



March 2018
No. 318

Monthly Magazine
ISSN 1019 - 0767

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ
وَاللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُدْخِلُ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ
مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَنبَأَ بِالْوَعْدِ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ

NOROUZ, SEASON OF BLOSSOMS

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

HOUSE CLEANING; HEART CLEANING!

Samaneh Nazerian

The old is going, let him go,
The new, ringing out across the snow!

Look at the sky,
Spring draws nigh!

It's playing lyre,
For us seeking our household fire!

Warmth is knocking at the door,
Winter is shaken to the core!

Heart of nature is quickening,
Pairs of birds are on the wing!

Let's ring in the new,
And turn to the True!

Give up hostility, brutality,
Observe highest human dignity!

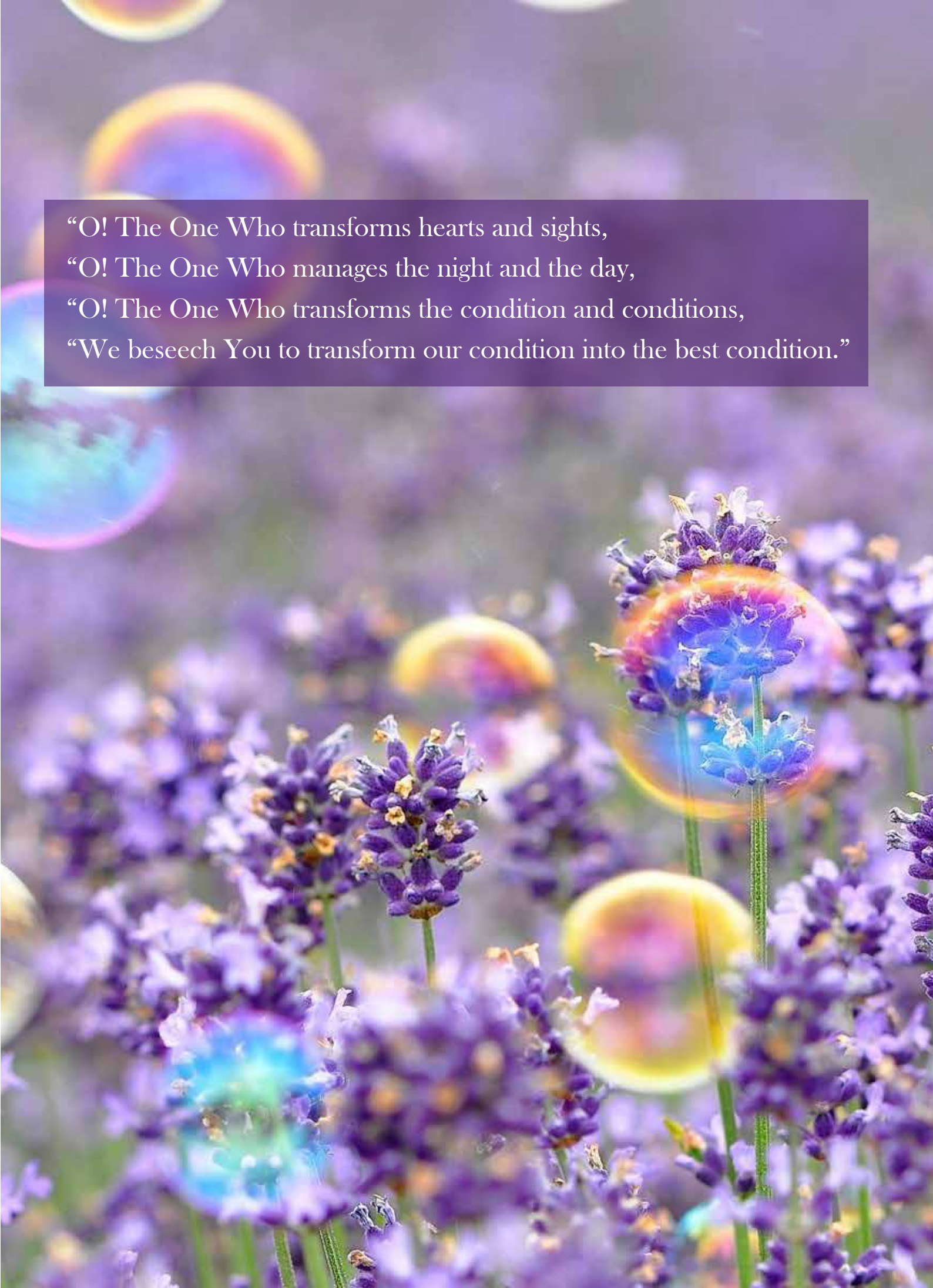
When we are dressing the part,
Off the False, clean our heart!

Keep our heart off sorrow,
Keep in mind life is wow!

Let heart get cleaned up,
Just right to the top,

Fill it in the New Year,
With divine love, my dear!





“O! The One Who transforms hearts and sights,
“O! The One Who manages the night and the day,
“O! The One Who transforms the condition and conditions,
“We beseech You to transform our condition into the best condition.”

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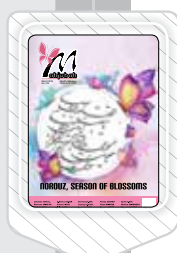
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Magazine of ITF,
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Editorial

In The Name of God The Compassionate The Merciful

Dear Readers,

As we know, on the eve of each new year, in the last moments of the (ending) year, celebrating Nouruz, we recite a prayer with such contents:

"O! The One Who transforms hearts and sights,
"O! The One Who manages the night and the day,
"O! The One Who transforms the condition and conditions,
"We beseech You to transform our condition into the best condition."

Let's turn to certain illuminating remarks on what the best condition is; The learned believe that 'best condition' is being elevated so spiritually high as to be totally devoted to one's duties towards Allah, and so be free from all alluring worldly attachments. This view seems quite worthwhile and worth pondering and working upon, since as we know all Divine Messengers (AS) have been on such a high spiritual level. They lived for Allah, worked for Allah, preached for Allah and struggled to fulfil Allah's commands in every field and to the last moment of their blessed lives, without any selfish considerations and without fearing any but Allah.

Of course this enviable spiritual level can just be attained through seeking help from Allah Himself and also through constant care about one's own thoughts and actions; one should every day and every night check to see whether his/her intentions and deeds are in conformity with Allah's commands or God-forbid, they are getting deviated from the straight path, (Siratal-Mostaqim) which as per the Holy Qur'an (1: 5-7) is the path of the blessed Infallible, not that of those with whom Allah is angry, nor that of the astray.

And, dear readers! Have a nice spring, a fruitful year and every blessing good servants of Allah deserve. Do not forget us in your prayers.

M. Salimi

**NOROUZ, A NATIONAL CELEBRATION
ENDORSED BY THE FAITH**



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**PROPHET
MUHAMMAD (PBUH);
THE MODEL INSTRUCTOR**

NOROUZ,

A NATIONAL CELEBRATION ENDORSED BY THE FAITH

By: Fatemeh Karjoo - Ma'edeh Karjoo

The Resurrection of the nature is celebrated by the birds which sing, by plants which blossom and by the nice spring breeze. After the cold days and nights of the winter, the pleasant spring days and nights are presented to us by our Gracious God. And Norouz (literally meaning new day) is the celebration of these blessings plus many others. To be thankful, let's start with creating better communication with our Merciful Creator - the One and Only God Who out of His Mercy, showers His innumerable blessings upon us. Let's decide to be better servants of Him through being better to His creatures, and to our own souls.

Norouz celebrations are regarded by us as the celebration of, among other things, the revival for of the earth, the resurrection of the nature and the blossoming of the flowers of life, love and affection. Norouz contains the stories of growth, renewal, refreshment and joy. Norouz

or in fact the early spring is a proof of the Resurrection, there coming back to life of the dead for judgment and their eternal life. The Islamic supplication recited by Mus-

lims on the eve of Norouz indicates their faith in the power of God, in His Mercy, in His Wisdom and in the fact that human beings need to change for the best:

"O the One Who changes the condition and the conditions,

Change our condition into the best condition."

Norouz is indeed also an opportunity for removing hostilities and misunderstandings, replacing the same with peace and love. Like rain, it can offer purity and freshness to the souls.

Norouz, being an ancient and national feast, starts on the first day of each solar



“

In fact, Norouz has been the only national festival of Iranians which not only continue to be held, but also gained increased significance after Islam, because of being in harmony with Islamic beliefs.

”

year. This celebration has its roots in the ancient custom and traditions of Persians and since Norouz is also endorsed by Islam, Iranians and other Persian-speaking nations who believe in religious teachings and have been loyal to national traditions have kept it alive. In fact, Norouz has been the only national festival of Iranians which not only continue to be held, but also gained increased significance after Islam, because of being in harmony with Islamic beliefs. And boosting national solidarity is another fruit of Norouz celebrations. In fact, Norouz presents a clear picture of Iranians' reli-

gious-national culture and is a great factor in the unity of their hearts. Of course, Iranians, being very hospitable, share their Norouz joys with any well-meaning visitors, irrespective of their nationality, colour and creed.

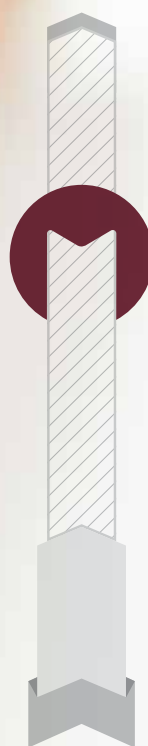
The rich, comprehensive Islamic culture gave a Divine colour to the Norouz celebrations. Norouz being harmonious with human nature received the stamp of approval from Islam and was enriched by the praiseworthy Islamic traditions and manners. In fact, Norouz has been recognized by Islam and has also received spiritual, humane manners from Islam.

It is quite worthwhile to mention here an Islamic narration about Norouz : “One of the friends of Imam Jafar as-Sadiq(AS) the sixth Infallible Imam of the Shi'a quoted that ‘On Norouz I met Jafar as-Sadiq(AS) and His Holiness asked me if I knew about that day. I answered that as far as I knew, on Norouz the non—Arabs celebrate and exchange gifts. Then then the Imam(AS)said, “Norouz is the day on which Allah took the covenant from His servants to worship Him only, not to associate anyone or anything in deity with Him and to believe in His Messengers(AS). And Norouz has been the first day of the rising of the sun and has been the day on which the flowers on the earth were created. And Norouz has been the day of the landing of Noah(AS)’s



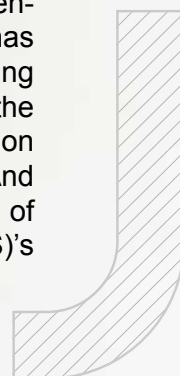
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WOMAN**



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Ark on the Judi mountain., the day of the descent of Arch-Angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad(PBUH), the day of the breaking of the idols in Ka'ba by Prophet Ibrahim (AS), the day of the allegiance of the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam with Imam Ali(AS) for his having become the Amir al-Mu'minin (Commander of the believers) and the day of Imam Ali(AS)'s victory over Nahravan rebels."

And it has also been quoted from Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (AS) that His Holiness said: "On Norouz do *Ghusl* (Islamic ritual ablution), wear your best, scent yourselves with the best of perfumes and you had also better fast on that day." This Islamic narration clearly points to the fact that Norouz is regarded a blessed feast in the Divine culture.

