and substituted it with the Iranian solar calendar.

During the 18 years of Jahangir's rule (Akbar Shah's son), Nowruz celebrations were held from the beginning of the Iranian month of Farvardin (coinciding with March 21) for eighteen days and would end with "Jashn-e Sharaf" (lit. celebration of honor) on the nine-

teenth day. The day before the start of the celebration and the last day of the celebration was dedicated to exchanging gifts and paying alms and charity.

According to the works of famous historians such as Abolfazl Alami, the author of Akbarnamah and A'in-e Akbari, and Mullah Abdul Qader Badayouni, the author of Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Nowruz celebration was of great importance in the court of the Mughal emperors of India and was held with great interest and splendor. Nights were decorated with colored lanterns and Persian and Indian songs were sung.



Nowruz among the Parsis (Zoroastrians) of India

Iranian festivities, especially Nowruz, became popular among the people of the Indian Subcontinent and the royal courts since the time of the Ghaznavids and reached their peak during the Timurid era and other Turkic dynasties. One of the factors that greatly contributed to this prevalence was the presence of Zoroastrians migrating to India. The Zoroastrians of the Subcontinent, who live mostly in western India and southern Pakistan, clean, perfume and decorate their homes from the morning of Nowruz. They believe that by doing so, they lead the guardian angels into the house and the fireplace. Flowers such as roses, marigolds or calendula, or "Ashoka" leaves are also used to decorate the house. Their traditional breakfast on the first day of Nowruz comprises sweet noodles cooked with raisins and almonds. After the Haft-Sin custom, Parsis go to the fire temple to perform the religious rituals of Nowruz following which relatives and friends gather together to celebrate.



Nowruz in Kashmir

Nowruz is a special day for the people of Kashmir, which is mostly associated with prayers and special religious ceremonies and get together of relatives.

The importance of Nowruz for the Muslims of this region is due to the fact that according to Islamic sources, many important events have taken place in the history of the prophets on this day. According to these sources,

the creation of the world and the creation of Adam took place on Nowruz, Noah's ark rested on Mount Judi, the Prophet of Islam cleansed the Ka'ba of idols, and most importantly, the event of Ghadir-e Khumm coincided with Nowruz. For this reason, some people fast on Nowruz and offer special prayers on this day. Nowruz is more of religious importance among the Muslims of the Subcontinent and is associated with prayers and supplications and they believe that Nowruz prayers are definitely answered. Some ancient customs such as "Chaharshanbe Suri" and "Sizdah Be-dar" are not observed in this region.



Nowruz in the Gilgit Region

Gilgit is one of the five provinces of old Kashmir that is part of northern Pakistan and has long and snowy winters. The inhabitants of this region look forward to the arrival of spring from mid-winter and set up beautiful celebrations to welcome it. The day before Nowruz, they go to the mountains and plains to pick the first blooming spring flowers and present colorful bouquets of desert flowers to the graves of their deceased ones and distribute special cookies as charity at the graves of their loved ones. In the Gilgit region of northern Pakistan, Nowruz celebrations are accompanied by fireworks and polo games.



Nowruz in Sindh

The general belief of the people of this region is that change of year in Iran coincides with Aries and it is time

in which prayers are answered and the wishes are fulfilled. Thus, all the members of the family gather together, place a bowl full of water on a large tray, and put flowers in that bowl of water believing that at that moment heavenly breeze blows and revives the earth that was dead in the winter and spins the flowers in a bowl of water. At this point, the head of the family recites the New Year prayer and the others follow him. This act is repeated 365 times, then the head of the family sprinkles the bowl of water with his fingers on all the people, and this ceremony is considered to be the source of blessing and happiness.



Nowruz in Lahore, Pakistan

In ancient times, Nowruz was celebrated in Lahore with grandeur, and even today the people of Punjab state welcome spring by flying kites (Basanti). The main center of this celebration is Lahore, the cultural capital of Pakistan. On this day, the sky of the city is full of colorful kites, and children and old and young enthusiastically participate in flying kites on the rooftops. They call Nowruz "Alam Afrooz" because, with its arrival, it makes the world bright and lively.



Nowruz in the City of Lucknow

Lucknow is one of the important centers of Shiites in India and Nowruz is very popular among the Shiites

of this city and celebrated with great enthusiasm such that it should be considered as one of their great religious festivities. In addition to certain religious rituals and prayers, the people of Lucknow sprinkle colored water on each other with small pumps and in this way decorate to make Nowruz colorful.



Nowruz in Peshawar

Nowruz is also very popular among the people of Peshawar. Men, women, and children celebrate it by going out to the gardens and meadows and walking in them barefoot, and believing that it would enlighten their hearts.



Nowruz in Parachinar

In Parachinar of Pakistan, women go out with guns and hunt in meadows and near riverbanks, and men engage in local games in the open. Some people gather in large squares, holding colorful flags, and celebrate Nowruz by making merry there and spending the day congratulating each other until evening.



Being a Muslim

By: Hasan Shaikhul-Islami Translated by: Fatemeh Khazaii

As Muslims, each of us needs to study our own degree of devotion to our faith. In other words, we need to constantly check to see how much we are Muslims, whether we live up to the requirements of our faith carefully and with commitment or whether God-forbid, most of the time neglect parts of our duties towards our Creator – Allah – The One and only God. No doubt, all of us desire Allah's pleasure and a nice place in paradise in the Hereafter,

but not all of us might be careful enough regarding the details of our daily actions and thoughts, to see our faults and shortcomings, and to try to remove them.

As we know, Allah's last and most exalted Messenger - Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) called on the people to say "La ilaha illa Allah" (There is no God but Allah) in order to attain salvation. And obviously, in the course of his Prophetic Mission, he presented each and every aspect of being

a true believer in Allah. As we observe in the Holy Qur'an and also in the Ahadith, including: "A true Muslim is the one from whose tongue (words) and hands (actions) the other Muslims are safe.", meaning that to be regarded as a true follower of Islam and the Holy Qur'an, we should be always careful about what we do to the others.