Likewise, it has been narrated that on Norouz some Persians brought sweets as a gift to the commander of the believers - Imam Ali(AS). The Imam (AS) asked what the sweets were for. The Persians replied that the sweets had been prepared for the Norouz celebration. The Imam (AS) accepted the gift with a smile and then said: "Make every day Norouz for us." Imam Ali's accepting the Norouz gift and his talking in a friendly joking way about that can be regarded as another proof of the approval of Norouz by the Infallible (AS).

Among the constructive, useful aspects of customs

related to Norouz are the house-cleaning custom observed to welcome Norouz as well as buying new clothing for all family members, and also for the less privileged people, especially the needy orphans, exchanging gifts and more importantly visiting relatives, and friends and wishing them the best for the new year. Obviously, these customs are quite approved of and encouraged by Islam, because they breed affection and unity among the people. And of course starting the new year with sincere prayers to God is a great blessing, since remembering God and supplication to Him with monotheistic prayers revives one's soul, just as the spring breeze revives the plants. And as per Islamic teachings, Muslim Iranians also recite verses from the Holy Qur'an on the eve of Norouz, including

verse 190 of chapter 3 (Al-i-'Imran) which points to Allah's signs: *"In the creation of Heaven and Earth, and the alternation between night and daylight, there are signs*



The rich, comprehensive Islamic culture gave a Divine colour to the Norouz celebrations. Norouz being harmonious with human nature received the stamp of approval from Islam and was enriched by the praiseworthy Islamic traditions and manners. In fact, Norouz has been recognized by Islam and has also received spiritual, humane manners from Islam.



for wise persons.”

In fact, following the introduction of Islam into Iran and the Iranians’ embracing Islam, Norouz customs, influenced by the Qur’anic culture gained tremendous richness. Islam emphasizes the significance of visiting and sincere contact among people in particular among relatives and hence Iranians have made the custom of going to each other’s houses and likewise receiving guests during Norouz, a very significant part of the Norouz celebrations. They know that the Prophet of Mercy – Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has taught that: “Visiting and seeing each other grows affection in the hearts.” and “Seeing brothers-in-faith gladdens the heart of the believers.”

In the same way, the Holy Qur’an and the infallible (AS) have urged the believers to do good to each other, in par-

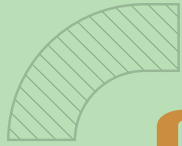
ticular to the needy and so Norouz has also embraced these Divine teachings.

Following in the footsteps of the Infallible (AS), Imam Khomeini (ra) the great leader of the Islamic Revolution has considered the arrival of each new year as an opportunity for the elevation of the soul: “We hope in this year our nation will act as per the teachings of Divine Messengers (AS). The important point to be remembered is that egoistic, materialistic inclinations should be removed from one’s heart and this goal takes constant care to be fulfilled..... I hope in this year the Iranian people and all the world Muslims will change for the better, working for God and never for selfish interests. May Allah help all strive for His cause, make Norouz blessed for all and unite all Muslims in the face of the world *Kufr*.”

Also, Ayatullah Khamenei, the esteemed leader of Islamic Revolution, has stated: “The arrival of each new solar year which coincides with certain changes in nature is an opportunity for the reformation and correction of one’s spiritual, mental and also material conditions. The blessed prayer we are taught to recite at the beginning of each new year is a lesson for this very desirable transformation.

In this prayer we are asking Allah to make a blessed change in our spiritual condition. Of course it is Allah who transforms, but we are duty-bound to do our best for making changes for the best both in our souls, lives and in the world.” And he also has expressed these beautiful meanings about Norouz: “Norouz, means a day which you make new through your actions. That means a day which you make new through your actions. The day of the victory of Islamic Revolution in Iran -22nd Bahman, 1357 - was in fact a new day, because on that day the Iranian nation, aided by Allah fulfilled a great task. The day when the Imam of the Ummah severely rebuffed America – the world bully was a new day. So, we should make Norouz a Norouz in its perfect sense. Norouz is a new day in nature, while it is up to us to fulfill its human aspect.





PERSIAN PISTACHIO CAKE

Serving: 8

Cooking time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup sugar
1 cup raw, unsalted pistachio nut, shelled (6 ounces)
4 eggs, separated (at room temperature)
Zest of orange
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped out, or ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon rose water
1 cup plain yogurt
½ cup unsalted butter
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

Garnish:

¼ cup unsalted pistachios, ground

¼ cup confectioners' sugar

1- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

2- Butter and dust and 8-inch spring form cake pan with flour and line the base with parchment paper.

3- Put the sugar and pistachios in a food processor until finely ground.

4- Beat the egg yolks gradually. Add the zest of orange, vanilla, rose water, yogurt and butter, and mix for about 5 minutes, until creamy.

5- Sift the salt, baking powder, baking soda and flour onto a piece of wax paper. Fold into the egg mixture.

6- In a separate mixing bowl, beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks and fold into the flour mixture using a rubber spatula.

7- Gently pour the batter into the cake pan and bake in the preheated oven for 35 to 40 minutes, until a tester comes out clean.

8- Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a rack for 10 minutes. Tap the pan to release the cake. Turn the cake out onto the rack and remove the mold, peel off the wax paper and turn the cake over. Sprinkle the top with ground pistachios and dust with confectioners' sugar. Allow to cool completely for about 9 hours, uncovered, to air-dry. Transfer to a serving platter.

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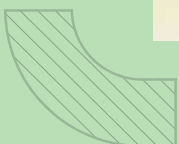
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WOMEN IN OUR ISLAMIC-IRANIAN PERSPECTIVE

Our Staff Writer



In our Islamic culture, woman has invariably been regarded as a very significant factor behind mobility, progress and prosperity. Accordingly, our thinkers and artists, contrary to many Western-oriented ones, have obviously had quite spiritual outlooks towards the female sex; unlike the Western sex-oriented, profiteering viewpoints on women, the Muslim intellectuals' and literary figures' views and attitudes towards women have been in conformity with humane values; they have regarded women as the reflection of celestial

beauty, Divine love and all praiseworthy human virtues and thus most respectable. In just the same vein, our Muslim literary figures, including Hafiz, Sa'di, Moulavi, Attar, Nizami, Roodaki and Ferdowsi have, most beautifully presented pictures of spiritual loftiness of women, in sharp contrast to the degrading pictures offered by irreligious writers and poets about women both in the past and in modern days; the mean pictures and writings in which woman has been considered just as a sex object and no more, wanted solely

for her physique and regarded as unworthy of reverence. The concept of respect for chaste women and self-sacrificing mothers and their like are virtually non-existent in any so-called work of art of the secular, materialistic and faithless figures and this is contrary to the works of the faithful and the spiritual artists, poets and authors who portray the God-given, praise-worthy virtues of women, thereby strengthening her spirituality and also making the men aware of the lofty realities of Divine love, as opposed to evil passions and lusts. And no doubt, the society possessed of women of spiritual strength, and chastity and men of piety and awareness will be prosperous in every respect, just as societies in which women are led to loose-living and cheapening themselves and in which men are encouraged to look down upon and exploit the women will become the desirable abode of devils and their mischief-makings. So, artists, poets, writers and film-makers play determining roles in human societies, in particular in connection with what they present about human desires, emotions, and the role of women. Fortunately, the rich Persian literature

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is overflowing with wise, sagacious words and works on the value of virtuous women and the positive effects of the same on human happiness. Here, it is quite worthwhile to quote certain remarks on the role of women (of piety and virtues) from Imam Khomeini (ra) - the great man of God and of Divine knowledge: "Woman is the instructor of the society. It is from the (virtuous) woman's lap that a man attains the lofty blessing of ascending (*Mi'raj*) towards God." As can be inferred from these illuminating statements, Imam Khomeini (ra) believed that a most faithful, pious and chaste lady like Her Holiness Amenuh (SA) - the revered mother of Allah's most exalted and last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had been selected by Allah to give birth to the most honorable of Di-

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Fortunately, the rich Persian literature is overflowing with wise, sagacious words and works on the value of virtuous women and the positive effects of the same on human happiness.

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vine Messengers (AS), and so a woman's characteristics play very determining roles in the personality of her offsprings. Likewise, the supreme leader Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khomeini has, on many occasions

emphasized the significance of the roles played by virtuous women as wives, mothers and also as active members of their societies, urging Muslim girls and women to follow the best role-models; lady Khadijah (SA), lady Fatimah (SA), lady Zainab (SA) and lady Umme-Kulsum (SA) and to reject all patterns and symbols of immorality and irreligiosity, such as indecent clothing, consumerism and wastefulness. Likewise, the esteemed leader has repeatedly mentioned the significance of family life in Divine teachings as opposed to the secular trends: "..... From an Islamic point of view, family is an essential pillar of society Healthy and dynamic families cannot be formed and preserved in the absence of pious and understanding women.... The West tactically avoids discussing the issue of family.....

Westerners discuss the issue of women in a passionate way, but they do not mention the issue of family because it is one of their obvious weak points.....

The Western view of women is seriously misguided and that is their biggest insult to the dignity of women.... Despite what they think, even the most radical feminists are harming women, because by degrading women, they have turned them into an object of pleasure for men and unfortunately this is considered normal and acceptable in Western public opinion....”

In the same vein, the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution, referring to the Islamic view of women has stressed: “From an Islamic point of view, there are no differences between men and women in terms of their human qualities and according to the Holy Qur’an, men and women are absolutely equal on the path of achieving transcendence and closeness to God.” Also, the supreme leader of the Islamic Revolution has repeatedly said that women can work outside the home environment as long as their work does not affect their responsibilities as wives and mothers and as long as Islamic rules are observed in their relationships with men. Ayatollah Khamenei also values the role played by devoted, pious women as wives and mothers and thus stresses the sanctity of marriage: “Marriage is a holy institution

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“Woman is the instructor of the society. It is from the (virtuous) woman’s lap that a man attains the lofty blessing of ascending (Mi’raj) towards God.”

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in different religions, particularly in Islam. It is necessary to avoid destroying the sanctity of marriage in society with inappropriate actions such as extravagant wedding ceremonies and heavy dowries.” Just compare such proper, truthful and life-saving attitudes and instructions with those prop-

agated by the secular, domineering media which through films, television shows and the like try to make women believe that they should be quite satisfied just if men select them as girlfriends and sweethearts and never demand marriage and marital life and that in this direction, they should work hard and try hard to look as attractive to men as possible, through buying and using cosmetics and indecent clothings. They even urge women to go on starvation diets in order to lose weight and look more desirable for the lustful men who regard women as nothing but a doll to be played with and then thrown away.

A very noteworthy point here is that such misleading media are also rude enough to claim that women in Islamic environments are oppressed and that the culture of nakedness and free sex gives women freedom and happiness. May Allah help all women know their own value and guard themselves.

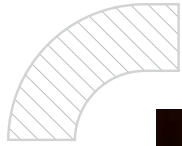


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WELCOME TO MY HOME

Fatemeh Khazaii

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Almost every culture has a tale of hospitality, for in almost every culture the guest is sacred. Guest is “Dear to God” or “God’s friend”, as Iranians say, and must be welcomed.

The sign of welcome is always food and drink. In medieval Europe, the food was bread and salt. In China the drink was tea. In Iran it was (and is) fresh tea, sweets and fruits, bread and cheese. In the regions along the Silk Road, hospitality traditionally meant bread and yogurt, although in more recent times the customs has been to serve tea with preserved fruits or jam: An ever-steaming samovar greets visitors to most houses in Central Asia.

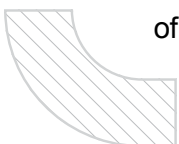
Whatever the food, the rules of hospitality say it must be

the best the hosts can provide - and it must be given without asking, assuming a visitor to be hungry and/or thirsty: A guest who is asked whether he wants something to eat is most likely to answer that he does not (the host should insist). The host’s other duty is to be as entertaining as he can, for example he can offer friendly conversation. As for the guest, he must be appreciative of all that is given. Generosity and appreciation form a bond between guest and host, and it is the eating of bread together that seals the bond. Once they have dined together, it might be said, their spirits are entwined.

The Iranians’ Tables

The Iranians’ tables reflect

their culture. Inviting the others to food on numerous occasions, has long since been part of the Iranian culture. They invite relatives, friends, neighbours and the others for *Iftar* (the meal taken for breaking one’s fast) in the Holy month of Ramadhan, they invite them to lunch or dinner during Nourouz celebrations, they invite them to lunch or dinner parties held to celebrate engagements and weddings and they make the effort to give the guests a happy pleasant time, not only by serving delicious foods but also true showing respect to them, in such a way as to make them feel at home and welcome. Regarding the variety of foods served, many interesting points have been



mentioned even by foreigners, but one particularly significant point in this regard is that 'moderation' plays a marked role in Persian cuisine. For example, if you taste the various kinds of *Powlo* (cooked rice), soup and stews made in Iran you will come to realize that the ingredients are quite harmonious with each other and that they are most delicious, and palatable.

Of course, inviting the others to one's house for lunch, dinner, or tea by Iranians has always been aimed at the lofty goal of promoting friendships, cordiality, unity, brotherhood and other humane values and that is why pious people avoid extravagance in their receptions. This is indeed a very valuable lesson taught by the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) who said: "*Israf* (extravagance) is *haram* (prohibited)."

Hospitality, a Divine guideline has been reflected in the Persian culture so radiantly as to urge foreign visitors express their admiration in words such as: "Iranians are greatly attached to hospitality. They do believe that it is part of Divine culture, emphasizing that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) never had his meals without guests."

And no doubt, showing reverence to the guests is not limited to just serving them food. Rather, as per the Divinely revealed culture of Islam, guests are to be welcomed through every gesture of respect, including usher-

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Generosity and appreciation form a bond between guest and host, and it is the eating of bread together that seals the bond. Once they have dined together, it might be said, their spirits are entwined.

”

ing them to the best place for sitting, listening to them attentively and seeing them off most respectfully in such a way as to make the guest feel that she/he has been of value to the hostess/host and that she/he will also be welcomed again whenever she/he chooses to visit the hostess/host at their home.

Traditionally Iranians advise their children to be very respectful in the presence of guests and also try to avoid the least bit of unpleasantness towards the other members of the family even towards children, because they believe that even if one talks harshly to her/his child in the presence of a guest, that guest might take it to mean that her/his presence at that home is

unpleasant for the hostess/host, and obviously this is against the rules of hospitality adhered to by Iranians.

Besides, cordiality is expressed towards uninvited visitors through a warm welcome first and then immediately bringing them whatever is available at home of fruit, sweets, and of course tea or sherbet (various kinds of sherbet are prepared in Iranians' homes including apple sherbet, raspberries sherbet, orange sherbet, blueberries sherbet, and they are very appealing to the taste, especially in the summers).

And certainly keeping the house clean for receiving invited and/or uninvited guests in a pleasant environment is part of the manners cherished by Iranians. This does not mean that cleanliness is just regarded significant because of hospitality; rather having clean houses has traditionally been recorded by Iranians as a sign of good faith, since Islam has taught that "Cleanliness is part of faith."

Meanwhile, hospitality reflects affection towards the other human beings, be them relatives, friends or strangers and no doubt, non-hospitable people can be regarded as lacking in human virtues – the same virtues preached by Divine Messengers (PBUH) all and most particularly by the last and most perfect of them, who advised his followers to "Honour the guest even if he is an infidel."

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BEST FOOD FOR SPRING SALAD

To all those people who have been fed up with staying indoors due to the cold winters, it's time to go green and feel the fresh and new air this spring. Spring is the season of change. Change not only happens in the environment but food remains at the top priority. Every season has its own significance. Food prepared by using the special seasonal fruits and vegetables grown in the spring, adds to the feast of celebrating, the existence of a new season.

Our eyes may get tired seeing the same fruits and vegetables available all over the year, but if you go beyond the shelves you may also find some new green vegetables and fruits that are freshly hand-picked and brought from the gardens. These are the new flavors of the spring season. So pick them up and enjoy the salads that are incomplete without these seasonal vegetables and fruits.

Naturally grown items have their own importance. Mango is said to be the king of the fruits, though it may be made avail-

able all round the year, but its utmost importance is during its peak season. Why so? Seasonal fruits and vegetables not only add to the taste but also tend to do the best to one's health if eaten in that specific season and salads are the best way to eat these special vegetables and fruits in the spring, as these are freshly available in that season.

Salads are the best and the most preferred foods. People love salads because it is not only healthy and tasty but, it also reduces one's waistline. Referred as the nutritious food, salads are imperfect without the dash of some specially grown and available fruits and vegetables of the spring season. Inclusion of fresh salads in the spring season helps in supplying vitamins and important nutrients to our body more than any other foods. Vitamin A, C, B6, B3, calcium, copper, protein, zinc and iron are some of the nutrients found in fruits and vegetables used in salads. Some of the green vegetables that can be included in the salad this season are:



1- Spinach: Spinach if used in salad consists of Lutein a natural pigment that does great to one's eyes and skin. Inclusion of spinach in our daily diet disallows congeality of arteries. It also prevents an individual from heart attacks and strokes. Spin-



ach reduces the danger of cataract in the eyes.
2- Lettuce: Lettuce consists of lutein and is rich in Vitamins. Lettuce is not only good for the eyes but for all those who wish to burn the calories, it is the best option.



3- Basil: Basil is used a lot in salads and soups. This herb is a great antioxidant. It also helps in keeping one away from viral and bacterial infections and fever. Inclusion of basil treats asthma and diabetes.



4- Parsley: Parsley is rich in Vitamin C. It prevents bad breath. Use of parsley in salad is the best therapy for people suffering with kidney stones. It also clears ones stomach and helps in getting rid of the problems related to urinary infection. It also treats cold and having rich source of boron and fluoride it may also help those suffering from osteoporosis.

5- Swiss Chard: Swiss chard also known as Chard consists of Vitamin A, C, iron and protein. It promotes bone health. The anti oxidant property in it fights diseases related to lung, cancer and osteoporosis, by increasing one's immunity.

6- Cherry: Cherry not only makes a salad tasty but it also relieves muscle and joint pain that may ensue in many people due to running and walking. Cherry contains Vitamin A, Vitamin C. It helps in fighting diseases like Cancer, relieves headaches and prevents from heart diseases.

7- Papaya: Papaya in salad not only makes it colorful and tasty but also nutritional. Papaya consists of carotene and vitamin C that prevents diabetes. It also cures allergies and problems of indigestion. It also lowers

cholesterol level in the body that may lead to heart ailments.

8- Strawberries: The most popular and nutritional berry, this red berry is an antioxidant that increases ones immunity to fight with diseases. It also averts leukemia. It prevents from tumors.

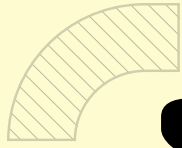
9- Blueberry: It consists of Vitamin A, B and C. It also consists of potassium and magnesium, that reduces cholesterol levels and reduces the fat from the body. It also lessens sodium level in body, thus curbing diseases like diabetes and heart related ailments from occurring.

10- Fig: Fig just eaten raw or put in a salad with other fruits and vegetables completes the nutritious bandwagon. Fig consists of minerals that control hypertension and high blood pressure. It helps in reducing weight and is the best for people suffering with breast cancer and diabetes.

For all those who wish to taste the naturally grown fruits and vegetables, spring is the best season to enjoy those delicious salads with the seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Source: medexpressrx.com

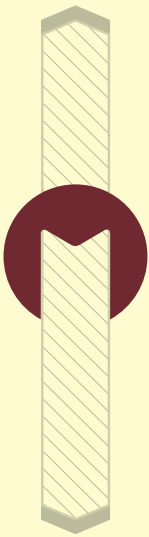




SAMANU PAZAN NOROUZ CEREMONIAL FOOD

Mohammad Mirshokraee

Mahjubah
Magazine



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No. 318
March 2018

**FAMILY
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FINAL WORD

Typology of foods, including the related methods of preparation and consumption, constitute part of cultural identities. Passed over from one generation to another, the foods generally produced and frequently consumed by communities gradually give rise to development and subsequent propagation of an accumulated state of respect and holiness among people.

Throughout the Norouz-holding lands, wheat enjoys the stance: As the basic, most frequent crop, all of the aspects related to it, from production to consumption, from the land on which it is cultivated and harvested, to the mill where it is ground, to the oven where it is baked, really, in one way or another, on the prevailing beliefs, carry a ring of holiness.

The whole range of the related activities encompass a rich collection of traditionally and ritually respected customs, all of which having the roots among holy considerations. These include ploughing, reaping, threshing, cleaning and dividing and weighing, grinding, kneading, baking and finally in some cases, the rituals related to consumption

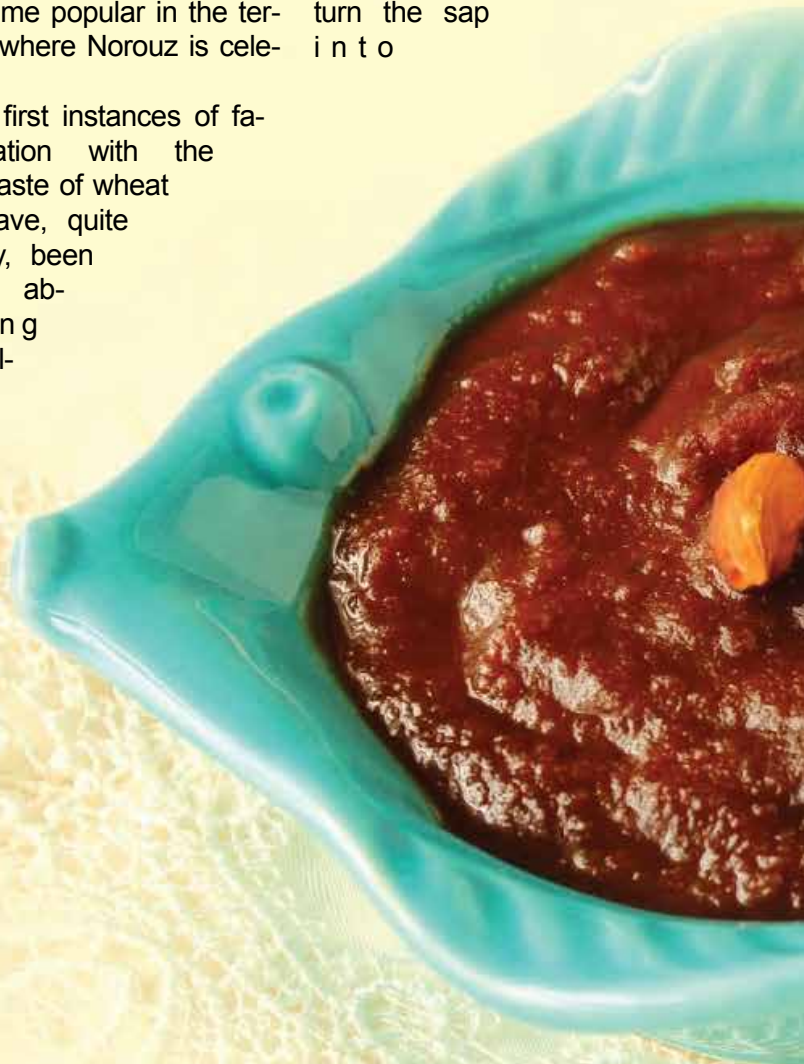
and observance regarding the produced bread.