Evidently, the one who backbites other Muslims, insults them, or cheats them is away

from Islam unless he/she repents and tries to make up for his/her past wrong-doings. These and all other needed teachings have been presented in illuminating verses of the Holy Qur'an and in the Ahadith of the Infallibles (as). A very significant point to be mentioned here is that we should be very careful not to be led astray because of what some people may remark about us and the degree of our piety because some might have a limited outlook and so judge others in a narrow-minded way. They may regard as a very good, very pious person, somebody who is just outwardly religious, but not inwardly, since that person might, in fact, be suffering from hypocrisy inwardly. And conversely, some may be true believers and very pious and yet criticized and disliked by some others. So, we should always remember that in the Holy Qur'an, Allah has taught us to try to be most careful about our duties to Him in order to be regarded as most honorable by Him: *"Truly the most honorable of you to Allah is the most careful about his or her duties towards Him."* Holy Qur'an, 49:13

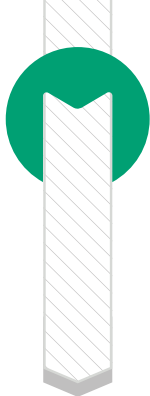
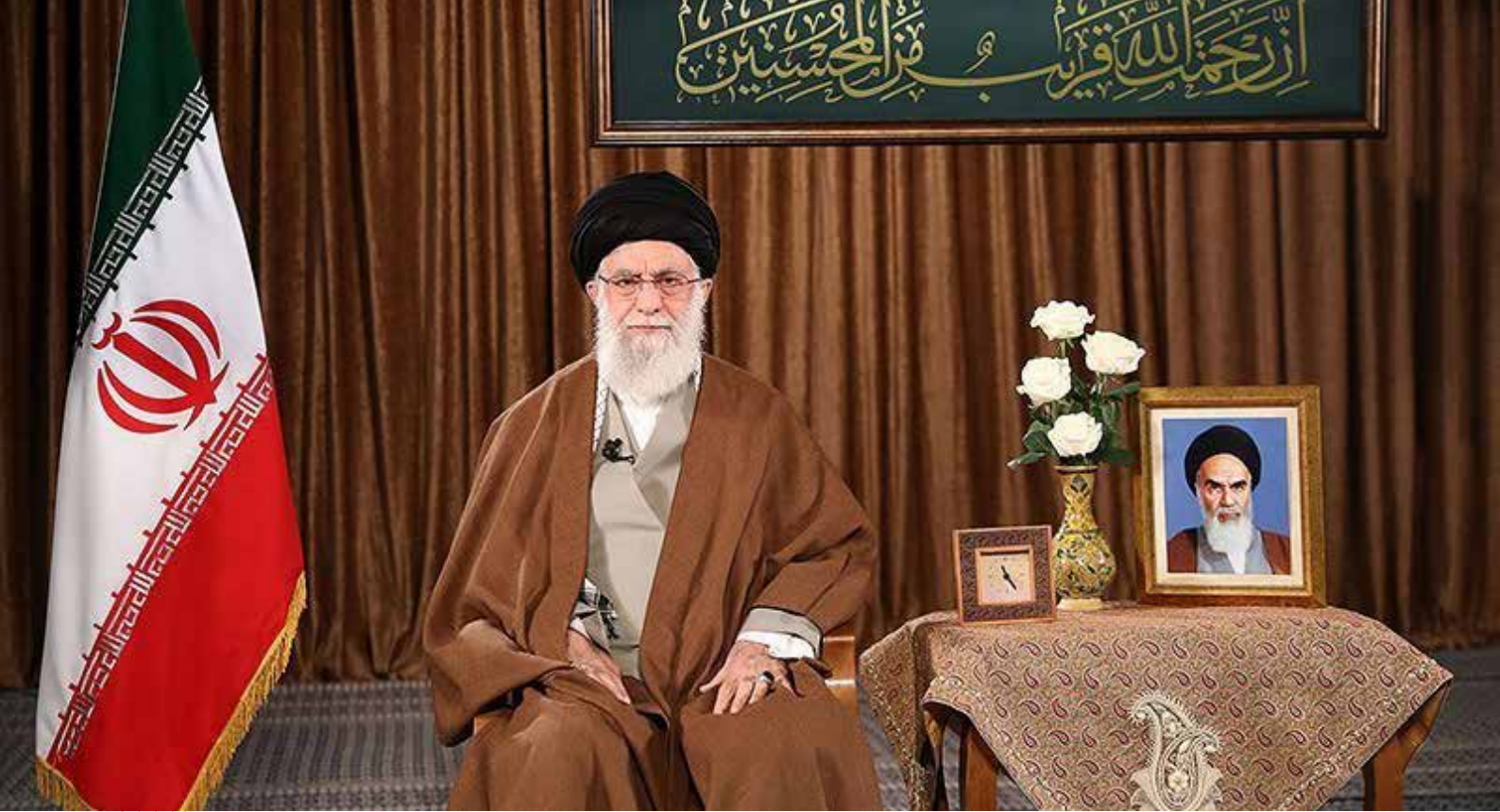
No doubt, as Muslims, our duties towards Allah, besides such acts of worships as daily prayers and fasting, also include our duties towards the other servants of God (be them Muslim or non-Muslim). So, the man who cheats or takes bribes in order to get the money he wants to spend on, say, his family's holidays or giving his children a big wedding ceremony should regard himself not a true Muslim, even if some people might praise him because he



“ we should be very careful not to be led astray because of what some people may remark about us and the degree of our piety because some might have a limited outlook and so judge others in a narrow-minded way. They may regard as a very good, very pious person, somebody who is just outwardly religious, but not inwardly, since that person might, in fact, be suffering from hypocrisy inwardly. ”

harms the other people through doing haram (forbidden by Allah) acts. And likewise, the woman who is pious in appearance, and is yet abusive and unfair - as a daughter-in-law or a mother-in-law - should be reminded that Allah sees and hears everything and no one can achieve His pleasure unless, he/she is pious, both in public and in private.