And this is how wheat, its flour, the grass-plot grown out of wheat grains (called Sabze), and Samanu, the foods prepared from wheat sprout sap, all, sit together on the Norouz Table-cloth (the so-called, Sofre-ye Haftsin); and this is how the grass-plot and Samanu accompany Norouz, to become popular in the territories where Norouz is celebrated.

The first instances of familiarization with the sweet taste of wheat may have, quite possibly, been through absorbing the silver cascades

grown out of the grains. The hypothesis can be furthered to guiding the experience with the mysterious taste toward the development of a new belief-based behavioral branch.

Both the silver sprout and the sweet sap must have presented people with some aspect of the hereafter. People, then, learned cooking by way of which they were able to turn the sap into



Samanu, and the latter into a medium linking them, the wheat consuming communities, to the holy concepts that had filled their worlds of religious beliefs. Today, all of the communities scattered on Norouz holding lands regard Samanu, as well as a number of other foods obtained from wheat sprout, as edibles ritual of the feast.

Samanu Pazan (Cooking Samanu)

A collection of rites within the magnificent Norouz ritual, Samanu Pazan (ceremony of cooking Samanu) is constituted by relatively rich sets of attitudes in different regions.

All involved nations regard Sa-

manu-Pazan a group – feminine job.

Few less ritual activities, mostly constituting the preliminary phases of preparation, are however, done by men too. The usual cleaning and washing make up the first step. The washed grains are then, poured in containers, here they are kept moistened by a cover of wet thin cloth.

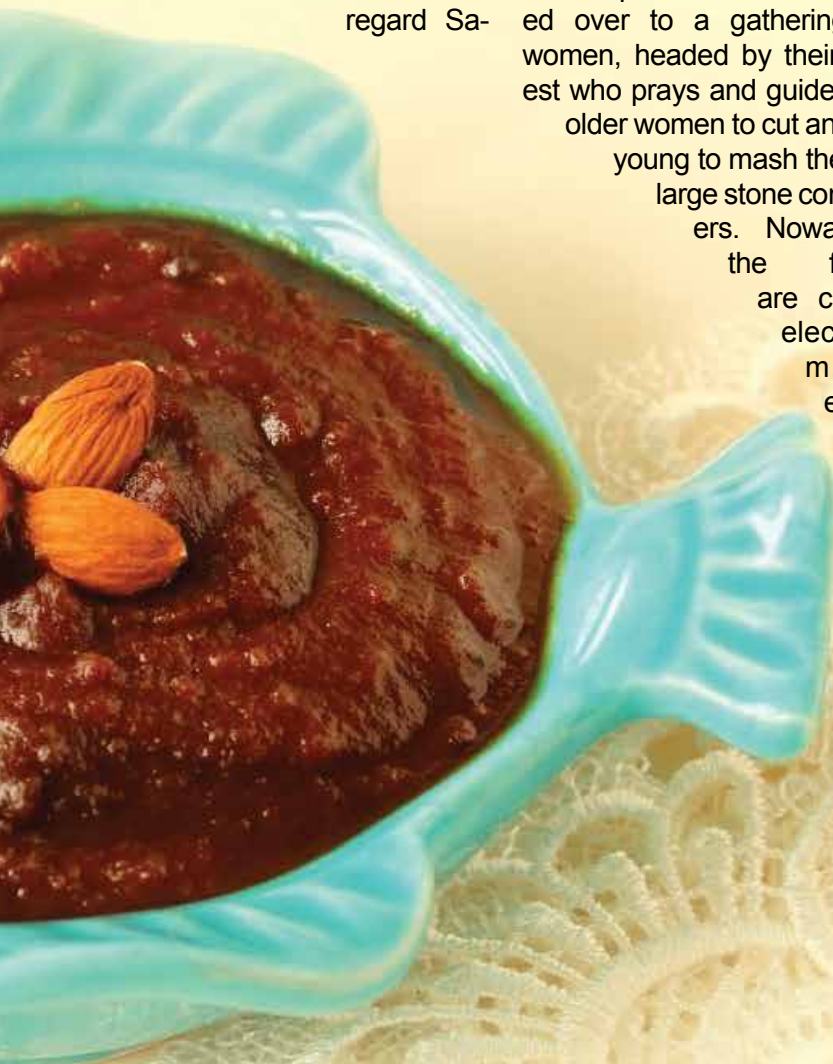
The containers are, then, transferred to a suitable place for sprouting in the few days to come. In Kylyab, Tajikistan, the containers are kept in mosques, sacred places of pilgrimage, or on plains outside the villages, where they are looked after by men.

The sprouts are then handed over to a gathering by women, headed by their oldest who prays and guides the older women to cut and the young to mash them in large stone containers. Nowadays the fibers are cut in electrical mincers.

The extractor is then filtrated and filled in the cooking pot. Cooking starts after some wheat flour is added. The mixture is continually stirred to be prevented from being burnt at the bottom. People take turns to stir the liquid with the skimmer while praying and vowing silently. The ritual which is respected throughout has the effect of preventing the dish from being destroyed.

In some regions this phase, too, is shared by men. The custom continues until dawn, together with a number of other local rituals and traditions. Samanu Pazan night rituals include regional games for children, religious recitals specially recitals of the life story of Hazrat Fatimah (SA), the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) daughter (Central Iran), folkloric comic plays (Kylyab, Tajikistan), happy songs in praise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)'s birth (Kurd communities of As-Sulaymanayah, as well as other Kurd nations of Iraq), prayers and vows for charitable dedications (the whole territory), among others. In Southern Tajikistan and Northern Afghanistan Samanu Pazan is called *Jann-I Samanu*, *Toy Samanu*, and *Mile Samanu* (all meaning, roughly 'Samanu Feast'). Respecting that related rituals and traditions, at dawn, Samanu is taken off the fireplace.

In Iran care is taken to cover the pot with a piece of cloth before sunrise, which is to remain there till the time the Samanu is to be distributed in small dishes. Eastern and





Central Iranian communities believe by this time the blessed trace made by Hazrat Fatimah (SA)'s hand is detectable on the Samanu, who is believed to come at dawn to bless the dish for salvation by touching it.

Among Western Iranian, including Kurdish societies the same effect is attributed to Khizr(AS), a Divine prophet. The effect is so highly regarded that the claim prevails throughout that the sweet taste of the dish is obtained only after it has been blessed. Here the pot is taken to an empty room, where it is surrounded by mirrors, collyrium, and henna to

wait until it is to be distributed at sunrise.

By this time, the people light candles around the pot and leave the scene. The rituals for distribution are mostly performed by one of the elders of the family or in the neighborhood. She starts with addressing the mentioned holy religious figures and praying for all, especially those who have taken part in the ritual, to remain healthy.

In Kilyab, Tajikistan, the Samanu pot is moved round a sacred place for three times by men, then the job of distribution is started by women. Nowadays, inhabitants of large

cities of Iran buy Samanu, together with the other components of Sofre-ye- Haftsin, in Norouz markets.

In small cities, as well as among other nations, however, the feast is respected together with all of its traditions and rituals: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan, are some prominent examples.

Foods of the Same Nature

In traditional Norouz foods, wheat sprout is used in two different forms. The first is cooked extracted sap which is known as Samanu, and



the other fresh or dried sprout mixed with wheat flour, out of which different cookies or forms of bread are prepared.

Sweet by the special taste of wheat sprouts, such cookies are prepared in Central, Eastern and South-eastern regions of Iran, as well as some parts of the Central Asia and Afghanistan. These foodstuffs enjoy the sacred position like Samanu and, include Komaj-e Seen, Halva-ye Sen, Nan-e Samanu, and Kolu-ye Samanu among other varieties.

Komaj-e Seen

Komaj-e Seen is specially produced by Boaaqai nomads of Kerman and Sirjan (South-east Iran) and constitutes a principal component of Norouz dish. The dough, formed of wheat grain and sprout flour, is spread on a large frying pan, covered with another piece of the same size, and dates, walnut, and special spices in between.

When cooked, the mixture is cut into small lozenges and added to the components of

the Norouz's Haft-seen. Originally, Komaj-e Seen used to be cooked on the occasion of Norouz. Today, however, confectionaries of Kerman produce it throughout the year among their traditional local cookies.

Halva-ye Seen

Zoroastrians produce a special type of sweet paste (Halva, in Persian language) from the Samanu dough, known as

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In spite of the long history of some thousands of years, Samanu- Pazan together with its varied symbolisms and rituals are still actively practiced throughout the vast territory on which Norouz, its feasts, traditions and rituals are respected.

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Halva-ye Seen. The paste is distributed among the poor on Norouz evenings, in celebrating the so-called, Farvardegan Feast, for their dead to be forgiven.

Aangal or Aangmal

In Central, as well as Eastern regions of Iran, the Samanu dough is first turned into a special kind of Lavaa (an extremely thin local type of bread). The bread is, then, mixed with dates, fat, and spices and the product, classifiable among Norouz cookies, is known as Aangal or Aangmal

Koloae or Samanak-e Tanuri

Specially cooked in Tajikistan, the wheat sprout dough is turned into a special kind of bread known as Koloae or Samanak-e Tanuri to be consumed during Norouz.

Samanu and Sacred Characters

In spite of the long history of some thousands of years, Samanu- Pazan together with its varied symbolisms and rituals are still actively practiced throughout the vast territory on which Norouz, its feasts, traditions and rituals are respected. Samanu is especially regarded in relation to its potential for giving rise to abundance for man's body, soul, and affluence. As a result, it finds a strong link with the sacred characters of water, respected for affluence, abundance, and prosperity.

LET'S HAVE BETTER TRIPS



Hussein Abdullahi

The very mention of trips, journey or travelling is really sweet and heart-warming to many. Possibly most of us like trips mainly because they take us away from the burdensome routine activities at least for a few days and give us some time for relaxing. Yet, a deep understanding of the philosophy behind travelling can give one, the knowledge that the benefits of travelling also include those resulting from movement, moving from home to the other places to see, experience and learn, thus experiencing fresh life-style and exposing one's soul to positive changes. Of course, there are certain points to be kept in mind by those who desire such positive changes:

1- Seeking one's goal in the journey, not in the destination

At first, most of us just want to reach the destination - the place we have chosen as our temporary residence during the trip, but the proper attitude is to start enjoying ourselves and looking for new experiences from the first hour of starting the travel.

2- Avoiding fixed programs

Usually people make certain plans for the trips they are going to take and so make frameworks for themselves which can most probably prevent them from enjoying the trip as they would otherwise do; You can also give yourself some spiritual refreshment through enjoying the healthy

weather and beautiful scenery in rural areas, without feeling obliged to rush towards the big cities you may have planned as your destination.

3- Avoiding luxuries

How good it would be if, instead of being attracted by luxurious hotels, we preferred simple, inexpensive accommodations and the companionship of rural people. This way we can somehow experience that life-style which is in reality in harmony with human nature; simple life. No doubt, those who deprive themselves of such useful experiences and instead focus on worldly pomps and luxuries, act against their God-given nature-human nature which finds modesty tranquilizing.

4- Having healthy diets

No doubt the one who is healthy enough to take a trip can enjoy some of delicious foods at least during the journey without worry, of course provided he/she does not forget exercises. And indeed it would be a nice experience if one stops eating the kinds of food ordinarily served at home or at work and instead try the especial local dishes which may also be healthier than one's ordinary meals, but it should be remembered that exceeding the limits in eating and drinking is not allowable even in trips, and that for those who are forbidden especial things by their physicians, it is better to obey the instructions throughout the journey to avoid undesirable results - getting ill and having hard times.

5- Working and cooperation

Certainly laziness is a bad habit at all times, so to avoid getting lazy during a trip (which is for fun and not for work) you can use every opportunity for cooperating with the others in for example, preparing food, and the like or even you may find an opportunity for fishing and/or helping farmers with their jobs as a sign of friendship. These can have very positive effects upon our morale and also upon the others.

6- Avoiding computers

Give yourself some mental rest through avoiding the

internet and other manifestations of modern mechanized life for the few weeks you are on a trip. This way, you can also better communicate with the family members or friends who are your co-travelers and also with the people you may meet. You will most probably find sight-seeking and also talking to the people more of a fun than Google.

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Take films and photographs when you feel like doing that, but do not let such things deprive you of desirable sense of focusing on the beauties of the nature God has created for us.

”

7- Avoiding too much filming and photographing

Certainly, most of us like taking out cameras with ourselves when going on a trip. There is nothing wrong with it unless it becomes a cause of distraction from the proper purpose of the journey - refreshment of the soul and getting rid of the spiritual fatigue caused by successive days of work in an obviously stressful mechanized world. Take films and photographs when you feel like doing that, but do not let such things deprive you of desirable sense of focusing on the beauties of the nature God has created for us.

Healthy Tips for Travellers

One very significant point regarding the preservation of one's health during a travel is to be equipped with sufficient supply of water to prevent dehydration. You should also advise your co-travellers to do the same, since water plays a vital function in connection with physical health. Also, those who suffer from a





heart condition need to consult their doctor before going on a journey and they are advised to avoid being motionless for successive hours if they are travelling by a car, a bus, or train. If you have a heart condition and are going to travel by train, be sure to take walks at regular intervals in the corridor of the train, and if by a bus, try to move your legs while seated repeatedly. Also, such patients should avoid eating high fat foods and instead increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables.

According to experts, travels can also be a good opportunity for those who desire

to give up smoking, since being in a new environment, increased intake of fresh air and enjoying the companionship of family members and friends during a journey can boost one's physical and emotional strength thus making one ready for giving up bad habits. In addition, those who are suffering from diabetes are advised to be very careful about their health during journeys and also take necessary items and medicine with themselves.

As for children, they need to be prevented from eating things like sausages which might cause various ailments and even severe poisoning. It is best for all the members of the family to have fresh vegetables like tomatoes, celery and fruit while on a journey. These foodstuffs are good and healthy sources of nourishment, since they contain vitamins and minerals enough to sustain the body for hours. It is of course better to wash the vegetables and fruit thoroughly at home and before packing them.

Also according to some physicians, it is better for children not to eat nuts while travelling, because they are often unable to chew the nuts well. If they like chocolates, let them have some and do not worry much about their appetite. True, they may spoil their appetite with feasting on chocolates, but it is ok to let the children have such feasts once in a while, especially on a trip. Have a nice time.

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It is best for all the members of the family to have fresh vegetables like tomatoes, celery and fruit while on a journey. These foodstuffs are good and healthy sources of nourishment, since they contain vitamins and minerals enough to sustain the body for hours.

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OMAR KHAYYAM AND NOROUZ

The universally popular Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam contains a number of stanzas well worth pondering during the Norouz. This classic work of poetry penned by Khayyam (1048-1131) famed more as a mathematical as a poet in Iran.

It was brought to the attention of the English-speaking world when it was translated rather freely, but nonetheless beautifully, by the 19th century British poet, Edward Fitzgerald.

As an astronomer, Khayyam contributed to the refinement of the Persian calendar, and as a mathematician he produced an important study of Euclid, an algebra text, as well as a scholarly research on mineralogy.

Among Khayyam's thoughts on the New Year are:

*Now the New Year, reviving old desires,
The thoughtful soul to solitude retires
Where the white hand of Moses on the bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the ground suspires.*

Also in another poem, we read:

*Come, full the cup, and in the fire of spring
Your winter garment of repentance fling.
The bird of time has but a little way
To flutter and the bird is on the wing.*

Omar Khayyam also commented on the rapid passing of time, of which we all become aware during the New Year celebrations:

*The moving finger writes, and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half of line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.*

How time is a slipping underneath our feet.

Unborn tomorrow and dead yesterday,

Why fire about them if today be sweet?

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam is the title that Edward Fitzgerald gave to his translation of a selection of poems, originally written in the Persian and of which there are about a thousand attributions to Omar Khayyam.

*Alas, that spring should vanish with the rose!
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript
should close!*

*The nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence and whither flown again, who
knows!*

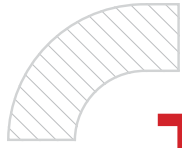
*Ah, love! Could thou and I with fate conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire'
Would we not shatter it to bits - and then Re-
mold it nearer to the heart's desire?*

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THE FRUIT OF PARADISE

Jacqueline Mirsadeghi

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FAMILY WOMAN

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When we say that life is a journey, for some people those words have a spiritual meaning exclusively. For others it may be more literal. To Jacqueline Mirsadeghi they unquestionably represent both connotations.

Born in Izmir, Turkey, her French father and mother of German-Dutch descent took her to Switzerland when she was still little. Jacqueline spent part of her childhood in Switzerland, went to an English boarding school and studied documentary photography at the University of Iowa, USA.

She worked as a journalist for the Daily Iowan during her

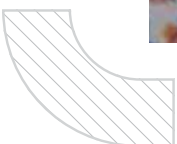
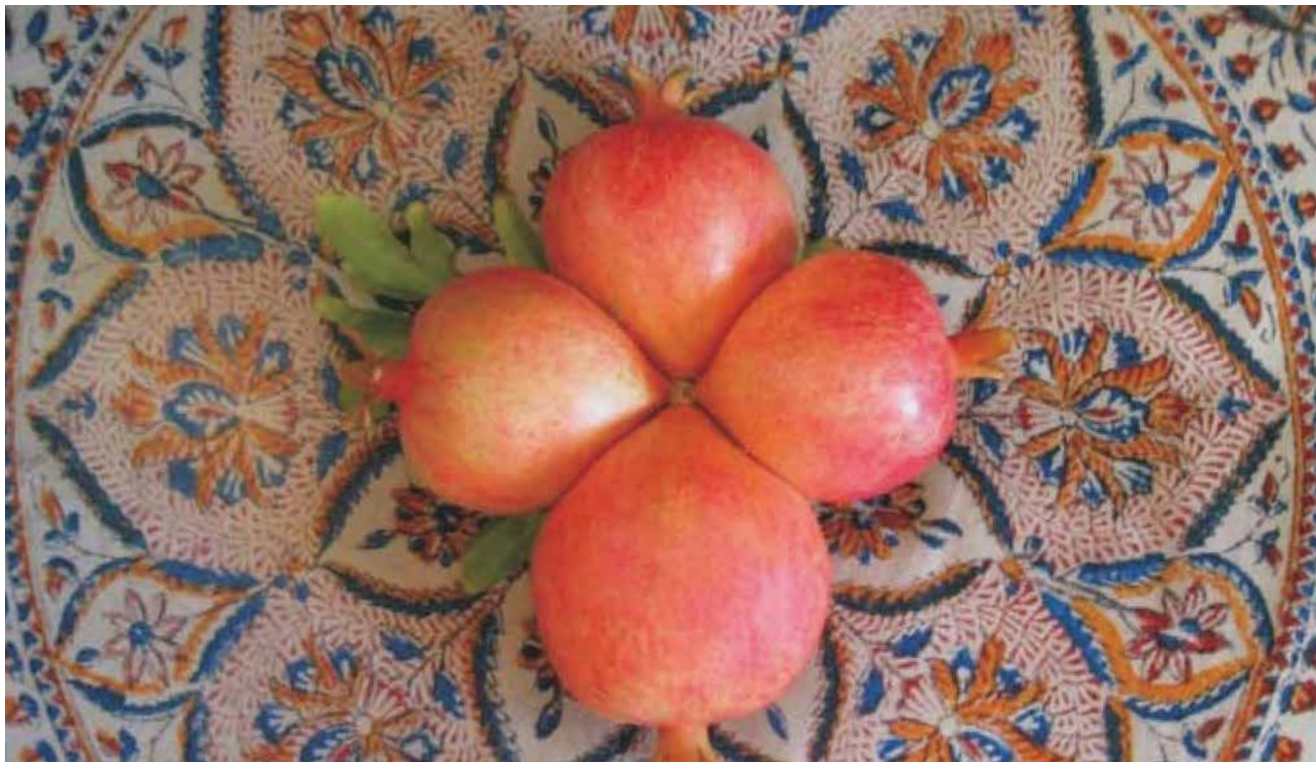
study to gain experience and finished the last part of her studies in Maryland.

In the spring of 1984 she returned to Switzerland accompanied by her Iranian husband. After eight years they went to Iran for a two year period, now with their 2-year old son and 3-year old daughter. They stayed until 2005, before coming back to Switzerland again.

Saveh, south-west of Tehran is her second home. During the hot summer it goes without rain for six months; its winters are harsh. For survival and the cultivation of fruit and other crops the Iranians use "qanat" ground

water tapped into via a man-made underground canal system that has been around for centuries.

"I feel so deeply connected with this part of Iran because of the efforts of man to establish it long ago and to keep it intact. The cost of the water in this created oasis is amazing. People risk their lives to get to it and to keep it flowing," she explains. "Water is allocated. If you possess a piece of land you are entitled to irrigate it. This is a 'water right' shared among the landowners. Living there one is constantly aware of the value and the necessity of protecting



life.”

The people in Saveh grow pomegranates, originating from that part of the world. The pomegranate (*Punica Granatum*) is very important to the entire region, even to the country. It can be stored for six months and taken on a caravan. The fruit contains hundreds of juicy seeds that liquefy when it is carefully squeezed. Then turning into a natural “juice box” a pomegranate can literally save lives. It does not only quench thirst, it is also rich in vitamin C and potassium while it gives “physical and mental energy, increases the body’s resistance against infections, enhances blood cells and improves blood circulation.” The pomegranate is growing in popularity outside Iran as well. It is used for skin beauty products, juice (grenadine), coloring, and medical application.