It goes without saying that a true Muslim is moral, spiritual, and always fair and considerate and kind towards all; even towards animals. And no true Muslim is arrogant towards the other Muslims. Now let's cite very enlightening remarks by Imam Khomeini (ra) about Islamic teachings: "Islam commands us to neither be oppressive nor to submit to oppression."



22

No. 328
March 2022

Change Our Condition to the Best of Conditions

The followings are excerpts of the messages by Grand Ayatollah Khamenei; the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution on the occasion of Nowruz (Iranian New Year – ‘Eid).

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

O Conqueror of hearts and sights,
O Planner of night and day,
O Transformer of power and circumstances,
Change our condition to the best of conditions.

We all prayed to “the Transformer of power and circumstances” at the beginning of this year to “change our condition to the best of conditions.” This prayer is about Allah’s will, but it is undoubtedly necessary for all of us to make efforts. These efforts prepare the requirements for God’s blessings and mercy. We must make efforts to transform our own situation. We must make efforts to improve our lives, minds, hearts, and conditions in this world and the hereafter. That is the duty of the entire Iranian nation. A variety of spiritual and religious issues, subjective and objective realities and daily experiences in our personal and social lives are all included in the divine order that is repeated each year in the form of this prayer: “Change our condition into the best of conditions.” March 2009

This prayer, which we recite every New Year, contains a very interesting point. It says: “...transform our condition into the best condition.” It does not say transform us to a better state or better condition. It is a request to the Almighty to transform our condition to the best of conditions. The sincere and dedicated effort of Muslim individuals is the one that allows them to reach the best in all areas and affairs. March 2010





In spite of all the enmity, in spite of all the propaganda and in spite of all the hostile and malevolent attacks, last year, the Iranian people managed to show and prove their presence on the scene, their dynamism, and their preparedness in different scientific, social, political and economic arenas with all their heart. Thankfully, in spite of all the hardships, we made great achievements last year. As I have pointed out before, the conditions were the conditions of Badr and Khaybar - that is to say, conditions in which we had to accept and overcome challenges and hardships. March 20, 2012

The moment a new year starts is, in fact, the interval between an end and a beginning: the end of one year and the beginning of a new year. Of course, we should mainly focus on what lies ahead. We should look at the New Year and we should make plans and prepare ourselves for it. However, looking back on the path that we have traversed will also be beneficial for us so that we see what we have done, how we have moved forward, and what results our efforts have produced, and we should learn lessons from it and gain experience. March 2013

It is necessary for us to evaluate ourselves in the case of our personal matters. As the narration says, "Evaluate yourselves before you are evaluated." We should evaluate our work and actions. Similarly, it is important and valuable to carry out an evaluation at the national level. We should evaluate ourselves. We should review everything that has happened to us and try to learn lessons for the future. March 2013

The passage of different years should both be an experience and a source of foresight for us. We should learn from the past and we should look to the future and make decisions for it with open eyes and with wise hearts. I ask Allah the Exalted to bestow health, enthusiasm, psychological security, peace of mind, progress, transcendence, and happiness on our dear Iranians in this new year. I hope He bestows enthusiasm and dynamism on our youth. I hope He bestows firm determination and willpower on our men and women so that they can take great steps. I hope He bestows happiness and health on our children and I hope He bestows security, kindness, and compassion on our families. March 2014

Allah the Exalted has laid down a condition for those whom He has promised to help: *"And most surely Allah is well able to assist them... They are those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular prayer and give regular charity, enjoin to do good and forbid evil. With Allah rests the end of all affairs."* The Holy Quran, 22: 39-41.

In this Holy ayah, Allah the Exalted has laid down four conditions and criteria for those believers whom He offers power and whom He saves from cruel rulers. He has said: "And most surely Allah is well able to assist them". Allah the Exalted is able to help such people and He will definitely do so. March 2015



Happy Nowruz



Happy spring



25

No. 328
March 2022



The Spread of New Year

By: Malihe Dargahi

Open the windows, for the spring breeze is celebrating the rebirth of flowers and the spring sunlight has lit a candle on every branch of trees. For us Iranians, Nowruz is a symbol of freshness, re-birth of nature, and the removal of all impurities from bodies and souls and also a symbol of solidarity among the various Iranian ethnicities and unity of the whole nation. These are all values for us. As for the Haft-Seen spread on which seven items are put, (the names of

which starts with the letter Seen in the Persian language) it should be said that it is also a custom rooted in the belief of the Iranians in spiritual concepts including the number seven, which is connected with several sacred facts, such as the seven Skies, the seven days of the week and so on. Each item placed on the Haft-Seen spread also symbolizes spirituality and hope for prosperity and strength. For example, Seer (garlic) symbolizes

vigor and dynamism. Seeb (apple) is regarded as a symbol of re-birth, recreation, and good health. As I remember, there has always been a copy of the Holy Qur'an placed first and foremost on our Nowruz Haft-Seen spread.

Besides, visiting holy shrines and praying there have always been part of the 13-day celebrations. On the 13th day of the Nowruz holidays, like most other Iranians, we go outdoors for a picnic to enjoy the fresh spring weather and refresh ourselves. It is



a wrong conception that people think the number 13 is unlucky. As for me, I think that just the opposite, it is lucky, because on the 13th day of the first month of spring (Farvardin) people in our country have a very nice time through family gatherings in the beautiful nature. So, how can such a happy fruitful occasion be regarded as being on a day with an unlucky number? What brings unity and good health is, in fact, lucky and not unlucky. I pray for good health, happiness, and prosperity for all in the new year and wish them the best, and offer my greetings on the occasion of Nowruz to all Iranians both living in Iran and abroad. May Allah help them more and more in His way and open doors for doing good, generosity, piety, and benevolence for all of them!