“The fruit became a normal part of our lives, but I realized that it should never be taken for granted,” Jacqueline muses. “That is why it became part of my artistic adventure as a photographer.” Jacqueline’s beautiful multilingual book “Pomegranate garden” shows her cherished, luscious paradise surrounded by mountainous desert. Pomegranates can be found in most of her pictures, stocked away for the winter, basking in the sun on a branch, or just displayed in a piece of local pottery. She makes the local architecture stand out through its strong lines and simplicity.

Jacqueline is grateful to be

able to spread the culture of her Iranian Eden. Her images, now being spread across the globe, capture its amazing nature. Through her work and heritage she has become a cultural nomad in her own right.

The Pomegranate Gardens of Savah

The small town of Saveh is located some 120 kilometers-west of Tehran, on an ancient caravan road. It is especially known in Iran for its famous pomegranates. The pomegranate gardens of this region have witnessed centuries of tumultuous history, yet the culture of this fruit, dear to Iranians, has survived and thrived over the centuries. Being at the edge of the “Dasht-e-



In Islam, the Holy Qur’an names the pomegranate as the fruit of paradise. Muslims believe that the one who eats pomegranate receives the light of Allah in his heart.



Kavir” desert, Saveh’s climate is dry, with hot summers and relatively harsh winters. Because of low rainfall (six months without any rain at all), irrigation is essential, many of these oases exist because of water from “qanats”, ancient underground canals dug by hand which bring ground water over many kilometers; the Saveh dam originally built in the 15th century, but replaced in the 20th century by a more modern work and water drawn by deep well pumps also provide irrigation water.

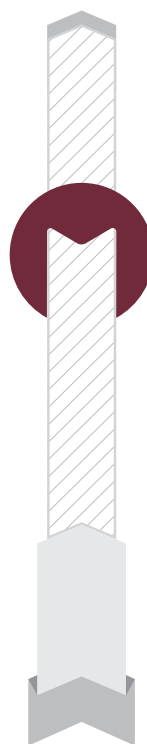
The Saveh region’s past includes pre-historic traces through the presence of many mounds and caves, one with cave paintings; the oldest pottery ware found in this area dated back to Neolithic times. In the pre-Islamic era, Saveh was flourishing as an important caravan centre, on the north-south and east-west cross-roads. It is said to be one of the oldest Islamic cities of Iran. For many centuries, it enjoyed a significant pottery, glassware and carpet knitting activity, and boasted a renowned astronomical library by the end of the 12th century.

The city was destroyed several times by invaders (notably the Mongols) and rivalries between tribes, but also rebuilt at as many. Winter capital of the last Saljuks (11th century), it was visited by Marco Polo in the 13th century. Documents indicated that during the Safavid era (16th century), pomegranates were part of caravan merchandise sent to other Persian cities. Saveh’s impor-



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tance declined at the end of the 19th century. It is only in the last decade that it has gotten a new boost through it's growing industrial Park, the construction of an east-west highway and Free Zones. Iran ranks first among the pomegranate producing countries in the world.

The pomegranate: fruit of paradise

The pomegranate (*Punica Granatum*) is from the myrtle shrub family and is believed to be native to Persia and surrounding areas. The pomegranate is grown in mild climate with little humidity such as the Middle East, northern Africa, India, China, Malaysia, southern Europe, the US and South America. The fruits are picked by the end of October, and can be kept for up to six months

when is stored at 4-6 centigrade; that is why the pomegranate is known as the 'Jewel of Winter' The word pomegranate comes from the middle French word "Pume Grenate", meaning "seeded apple".

Pomegranates are used in many different ways in food preparation, from drinks, soups, salads to main courses; one can make molasses, sorbets, jellies, sauces, syrups, soups marinades, desserts and ice cream. In the Middle East, where the fruit is most widely known and used, it is customary to make pomegranate juice within the fruit by gently squeezing the entire fruit (without making it explode!) until the seeds are completely liquefied; one then makes a small hole into the skin to suck out the juice.

History

The pomegranate is one of the oldest fruit known to man. Although pomegranates grew in the wild before the dawn of agriculture, they were one of the first domesticated crops along with olives, grapes, figs and dates. Historical evidence shows that man first began planting pomegranate trees sometimes between 4000 and 3000 BC. One says they were grown in the hanging gardens of Babylon. The pomegranate was buried among the ancient Egyptians such as King Tutankhamen in the hope of re-birth. During ancient times, the pomegranate juice was used as ink, and the rind and flowers of pomegranate trees provided dyes for textiles and wood, such as the traditional red colour called "garnet" found in Persian rugs still today.

Following the Punic wars, the pomegranate made its way to Italy via Carthage. The Moors brought the pomegranate to Spain around 800 AD; the city of Grenada was named after the fruit, which became its emblem. Most likely, Spanish sailors have named the Caribbean island "Grenada" after the Spanish city of "Granada"; the pomegranate was brought to California by Spanish settlers in 1769.

Created in 1518 by King Henry VIII, the Royal College of Physicians displayed its coat of arms a gilded pomegranate, symbol of fertility, also coat of arms of King's wife, Catherine of Aragon from Spain, who is believed to have planted the

first pomegranate tree in England.

Medicine

Pomegranate juice contains large amounts of potassium and vitamin C; taken regularly, it gives physical and mental energy, increases the body's resistance against infections, enhances blood cells and improves blood circulation. Recent studies have shown that pomegranate juice lowers that risk of a heart disease, helping to prevent the oxidation of LDL (bad) cholesterol, main contributor to the clogging of arteries. Pomegranate may help protect against osteoarthritis; they also act on the liver and kidneys and tone up their functions.

All parts of the pomegranate tree (roots, bark, flowers, rind and seeds) have featured in medicine for thousands of years. The Greek philosopher, Hippocrates, used pomegranates as a plaster for leg and eye inflammations (400 BC). Ibne Sina, the famous Persian physician and philosopher (980-1037 AD) has described the medical use of the wild pomegranate in his 'Canon of Medicine'. The pomegranate is used in folk medicine to treat inflammations, sore throats and rheumatism. Herbalists recommended pomegranate juice applied in massage to rejuvenate aging skin, and ground pomegranate flowers to eliminate aging spots. Altogether, the pomegranate maybe a factor in hindering disease and showing the ageing process. In India there is a common adage

that says: "This one fruit - the pomegranate, cures a hundred diseases."

Religion

In Islam, the Holy Qur'an names the pomegranate as the fruit of paradise. Muslims believe that the one who eats pomegranate receives the light of Allah in his heart. The Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessing of Allah be upon him) said, "Eat pomegranates, for they cleanse the body of evil and envy" and "Every pomegranate contains one seeds which comes from heaven".

In ancient Christian beliefs, the pomegranate in the hand of Jesus symbolizes eternal life and worldly rule. In the Bible, King Solomon's riches included an orchard of pomegranate trees, and the pomegranate is praised as one of the seven spices with which the Holy Land was blessed.

In Judaism, the pomegranate symbolizes fertility, good deeds and abundance. According to tradition, the pomegranate contains 613 seeds which represent the 613 commandments of the Old Testament. In Buddhism, the pomegranate is considered one of the three blessed fruits, along with the citrus fruit and the peach.

Art

Ancient Assyrians and Egyptians frequently represented pomegranate in a sculptures as "sacred trees of life". Italian Renaissance fabrics boasted the pattern of pomegranates. And pomegranates have graced

many canvasses, including those of Leonardo da Vinci, Paul Cezanne, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Henri Matisse, Salvador Dali and many more. One of the most known paintings is probably the "Madonna" by the Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Boticelli, in which the child Jesus holds a pomegranate in his hand.

Literature

The pomegranate appears in literature in Homer's "Odyssey" (the Greek epic poem poet), where he speaks of the fruit's cultivation in the gardens of the kings of Phrygia and Phaeacia (700 BC). The pomegranate is also the subject of one of Aesop's fables (Greek writer 600 BC), in which the proud fruit argues with an apple over who is more beautiful.

Ancient and contemporary Persian poets and writers have of course extensively referred to the pomegranate in their works: Ferdowsi (941-1020), Jalaeddin Rumi also known as Mawlana (1207-1273), Sa'di (1209-1291), Hafez (1326-1390), Sohrab Sepehri (1928-1980) writes: "have cut open pomegranate, and am breaking apart its clusters of juicy seeds. It would be a good thing, I tell myself, if the seeds inside the people's hearts were also visible." Writers from other countries have also mentioned the pomegranate in their works, such as Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400), Shakespeare (1564-1616) and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900).

PARIS INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

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This year (2018) simultaneous with the world registration of the Millennium of composing Shahnameh; the greatest epic book and the invaluable Iranian literary work, a significant world cultural event will be organized by the Ferdowsi Foundation of Iran in UNESCO.

This cultural exhibition (simultaneous with 1008th year of composing Shahnameh) is to be held in France, from 16-19 March 2018 and will be attended by numerous world famous authors. Also the event will include significant literary gatherings.

World Registration of the Millennium of Composing of Shahnameh Ferdowsi in UNESCO

The Ferdowsi Foundation with the cooperation of Cultural Center of Iran in France, the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and Iran Cultural Farsi Institute has aimed at presenting a valuable work of art based on Shahnameh of Ferdowsi to present recognition of Iran's culture on the world scene. This work is a combination of modern theatre with narrating the stories