Nowruz: A UN Recognized Celebration

International Nowruz Day was officially recognized by the United Nations as a part of the world's 'intangible heritage' in 2010. Resolution A/RES/64/253 added the 3000-year-old celebration to the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The UN General Assembly described it as a spring festival of Persian origin, observed by numerous peoples, and called on world countries to draw upon the holiday's rich history to promote peace and goodwill.

Nowruz is celebrated in Iran, Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan.

Nowruz Celebrations

By: Nayyereh Towhidi

Happy Nowruz, happy spring. May Allah - The Gracious give you the best in life, and may He help you make your lives as beautiful and fruitful as springs. As we know, this world's life has its ups and downs, like each year in our lives in which the refreshing spring and warm summer are followed by a dry or cold autumn, and colder winter. Yet the fact is that Allah, the All-Knowing, has placed innumerable blessings for His servants in each of these apparently difficult times. One lesson we can take from this fact is that we should regard hardships we go through in life as leading to certain blessings, just as cold winters give their place to refreshing springs. Hope and trust in God are really what we need most to become able to tolerate what we need to tolerate, without thanklessness. Our divine teachers have taught us, among others, to rely on Allah - The One and Only God - and to keep our hearts alive and healthy through remembering God. This lesson is most valuable and should be conveyed to all.

We extend our heartfelt greetings to you and wish you better and better days and years, and here we present a brief account of Nowruz celebrations in various countries to you.



Nowruz in Tajikistan

Tajikistan's biggest annual celebration is the spring festival of Nowruz. For the Tajiks, Nowruz represents a festival of friendship and renewal of all living beings.

Jumping over the fire on the eve of the last Wednesday of the year is practiced by the Tajiks as well. One tradition that has survived in Tajikistan is the gathering of wildflowers by children in the villages. They bring the flowers back and while wearing colorful attire walk around the village, knock on people's doors and present them with a flower.

House cleaning is done before the celebrations start and this includes washing and polishing all the dishes in the household. New Year's morning starts with a sweet breakfast. New colorful clothes with spring motives (flowers) are worn.

Special food and sweets are prepared. Games including playing with eggs, and wrestling are part of the celebrations. Women prepare "Sumalak", a porridge made from sprouted wheat that is traditionally eaten on the spring holiday.

March 21 and 22 are official Nowruz holidays in Tajikistan, but celebrations start before these dates and continue afterward.



Nowruz in the Republic of Azerbaijan

Nowruz in the Republic of Azerbaijan is the most important national celebration. It starts two weeks before the beginning of the New Year when house cleaning starts. Homes and public places are cleaned and painted and new flowers are planted in city squares and in private gardens. The night before New Year members of extended families have dinner together and fish is a must at these dinners. New clothes are worn and all kinds of sweets

are baked for the occasion. There are plays and performances with games, competitions, horse riding, wrestling, fencing, and archery. There is a Nowruz spread with symbolic items and people visit parks and fields after the occasion. Chahar-Shanbe-Soori is also celebrated. But unlike Iran where this celebration takes place only on the last Wednesday eve of the year, it lasts for four Wednesday eves in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Each Wednesday eve is dedicated to one of the four elements water, wind, soil, and fire. The night before the last Wednesday, dedicated to fire, is the most ostentatious one and is celebrated by setting bonfires and jumping over them with music.



Nowruz in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, Nowruz is celebrated for two weeks. People wear new clothes, refurbish their houses, paint the buildings, and henna their hands.

A famous tradition among Afghans is to forget and forgive the mistakes of one another and start the New Year with new hopes and new goals. During the first three days of the year, families and relatives meet and visit each other. These are parts of Afghan traditions that date back to centuries ago. One of the most significant symbolic traditions of Nowruz in Afghanistan is Haft-Meewa or Seven Fruits. The Seven Fruits table is adorned with seven dried fruit: raisins, senjed (the dried fruit of the oleaster tree), pistachio, hazelnuts, prunes (dry fruit of apricot), walnuts, and either almond or another species of plum fruit. Haft-Meewa is like a fruit salad, served in the fruits syrup. Afghans also celebrate Chahar-Shanbe-Soori, the festival of the last Wednesday eve before the New Year, celebrated with bonfires and fireworks.





Nowruz in Turkey

In Turkey, Nowruz is celebrated by the Kurdish community. Kurds celebrate this feast between March 18 and 21. The Nowruz holiday is considered by Kurds to be the single most important holiday of the year. It involves setting up large bonfires on mountain tops, celebrating the defeat of the demon-king Zahak, a character from the Shahnameh, a book by the Iranian epic poet, Ferdowsi. With this festival, Kurds gather at fairgrounds mostly outside the cities to welcome spring. Women wear colorful dresses and headscarves and young men wave flags of green, yellow and red. They hold this festival by lighting fires and dancing around them. Nowruz is still largely considered a potent symbol of Kurdish identity in Turkey. In recent years the New Year celebration attracted another one million participants in Diyarbakır, the largest Kurdish-majority city in Turkey.



Nowruz in Uzbekistan

Nowruz, in Uzbekistan, starts with house cleaning and airing of beddings and carpets. Broken household dishes and pots and pans are discarded. Pots or saucepans are left outside to be filled with rainwa-

ter and this water is kept as a symbol of blessing. They celebrate with Haft-Seen, wearing new clothes and having lights or candles in every room of the house when Nowruz starts. Jumping over the bonfire on the last Wednesday eve of the year is also practiced. Children and youths in the villages and small cities go out into the fields and gather wildflowers that they will later give as presents to their neighbors and friends. The elderly will kiss the flowers and will put them on their eyes and give treats to the children.

Reading the poems of Hafez, the renowned Iranian famous poet, and seeking one's fortune through various poems of his is very popular and they often leave an open book of Hafez next to their baby's cots to bring good fortune for the newborns. On the 13th day, the celebrations end by going to picnics and spending time in the fields in nature



Nowruz in Kyrgyzstan

Nowruz is a short but major national celebration in Kyrgyzstan. It is celebrated on the first and the second day of the New Year and these days are public holidays. On these two days, people gather from early morning in major squares where Nowruz markets are set up. Music bands, games, competitions, fencing, horse riding, and archery are part of the celebrations. Special foods are prepared with sweets and treats and are distributed in the community.

On March 21, Kyrgyz (and Kazakh) households fumigate their homes with special smoke, which is said to make malicious spirits flee. The main holiday dishes for Turkic Central Asians are pilaf (plov), Shurpa, boiled mutton and Kok-samsa pies filled with spring greens and the young sprouts of steppe grasses. According to tradition, people try to make the celebratory table as rich as possible with various dishes and sweets. Everyone at the table should be full and happy to ensure that the coming year will be safe and the crop will be plentiful. The holiday is accompanied by competitions among national singers, storytellers, and horsemen, and also competitions among strong men.



Nowruz in Kazakhstan

The celebration of Nowruz starts a few days before the New Year with house cleaning. On the night before Nowruz, two candles are placed above the house and during the celebrations, people wear new white clothes. In the villages on the night before Nowruz, at 3 a.m. a large doll covered with bells is mounted on a horse and released and the sound is supposed to wake up everyone to make them ready for the coming of the first day of Nowruz. Neighbors, friends, and relatives visit each other and the people rub their shoulders with one other, a local tradition. If it rains people regard it as a good sign.

Special foods are made including Nowruz Goojeh (Ash-e-Nowruzi) that has seven ingredients. Different kinds of sweets are baked and shared by all.



Nowruz in Turkmenistan

Turkmen ancestors considered Nowruz as the symbol of a new life, blessing, dignity, bliss, and welfare. In Turkmenistan, the first two days of Nowruz, i.e., March 21 and 22, coinciding with the First and Second of Farvardin (first month of the Iranian calendar) are official holidays. While it was banned during Soviet rule, this festivity has been celebrated again since independence.

In Turkmenistan, Nowruz is a sign of preserving ancient customs. Turkmen have certain customs for Nowruz such as special foods, games, horse racing, and different competitions.

People in Turkmenistan celebrate this time with famous dishes. There is a tradition of jumping over fire in the evening which is still practiced in Turkmenistan. On Nowruz, women practice a very special rite. They cook wheat sprouts and place them in a bowl on their heads. Water is poured into the bowl while another woman cuts the steam with scissors. They believe it will make the woman fertile.



FAQ

34

No. 328
March 2022

Dear readers, we wish you all a happy Nowruz and a blissful life. May Allah make your whole life and the lives of your dear ones filled with desirable achievements, especially in connection with raising healthy, promising children. Please read the following question and answer for gaining certain guidelines.

Q: I would like to know about wet nursing and breastfeeding according to Islam.

A: First of all, we invite your attention to the following Qur'anic verses:

"Mothers should breastfeed their children two full years, provided they want to complete the nursing. The family head must support women and clothe them properly. Yet no person is charged with more than he can cope with. No mother should be made to suffer because of her child, nor any family head

because of his child. An heir has the same duties in that respect. If they both prefer to wean (the child) when they have agreed on terms and consulted together, it should not be held against them; so if you want to find a wet-nurse for your children, it should not be held against you, provided you hand over whatever you may have given in all decency. Heed God and know that God is observant of anything you do." [The Holy Qur'an; 2:233]

"We have instructed everyman to be kind to both his parents. His mother bears him with reluctance and gives birth to him painfully. Bearing him and weaning him last thirty months,....." [The Holy Qur'an; 46:15]

Now let's cite certain Ahadith in this connection:

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): "Do not let your children be wet-nursed (breastfed) by an immoral and crazy woman, because her evil will be transmitted to the breastfed child through her milk."

Imam Ali (as): "No milk is more blessed than the child's mother's milk."

Imam Ali (as): "Be careful about choosing a wet nurse for your children just as you are careful about choosing a spouse because wet nursing transforms the child's nurture."

As you see Islam has clearly given us the needed instructions and guidelines so that we can breed healthy, promising children by following them.



Parvin E'tesami

Compiled by: Morteza Afradian

Rakhshandeh E'tesami, known as Parvin E'tesami (1907-1941, Tabriz) was a 20th-century Iranian poetess and a prominent Iranian lexicographer. Parvin was around seven or eight years old when her poetic talent was re-

vealed. Through her father's encouragement, she versified some literary pieces which were translated from western sources by her father. In 1921-22, some of her earliest known poems were published in a Persian magazine

named 'Bahar' (lit. spring).

The first edition of her Divan (book of poetry) comprised 156 poems and was published in 1935. The famous poet and scholar Mohammad Taqi Bahar (given the honorific title of "King of Poets" wrote an introduction to her work.

In her short life, she managed to achieve great fame among Iranians. Parvin's poetry follows the classical Persian tradition, its form, and its substance. She remained unaffected by or perhaps ignored the modernistic trends in Persian poetry. Parvin wrote about men and women of different social backgrounds, an array of animals, birds, flowers, trees, cosmic and natural elements, objects of daily life, abstract concepts, all of which personified and symbolized her wealth of ideas. Through these figures, she reflected upon the abuses of society and loose moral behaviors. Likewise, in the debates, she eloquently expressed her basic thoughts about life and death, social justice, ethics, education, and the importance of knowledge.

In our era, Parvin is the only poetess whose poetry is pedagogic. She is the only poetess among her contemporaries who limited her literary activities to pedagogic literature. The number of her lyrics like "The Journey of a Tear" is very few and they were written in pedagogic style. All her poetry is filled with teachings on various social grounds. Her "Safar-e Ashk" (Journey of a tear) is considered the finest lyrics ever written in Persian.