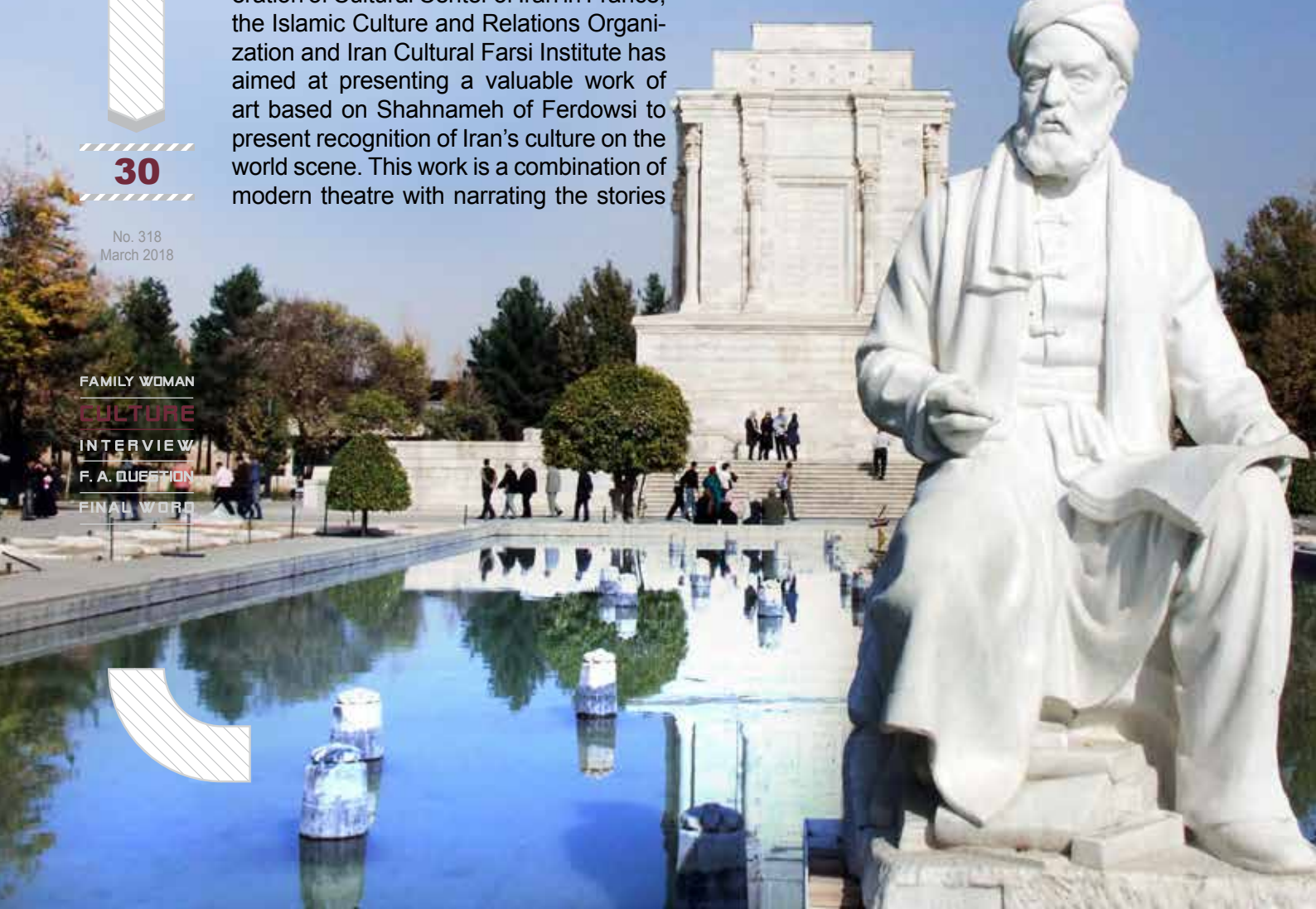
of Shahnameh, revolving around the role of Iranian women, also tableaux of modern and Iranian traditional paintings and an exhibition of Iranian traditional clothings, classic music and songs off Iran.

Brochures in Persian, English and French and also a booklet about Shahnameh Ferdowsi will be presented to the audience. At the Iranian stall the Iranian artists will perform three plays of Shahnameh Ferdowsi stories, each day. The Iranian group are: Yasser Movahed Fard (Director of the Artists Group) Masoud Nouri Fard (narrator, compiler of the stories and dramaturg) Milad Taghipour and Shaghayegh Sh'abani (directors of the play, actor and actress of the play and form designers) and Zahra Kaivani (painter and scene designer).

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NOROUZ, SEASON OF BLOSSOMS

Ahmad Barari

The ancient Norouz arrived joyful,
a reminder of an old civilization.

The glory of the Persian men,
dates back to the age of the shining sun.

Norouz reminds us of the happiness of the
good
It is an asset for the land of the good.

Though saddened by the oppressive,
it has survived the ordeals, standing high.

It stood to be looked up by the world,
the human history being it's evidence, telling
true word.

Green, white and red are nice to me,
since they are reflected in my land's flag.

The green colour is from the spring of the land,
it is like a mother giving birth to a child.

It's white colour is the symbol of the purity,
shining like the sun after a dark night.

It's red colour is from the fire of power,
it burns the evil, the badness all over.

O my land Iran, you are as a mother to me,
So, call me to get up for Norouz, to be happy.

Get up and wear new clothings,
make the whole land green and glowing.

We are all happy to have this nice mother,
We celebrate her brilliance, for her we care.

This love revives us to live with faith,
we live as long as our land lives, the best fate.

Sure, each night is followed by a day,
so hopelessness to us has no way.

Norouz, is full of joy, full of hope.
It gives you the message of a spring breeze,
so hope.

Hope and pray to God to give everywhere
Norouz,
to make every day a feast for all, a Norouz.

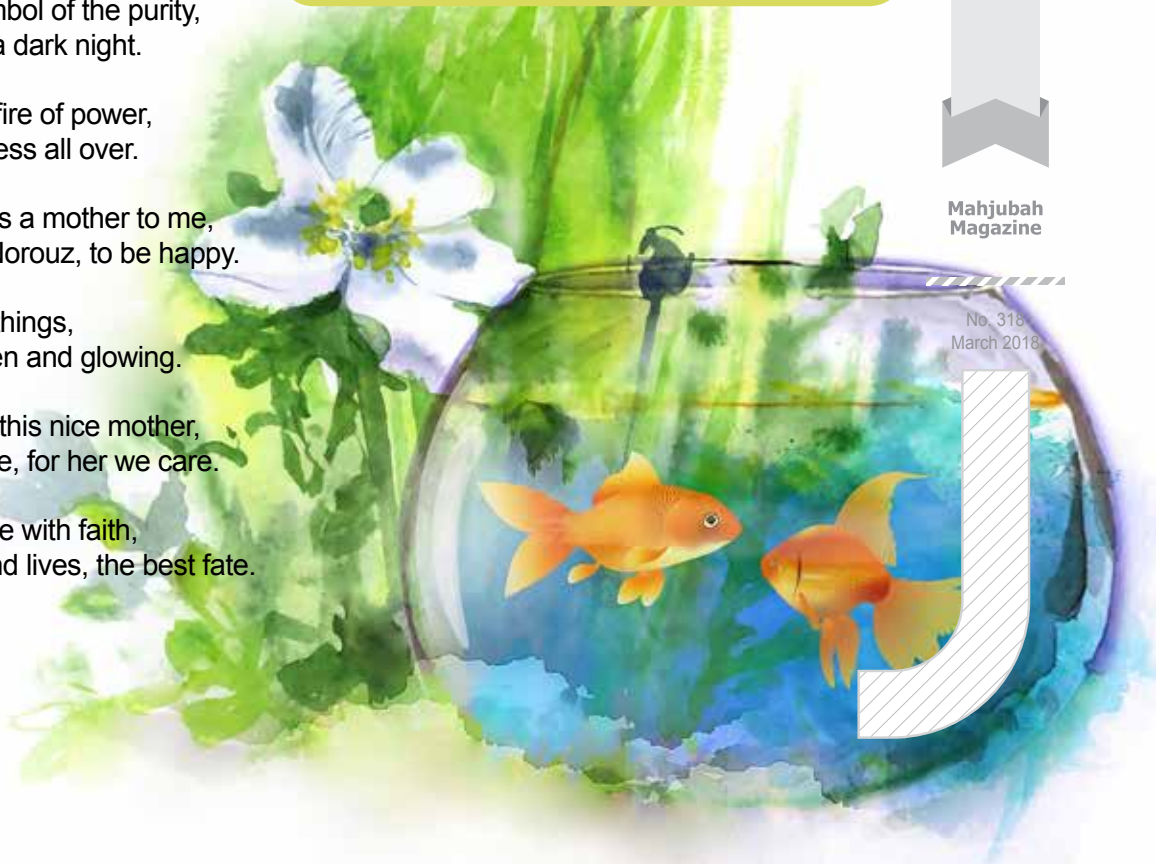
Norouz is an ancient national celebration for Iranians as well as other Persian speakers in the world. The celebration is at the beginning of each new solar year. Norouz is among the rare new year feasts which is deeply rooted in love of nature. It starts with the season of blossoms – the spring. The last Wednesday of each year is also celebrated by Iranians as a welcome to Norouz, called *Charshanbesoori*.

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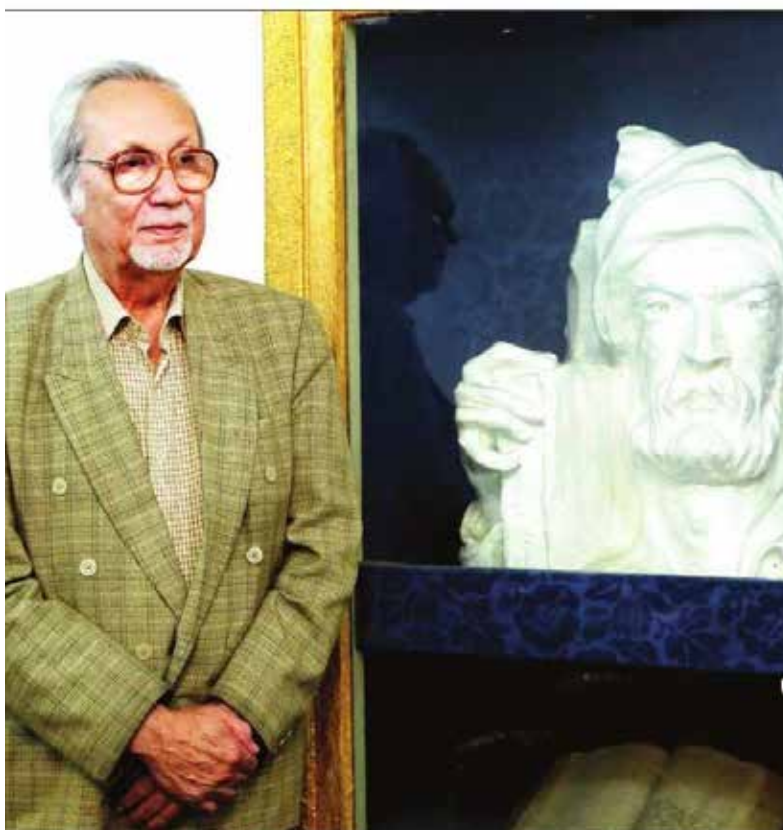


WOMEN AND ANCIENT NOROUZ

Dr. Fereydoon Jonaidi (born in 1940, Neyshabur, Khorasan, northern Iran) is the founder and manager of the Neyshabur Foundation and the Balkh publications. He has also taught ancient languages and Ferdowsi's poetical epic, Shahnameh, at different universities of Iran. He currently teaches Avesta and Pahlavi languages and holds Shahnameh narrating sessions at the Neyshabur Foundation. In his thirty-year enterprise, he has edited and rendered into modern Persian Ferdowsi's Shahnameh for the benefit of new generation.

Using the treasures of Persian culture and vocabulary, Fereydoon Jonaidi has re-worded the 1264-page epic stories of Rostam, using not a single non-Persian word. Here is an interview with him regarding woman and ancient Norouz, according to his own ideas and viewpoints.

A woman plays a significant role in various aspects of valuable life. She is active not only in rearing children as a mother, supporting her husband as a caring wife, and being active in the society, but as a Muslim woman, she strives to spread the dynamic teachings of Islam by maintaining modesty in dress, behaviour and more significant in the way she lives. She is also a medium in conveying the rich culture and civilization of her country. She teaches ethics, morality, affection and so on through different ways such as a storytelling and lullabies. Through diligence in dress, good taste, love for humanity, and for nature she has greatly contributed towards guarding the culture of her homeland. Iranian women also play a very remarkable role in Keeping alive the rich customs and traditions of Norouz.



Q: Please, elaborate on the history of Norouz. When does it originally date back to?

A: What can be inferred from Ferdowsi's poems and others signs inherited from our ancient ancestors is that the culture of Norouz dates back to at least 8000 years. A very important point here is that how our ancestors have been able to exactly determine the precise date and time of Norouz. This easily reveals that 8000 years ago the people of this land used an instrument for measuring and indicating the time, which is called a clock today. So we can claim that the ancient inhabitants of Iran have been the inventors of clock. Iranians have been familiar with different signs of the Zodiac such as a Scorpio, Lion, Capricorn, Virgo, etc. since thousands years ago. Therefore, Norouz is of a great significance from viewpoints of astronomy, mathematics and astrology.