35

Mahjubah
Magazine

No. 328
March 2022



Parvin E'tesami's House

Spring in Tehran

By: Parvin E'tesami

Spring with all its fragrance and freshness had entered the orchard of our house. As if a chunk of spring had just fallen into our yard. The smell of Farvardin (the first Iranian calendar month) had permeated everywhere. There was warm and pleasant sunshine. I could just see the warm breath of the earth coming out of the soil of the orchard. It was the Sizdahbedar Festival (the thirteenth day of the Iranian New Year).

Although the sky was clear and it was a sunny day, a few patches of adamant dark clouds had settled over the mountain; as if they were threatening the poor sun from a far distance that they would eventually snare it, draw the curtains of its room and im-

prison it. I was afraid lest all of a sudden it would rain. I didn't like that day to rain, not even a drizzle. The few adamant dark clouds were continuously disturbing my concentration. Off and on, my glance would clandestinely fly to the mountains, evaluating the clouds. My mother had told me that on the day of Sizdahbedar even if it were a sunny day, some clouds would finally arrive and the rain would soak the earth, dispersing the people who had gone out to dispel the bad omen of the Thirteenth Day of the New Year. The joy of the Sizdahbedar lies in its drizzle. But I didn't like that day to rain. I liked to dispel the bad omen of the Thirteenth at the orchard of our house.

I had spread a pale, worn-out mat in the middle of the humid orchard. I had arranged toys around myself. I had also some wooden, cotton, ceramic, and plaster dolls as well as a small brass samovar.

My mother had permitted me on that day to pour water into it, put it on the table of Sizdahbedar and play. My mother did not know that I play with my shadow when I am alone. I always played with my shadow, considering it as my aunt. If she had come to know, she would have definitely quarreled with me; for my mother believed that if somebody played with her shadow, she would not be mentally sound and would eventually land in the madhouse.

I and my shadow wanted to give a very good party. I did not like those few dark, adamant, bad clouds to disturb our small party through their drizzle. Just like many other days when the guests would pour into our house, my father's friends would come to our house. My father's parties were larger than that of mine and my shadow. My mother was saying that the party of that day would include eight to ten people. We had prepared vegetable stew and vegetable rice with fish for lunch. The smell of vegetable stew and fish spilled over to the rooms from the kitchen. The guests had not come yet. There was enough time until noon. I wished I could be alone; the guest of myself and my shadow. I was not in a mood to host elderly guests. But I didn't mind seeing one of the guests of that day. I liked his voice and even liked his heel's sound. He was kind just like my father and would listen to my poems very carefully. Whenever I read my poems to him he would applaud and praise me; would encourage me, frequently saying viva and bravo. He would say on occasions: "Well done", I would not understand what did that mean, probably it was a kind of bravo. When he would leave our house, the fragrance of his clothes and that of his words would remain around me. And I liked to sit and compose poems. Whenever he came as if he would pour a few poems along with the dried fruits into my hands. Perhaps he would hide the poems in between the figs and dried berries, giving them to me. His name was Bahar. And now on the thirteenth day of spring, I was waiting for Bahar (meaning spring in Persian).

My shadow was sitting beside me, gazing at me. It was silent. Perhaps it too was waiting for Bahar

to come. Perhaps my shadow too wanted to read my songs for Bahar's shadow. I had seen, a couple of times, that when I read my poems for Bahar, my shadow too would shake its head and move its lips, reading poems for Bahar's shadow. Bahar's shadow would silently listen, just like Bahar himself, who would remain silent and listen to my poems. I would sometimes think: just like human beings, trees, flowers, and clouds I have a shadow, and probably my poems, too, had their shadows. Perhaps my shadow reads out my poems for Bahar's shadow.

I had heard from my father and other elderly people say that Bahar is a great man. He was truly great. He was very tall. When I stood in front of him, it seemed that a small sapling was standing in front of a great, tall pine tree. His shadow was taller than himself. They would say Bahar is an important person. He is a parliament member and a great poet who composes very good poems. I wished I could become like him. I wished I would be as tall as him and compose as good poems as those of his.

I had heard that he published a magazine. He liked me too much. Unlike others who called me Rakhshandeh, he would call me Parvin. He would talk to me in a manner as if I had the same stature. Probably, whatever was there was in my name and his name. Whenever I was Parvin, they would treat me like grown-up people and whenever Rakhshandeh I would become a little girl and they would treat me just like an infant. But I liked both the names. I liked to grow up. This was why I tried to be Parvin, but I didn't know why I did not grow up. I did not grow up even a morsel.

Once Bahar told my father: "Yousuf, your little girl composes better and more beautiful poems than a number of grown-up pompous poets who only try to show off." My father only laughed but did not say anything. When Bahar saw that I was watching him and my father in a surprise, turned his face towards me - but as if addressing both of us - and said: "The daughter of a person like Yousuf E'tesam-ol-Molk should become a great poetess in childhood and compose genuine poems!" I don't know why my father smiled again and patted Bahar on the back and this time Bahar too smiled. They went away and left me with a question in mind: why did they smile?! I thought a lot, but I could not finally realize what part

of Bahar's remarks was funny that even made him and my father laugh.

The hot sunshine had shined on the wet soil of the orchard; making it evaporate. Suddenly I located an ant moving hurriedly under the pomegranate tree. The food was moving ahead of the ant. I bent and looked at it. I carefully inspected it; it was not clear where it was going. At times it would go ahead in the same route and sometimes it went back and forth and after hesitating for some time it would go back the traversed path. I said to myself: "It is better to help it. I have to search and find its nest and then lift it and put it in front of its nest to put an end to its bewilderment."

I inspected the route of the ant to find its nest. Finally, I succeeded. Its nest was a small hole near the pomegranate tree. Some soft, sieved soil was on the side of its nest. A big stone was on the nest. Probably, it was its roof. I picked up a small branch and stretched it towards the ant, saying: "Little kid, jump on the branch. Jump on the branch to take you to your nest!" I don't know how it did hear me with its little ears that were not seen; it jumped on the branch, sat on it and I carried and dropped it in front of its nest and made it enter the nest. I don't know why it was coming back and did not want to go inside. I had to force it with the tip of the branch to go inside. It had hardly entered the nest that quickly rushed back. It was not carrying its seed anymore. Suddenly two ants came out of the nest and attacked my ant. The poor ant was lonely and could not fight them back and those two bad ants beat it badly. The poor ant fled the scene. It suddenly occurred to me that probably the nest did not belong to the ant. I searched around. I was right. There was another nest nearby. Once again I picked up the ant with the piece of branch and dropped it near the new nest. As soon as it jumped down the branch it ran into the nest and did not come out anymore. The ant and its measures surprised me. As if two horns were growing on my head. The ants, just like human beings, do not allow strangers to enter their homes. The ants, too, defend their territories. These were what I realized that day about the ants and thought about it. I gave up the preoccupation about the ants and returned when I realized that my shadow too was astonished just like myself. It had crossed my

hands and was thinking. Perhaps it too..., and suddenly I heard that my shadow whispered:

**With a lot of effort, I carry a seed to my nest
I fail hundred times though I do my best**

**I don't complain of my hard work without rest
One cannot live successfully only by taking rest**

**No other duty for the ants except quest
Ants are alien to indolence, gluttony, and rest**

The sun was dragging itself towards the middle of the sky, silently and voicelessly. Those few patches of clouds had mounted the horse of wind and had descended the mountain. I guessed they were coming towards the sun. The poor sun was trying to get rid of those few pieces of adamant, dark clouds. But it was tired and could not move. It was on foot, while the clouds were riding.

Suddenly someone knocked at the door. I saw our servant going towards the door to open it. I cast a glance at him, wishing that the comer would be Bahar. But it was not. For eight times I counted from one to thirty; finally, it was his turn to come. When I heard the knock, I realize that it was him. His knocking too was different from that of others. As if he was testing the melody and meter of his poems on the door. Before the servant went to open the door, I went and opened it. The door was ajar. He pushed and opened it. I saw his tall stature which appeared within the frame of the door, evergreen as a pine tree. That day he looked taller as if I was an ant before him. But his shadow was very small, sticking to his feet. During the noontime, the shadows shrink. Before him, his small shadow entered the house.

- Hello!

- Hello and thousands of hellos to sweet Ms. Parvin. How are you, my daughter?

- Thank God.

- Bravo and viva my daughter! Tell me, do you have any new poems? What do you like to talk about?

- Poetry, which is better than anything else!

- Well done! That is right. Of course, you have definitely composed two, three poems, right? After all, the spring has come and spring smells of poetry. Isn't it so?

- Yes. Today I composed a poem about ants. About the efforts of the ants and ...

- Very good! Probably you have been inspired by the things around you in this poem, right?

- Yes, by the ants in the orchard!

- It is very good. Don't forget to read it for me. OK?

- Sure!

- Thank you dear Parvin. Now, will the Poetess of great poems allow me to go to the guests?

- You are most welcome.

Smiling, he went in. Going a little forward, he said: "Don't forget to read the poem for me after lunch."

I said, "I am celebrating Sizdahbedar in the orchard. If you like, you can join me."

- Definitely. After lunch, I will come and sit at your table. Then we will chat, that is, you will read your poems and I will listen. OK, my daughter?'

He left and I thought that my being became full of uncomposed poems. I went towards the orchard and my shrunken shadow, too, followed me. When I was talking to Bahar, I had totally forgotten about my shadow. I said: "Forgive me dear shadow. You know how much I like Bahar. Both the spring season and Mr. Bahar (lit. Spring)."

I sat down and read some of the poems of the great poets I had memorized for my shadow; some verses from Sa'di, Nezami, Hafiz, and Moulavi. I was fond of the verses of these poets. My father used to read their verses for me and I would quickly memorize them. Sometimes I felt that I had already memorized those verses a long time back. I felt that those verses would narrate some latent aspects of my inner being. I felt that those poems did not belong to Hafiz, Sa'di, and Moulavi (Rumi) and they were mine. When I read the poems loudly, I saw the butterflies waving their wings. Whatever I saw, I would inspect carefully. Sometimes I would compose a poem about it. I thought that the butterflies talk to the flowers; the ants with trees and stones with stones, trees with trees and greeneries with flowers and thorns. In short, whatever was around me had a tongue and would talk. Sometimes I would remain silent for some moments and listen to the conversation of flowers with thorns and heard what the breeze would whisper to a red rose! I saw that soil talked to the pomegranate tree. Sometimes I even felt the breathing of the tree under the soil. I heard

the beating of its heart. When I was at home, I would play with the things around me and talk to them. I wished to compose poems about the conversation of those things. I felt that everything was alive; had a tongue, talked, and understood my language. Sky used to listen to my words and when I called it, it would become bluer and would smile. I liked to understand the secrets of everything.

That day the small patches of cloud tried their best to hide the sun, but couldn't do anything. That day was the first day I saw there was no rain on Sizdahbedar; although it would not be bad if it had rained. A long time back when it was drizzling on Sizdahbedar, I and other children would sing traditional folklore and enjoy singing it.