Q: If we divide history into pre-Islamic and post-Islamic periods, has Norouz and its traditions been subject to changes due to elapsing of time?

A: Norouz is one of the few traditional customs which have not been subject to changes during long periods of time. Today, so many Iranian people celebrate and perform Norouz's traditional rituals in various countries like Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, etc. It has not changed from pre-Islamic to post-Islam



Photo by: Sepideh Samavati

period for Norouz is a cultural category, and is not in contradiction with religious orders and beliefs. When Islam entered Iran, the Iranian people accepted this Divine religion and at the same time they preserved their ancient customs and traditions. The only change in Norouz celebrations happens when it coincides with Islamic religious mourning ceremonies. In such cases, the Iranian people usually postpone the celebration or perform it while

respecting and observing the sanctity of such days (of mourning).

Q: What kind of relationship can be discerned between women and Norouz?

A: The results of my research indicate that Norouz originally dates back to when Iran was a matriarchal society. The results of researches conducted by European sociologists do support this claim, but they are not aware that when and how this phenomenon precisely took place. This issue, however, has been thoroughly dealt with in the Shahnameh. Women have always been regarded as the main element in all times. Throughout history women have also had a significant role in preserving and conveying traditional rites and customs to the next generations.

Q: What makes you sure that Iran had a matriarchal society in a



Iranian people did not believe in any goddess in ancient times, therefore, we highly take pride in our ancestors for they never believed in duality or plurality of gods.





particular period of time?

A: Although such a condition has been the result of a great deal of changes and evolution throughout long periods of time, one can conclude that women have been the main causes of evolution throughout long periods of time, one can conclude that women have been the main cause and managers of family in those little primitive societies. Their divine sense of motherhood and maternity has resulted in considering women as an integral and inseparable part of family and society.

Q: Orientalists claim that ancient Iran had goddesses of fertility and birth. What is your opinion in this regard?

A: Iranian people did not believe in any goddess in ancient times, therefore, we highly take pride in our ancestors for they never believed in duality or plurality of gods. They have always believed in Monotheism and considered God as the One and Only Creator as the Source of all births, growths and creations.

Q: Then what do the statues excavated from the ancient times symbolize?

A: Let me emphasize again that in Iranian ancient manuscripts there is no trace of anything called a goddess! However, European explorers, who unearthed some seven types of statues in Iran, wrongly thought of them as goddesses.

Q: So, what where those statues?

A: One answer is that they had been dolls made by ancient women for their children. One reason is that no other kinds of material have been in hand at that time.

Q: What features and aspects distinguish these statues from their foreign counterparts?

A: Not a single statue unearthed in Iran, depicts the person (whether male or female) as nude, while in all Greek statues or similar ones in other cultures, the human figures have been molded in nude form - without clothes to conceal the obscenities. This truly manifests the fact that Iran is the origin and the birthplace of costume.

Q: Thanks for the interview and if there is any final word or sentence, feel free to express.

A: I want to remind all Iranian girls that the stability, security and durability of human societies are indebted to mothers. I invite them to follow their mother's glorious paths leading to Iran's prosperity, success and glory.

Interviewed by: Soudabeh Rakhsh

QUOTES

Heart is the spring of sagacity. *Imam Ali (AS); Ghurar-ul Hekam*

If the gardener had not had any anticipation, he would have never done any cultivation. *Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, Mawlānā; 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian*

Hoping for returning the lost age, it is merely an image. *Sa'di Shīrāzī; Persian poet and literary of the medieval period*

Nourishing wishes better than sorrow. *Ghazali; medieval Muslim theologian, jurist, philosopher, and mystic of Persian origin*

The man is alive through hope and the world stands up on the legs of hope. *Al-*

lameh Ali Akbar Dehkhodā; prominent Iranian linguist, and author of Dehkhodā dictionary, the most extensive dictionary of the Persian language ever published

For the miserable people the only remedy is hope. *William Shakespeare; English poet, playwright and actor*

Hope is the man's sustenance. *Rabindranath Tagore; Bengali polymath who reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries*

Hope for men is like the wings for birds. *Victor Hugo; French poet, novelist, and dramatist of the Romantic Movement*

Evil counsellor is despair. *Sir Walter Scott; Scottish historical novelist, playwright, poet and historian*

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Q: I am 21, a university student and by Allah's grace, a successful one. I am studying medicine and hope to become a good physician. But there is something which annoys me. I have many friends all of whom, except one or two are unfortunately very jealous of me and tease me most of the time. I have decided that it is best for me to stop being their friend. Is it a proper decision? *Najla, Turkey*

A: Dear Najla, Your decision is a proper one, because as Imam Ali (AS) has stated: "The one who is jealous of you is not sincere in his/her friendship towards you." So, insincere friends are not true friends at all and moreover they may harm us in various ways; you trust them with

a secret and they reveal it to the others. So you had better content yourself with that single friend who is not jealous of you. God-willing, in the future you will find more faithful friends.

Q: I am a man of 32, married about four years ago. My wife and I could put up with each other well till my wife had a miscarriage which made her very upset, and from then on, she starts quarreling with me as soon as I start speaking to her. I think she has become sort of depressed. Of course she herself thinks she is acting quite normally and that all faults lie with me. Is there any solution to my problems? I do not want to divorce her, because I love her. Please help. *Ihsan, India*

A: Dear Ihsan, of course there are solutions to your problem, patience being the key one. Remember that in the Holy Qur'an we are informed: "Truly Allah is with the patient people." and "Truly Allah loves the patient people." Besides, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has given us the good tidings regarding patience thus: "Patience has the reward given to one thousand martyrs." So, try to tolerate her abnormal behaviour with patience and ask Allah for His help. It is very good that you love your wife even if she has become bad-tempered. You must be a tolerant man and so rest assured that soon you will receive help from Allah and witness the return of your wife to the normal behavior. It is possible that she has suffered some physical and/or emotional harms influencing her spiritual health. Through buying her presents, including flowers and saying 'I love you' to her, you may become able to help her get rid of the undesirable condition. It is possible that she has considered a miscarriage to be a failure on her part and so has been pushed to sort of abnormal mental condition. So, try also to convince her that you do not consider her blame-worthy and that God-willing, she will give birth to lovely children. Also, remember that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has said: "A man's saying 'I love you' to his wife will never leave her heart."

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH); THE MODEL INSTRUCTOR PART 3

By: Abolfazl Roohi

Translated by: Mina Salimi

According to authentic accounts, Allah's last Messenger - Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been very modest, both before and after the start of his Divine Mission, and in fact, as the leader of the Muslim community, His Holiness used to behave as modestly as he did as a young shepherd and as a young tradesman. Imam as-Sadiq (AS) has narrated: "Allah's Messenger (PBUH) would often sit facing the *Qiblah* (the prayer direction for Muslims) and would sit down on and eat on the ground, saying, "I am just a servant and so sit and eat like a servant." Also Imam al-Baqir (AS) has narrated that the holy Prophet(PBUH) of Islam had made eating on the ground with bondsmen, riding unsaddled donkeys, milking goats with his own hands, wearing simple and inexpensive clothes and pleasing the children as part of his manners (*Sunnah*) and stressed that he would continue these manners to the end of his life so they will be set as examples. Likewise, Abuzar Ghaffari, a well-known companion, has narrated that "Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would in gatherings sit among his companions and fol-

lowers in such a (modest) way that no visiting stranger would recognize which one of the persons present at that gathering was Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and eventually we requested His Holiness to allow us to make a



small platform from mud for him to sit on so unfamiliar visitors could know who the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam was among the gathering."

And as significant has been his matchless attentiveness to the people and to their needs. It has been narrated that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would shorten his prayers upon observing that someone had a need or request, and that even His Holiness upon hearing a baby's crying, would

recite shorter chapters of the Holy Qur'an in his congregational (*Jama'at*) prayers, so the prayers would end sooner and that baby's parent could attend to its needs. In another Narration from Imam Sajjad (AS) we read that once Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) hurriedly finished the congregational prayer he was leading, and then said: "I did so, because I heard the cry of a child and feared lest that child's parents would find it hard to continue the prayer (in the usual period of time) and so I hurried to say the prayer sooner." And of course, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was always the first to utter the Islamic greeting to the others and would behave so even to children and women, and would behave politely towards all, even towards bondsmen and bondswomen, and would never let anybody humiliate them. According to narrations, His Holiness would never stretch his legs in the presence of the others and would avoid harshness and meeting the others with a morose face. Instead, as testified by all his companions, no one could be found who would smile more than Prophet Muhammad(PBUH), and no one had a more warmly, kindly and pleasant look than him.

As for his patience and patient encounter with people, let's first point out that in the Holy Qur'an (3:159) we read: "..... since mercy from God

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does exist, you have been easy on them. If you had been harsh and cruel-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you ”

We can infer from this verse of the Holy Qur'an that the exemplary patience and tolerance on the part of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam has been a mercy from Allah and a very determining factor in attracting people to Islam. According to numerous authentic accounts on various occasions, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had to deal with people (of low level of intelligence) who could not understand what His Holiness said and so the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam would repeat his words up to three times for them with patience and tenderness. And in the same vein, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would always keep silent when talking was unnecessary and would smile away the excessive talkativeness of the others. His Holiness would inquire about the others' health with sincerity,

would pray for them whenever they went on a trip and would pay very affectionate visits to them whenever they got ill and likewise would never annoy any servant or even strangers through humiliating words. His respectful compassionate behaviour towards all, including bondsmen, bondswomen servants and the followers have been repeatedly testified and recorded in Islamic sources and also, His Holiness would never put pressure, whether physical or emotional upon the others. Anas ibne Malik has quoted S'aid ibne Abi bard as follows: "I spent nine years at the service of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), without experiencing the least bit of harshness or unpleasant behaviour on his part. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) never disturbed me, nor gave me any unnecessary burdensome orders."

And on many occasions, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was addressed by people who were lacking in manners and who acted impolitely towards Al-

lah's last Messenger – Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which improper conducts of them His Holiness would tolerate with kindness and showing no sign of resentment. As for his sympathy towards the poor and the needy, suffice it to mention that His Holiness would refuse to eat wheat bread and would even refuse to eat barley bread to the extent of a filling meal, thus making himself feel the hunger which the poorest of people might feel.

Here, let's also point out the Qur'anic verses in which Allah has Himself admired the blessed purified household of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for the sympathy towards the needy and their perfect devotion to the cause of Allah. In Chapter 76 we read, "*They offer food to the needy, the orphan, and the captive out of love for Him*" (76: 8).

Please also read and ponder upon the preceding and the following verses in this chapter of the Holy Qur'an and remember that according to Qur'anic commentaries, these verses were revealed by Allah to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) after His Holiness, and the Ahlul-Bait (AS) – Imam Ali (AS), Her Holiness Fatimah (SA), Imam Hasan (AS) and Imam Hussein (AS) had gone hungry for three successive days, because they had offered their food to the needy. Do you know of any better instructors and teachers of humanity?



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**The one who desires Norouz (the early spring celebration),
should be patient during the cold winter.**

Sa'di, Iranian Great Poet



The Mausoleum of Sa'di