"It's raining; it's raining,

the earth is becoming wetter

Dear Golnesa, things will be better

Dear Golnesa, things will be better— things will be better"

Sources:

1- Ashna Magazine, published by: Islamic Thought Foundation, Translated by M. H. Broomand

2- Parvin Etesami, Published by: Al-Huda International Publications



Sa'di, Master of Poetry Describing the Human Conditions

Compiled by: Pooneh Rahmati

Mushrif al-Din ibn Muslih al-Din, popularly known as Sa'di, also spelled Saadi, (1213 – 1291 CE, Shiraz, Iran), was one of the greatest figures in classical Persian literature. He lost his father, Muslih al-Din, in early childhood; later he was sent to study in Baghdad at the renowned Nezamiyeh College, where he received the traditional Islamic teachings. The unsettled conditions following the Mongol invasion of Persia led him to wander abroad through Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, and

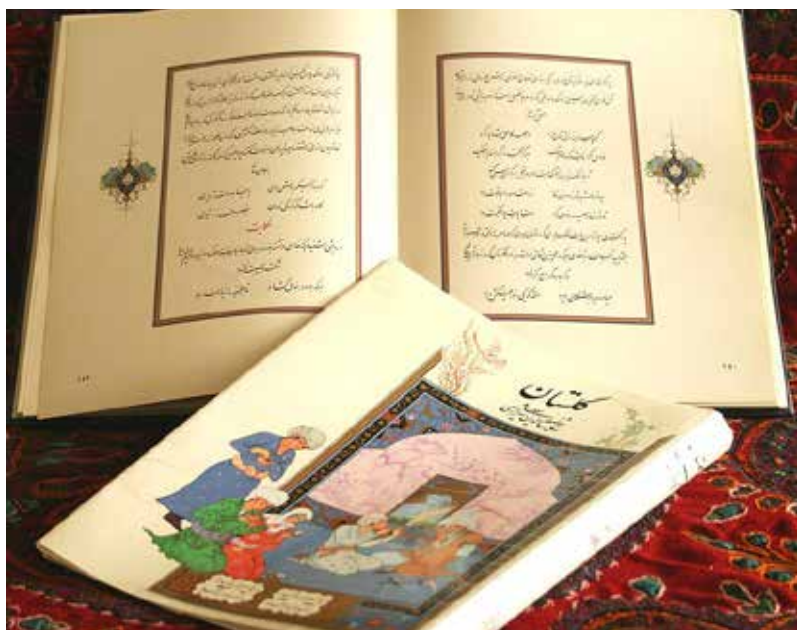
Iraq. In his works, he has also mentioned having traveled to India and Central Asia. He claimed that he was held captive by the Franks and put to work in the trenches of the fortress of Tripoli (now in Lebanon). When he returned to his native Shiraz, he was middle-aged; he seems to have spent the rest of his life in Shiraz. Sa'di took his nom de plume from the name of a local Atabeg (prince), Sa'd ibn Zangi. Sa'di's best-known works are the Boustán (1257; The Orchard) and the Golestan (1258;

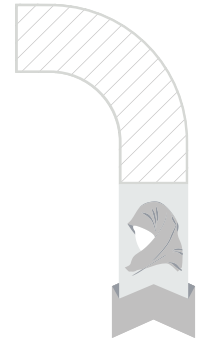
The Rose Garden). The Boustán is entirely a book of poems and consists of stories aptly illustrating the standard virtues recommended to Muslims (justice, liberality, modesty, contentment) as well as reflections on the behavior of dervishes and their ecstatic practices.

The Golestan is mainly in prose and contains stories and personal anecdotes. The text is interspersed with a variety of short poems, containing aphorisms, advice, and humorous reflections. The morals preached in the Golestan demonstrate a profound awareness of Sa'di about the importance of human existence. The fate of those who depend on the changeable moods of kings is contrasted with the freedom of the dervishes.

For Western students Boustán and Golestan are of special attraction; but Sa'di is also remembered as a great lyricist, the author of a number of masterly general odes portraying human experience and also of particular odes such as the lament on the fall of Baghdad after the Mongol invasion in 1258 CE.

He is also known for a number of works in Arabic. The peculiar blend of human kindness and cynicism, humor, and resignation displayed in Sa'di's works, together with a tendency to avoid the hard dilemma, make him, to many, the most typical and lovable writer in the world of Iranian culture.





A Poem by Sa'di

41

How could I ever thank my Friend?

How could I ever thank my Friend?
No thanks could ever begin to be worthy.
Every hair of my body is a gift from Him;
How could I thank Him for each hair?
Praise that loving Lord forever
Who from nothing conjures all living beings!
Who could ever describe His goodness?
His infinite glory lays all praise waste.
Look, He has graced you a robe of splendor
From childhood's first cries to old age!
He made you pure in His own image; stay pure.
It is horrible to die blackened by sin.
Never let dust settle on your mirror's shining;
Let it once grow dull and it will never polish.
When you work in the world to earn your living
Do not, for one moment, rely on your own strength.
Self-worshiper, don't you understand anything yet?
It is God alone that gives your arms their power.
If, by your striving, you achieve something good,
Don't claim the credit all for yourself;
It is fate that decides who wins and who loses
And all success streams only from the grace of God.
In this world you never stand by your own strength;
It is the Invisible that sustains you every moment.



Two Stories from The Golestan of Sa'di on the advantages of silence

Translated by Sir Edwin Arnold, [1899]

I said to a friend that I have chosen rather to be silent than to speak because on most occasions good and bad words are scattered concurrently but enemies perceive only the latter. He replied: 'That enemy is the greatest who does not see any good.'

The brother of enmity passes not near a good man
Except to consider him as a most wicked liar.
Virtue is to the eyes of enmity the greatest fault.
Sa'di is a rose but to the eye of enemies a thorn.
The world illumining sun and fountain of light
Look ugly to the eye of the mole.

A scholar of note had a controversy with an unbeliever but, being unable to cope with him in argument, shook his head and retired. Someone asked him how it came to pass that, with all his eloquence and learning, he had been unable to vanquish an irreligious man. He replied: "My learning is in the Qur'an, in tradition and in the sayings of sheikhs, which he neither believes in nor listens to. Then of what use is it to me to hear him blaspheming?" To him of whom thou canst not rid thyself by the Qur'an and tradition The best reply is if thou dost not reply anything.



Tomb of Sa'di Shirazi; Persian Poet and Prose Writer

