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SPRING, REBIRTH OF NATURE



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*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.*





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

S`adi Shirazi, Persian poet



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Editorial

In The Name of God The Compassionate The Merciful

Springtime is certainly a time of renewal of hopes and revival of the manifestations of life. With the flowers out, the smiling sunshine and refreshing breeze, each of us can feel lively enough to plan for a new year, a better year in fact, both in terms of worldly matters and spiritual ones. As we all know, today's world is witnessing lots of maladies, plights and human sufferings which may darken the horizon of hope for some. But, for those who truly believe in God and in His Messengers (AS), there is endless hope, since they know God – The Most Gracious has presented the best directions and solutions in His last Book – the Holy Qur'an and so they see guidance in that Divine treasure as Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has advised his followers, "Solve your problems with the help of the Holy Qur'an."

In another Hadith, the Holy Qur'an has been regarded as "the spring of hearts". So let's revive our hearts with that celestial spring and also share that reviving blessing with the others. Never forget that God is the most kind and desires the best for all. That is why he has sent Messengers (AS) to take us out of the darkness and ignorance and lead us into the blissful path of salvation and eternal Paradise.

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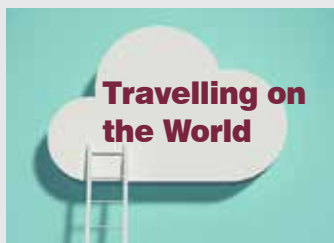
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The Lasting Norouz

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Certainly, each country's life is intertwined with the customs and traditions of its people, and each nation tries to protect and revive its national traditions and customs and to build its future upon the basis of its cultural heritage. Norouz is, no doubt one of the valuable heritages of human history and shows the constructive, brilliant mentality of its upholders.

Norouz has been honoured in our land for thousands of years and can be regarded as a strong pillar of our national identity. The secret behind the durability of Norouz can be sought in the traditions of the learned, the very traditions which purify the hearts and make the faces smiling. Pleasant meetings with dear ones, friends and the others during Norouz serve to add to compassion and respect towards the dear ones and also to remove the ill-feelings. Norouz refreshes the sense of being alive, brings beauty to houses and gardens, decreases harshness and enmities and strengthens friendships.

Norouz calls the people towards joviality and creativity and advises them against laziness and depressed moods. Norouz is, as a matter of fact totally joy and enthusiasm and this has added to Iranians' valuing Norouz. It should be noted that since old past times till now, in Iran, happy living has been closely connected with Divine worship. To Iranians happiness has invariably meant enjoying a pure heart and an enlightened spirit and not forgetfulness and harmful actions. Rather,

in Iranian traditions including Norouz, merry-making has been directed towards dignified conduct, exhibiting lofty thoughts. As an example, we can cite the Norouz-related costumes of spreading 'The Haft Seen' table-cloth and tying grasses as signs of the hearts' relation with the heavens and as bringing spiritual joy. Certainly, these facts have not been known by some Westerners who have expressed futile views in this regard. Interestingly, the various customs of Norouz are almost fulfilled in the same way throughout Iran, without having been propagated by any particular customs-teachers.

Needless to say, the Persian language has played a vital role in the unity of Iranian ethnic groups and their harmonious way of holding Norouz traditions add to their sense of devotion to their homeland, and to their country's territorial integrity. And the fact is that in many cases, the effect of shared traditions and beliefs are greater than a common language in unifying a nation, as the saying goes, "Being of the same belief is better than having the same language." And in Iran, both Muslims and non-Muslims including Christians, the Jewish and Zoroastrians hold Norouz in reverence and do their best to celebrate it. Thus, on the eve of Norouz, every Iranian, of whatever religious belief or ethnicity she/he may be, wishes a happy Norouz, and a happy year for all Iranians.

In the course of time, of course, Norouz attracted the attention of certain other nations, including Indians and some peoples

in Egypt, Mongolia, South Africa and Zanzibar. It has been recorded in historical texts that some Turkish rulers, including the Ghaznavid and the Saljuk rulers honoured Norouz, though they were not Iranian themselves, and the Mongols too got interested in Norouz traditions in Iran and so spread it to India and where the Baberi ruled. In fact, some Indian rulers continued the celebration of Norouz up to 1800 AD, most splendidly. Norouz has also been honored by Ottoman rulers. Those of Iranian origin who reside in Iraq, specially the Kurds also hold the Norouz celebrations for 13 days enthusiastically just like those who live in Iran.

One of the impressions left by Norouz traditions on other countries can be found in a tradition prevalent among the Egyptian Copts which tradition somehow resembles the 'Sizdahbedar' or the 'Nature's Day' held in Iran on the 13th day of the first month of spring each year. They regard Norouz as the beginning of their new year and go out for recreation and sight-seeing on the 13th day. This day is called 'Shamul-Nasim' by them. Certain interesting poems have also been composed about Norouz by Arab poets.

Norouz, conveys the unforgettable message of hope, namely that of hope's being a birth for humans. No doubt such a message wins hearts and encourages societies towards perfection. That is why this tradition has been welcomed by various world nations, those of Pakistan, China included.

In Turkey, the Ottoman rulers used to celebrate Norouz in their palaces, in the course of which the prime-minister would give gifts such as horses and fine clothes to the Sultan. The Turkish people would also make special meals for Norouz, which custom is still prevalent among them. The Turkish poets have also composed

was recognized as an official feast and holiday in Turkey.

And it has been about 1,000 years, since Norouz began to be celebrated in the Indian sub-continent, in particular by the Muslims there. In Pakistan, Norouz is often referred to as 'Alam-Afrouz' meaning 'lighting the world', which shows their interest in No-

significance is attached to Norouz traditions. These illustrated calendars include an inscription containing the name 'Ali' (repeated 20 times) and the verse of the Holy Qur'an, "... Allah is the Best Guard and He is the Most Merciful." In Arabic, together with certain numbers and sacred words. It is generally believed that writing



interesting poems on Norouz in various periods. Dr. Muzhgan Jonbur, the ex-director of the Turkish national library has authored a paper on Norouz in which she has introduced some of those poems known as 'Norouziyyah'. In those poems, Norouz has been honored as a reviver and giver of freshness to life and regarded as sacred days. Also, some have honoured Norouz as the anniversary of Imam Ali (AS)'s birth, and his marriage with Hazrat Fatimah (SA). Since, a few years ago, the Turkish government has been paying particular attention to Norouz honoring it through holding conferences, meetings and publishing books and booklets on Norouz customs. In 1991 AD, Norouz

rouz. Many families in Pakistan like Iranians clean their houses and wear new clothes, for Norouz and also visit relatives and friends. They also send each other beautiful greeting cards and try to make Norouz an occasion for the removal of grief and settling disputes. Some Persian-speaking poets, have composed poems on the beauty of the nature in the springs. Also, it has been narrated that Mas'ud S'ad (born in Lahore) has composed many couplets to glorify Norouz. Among the rulers in the sub-continent, Jalaedin Mohammad Akbarshah has been the most outstanding in celebrating Norouz. Also, presently in Pakistan some calendars are published each year in which special



that inscription with rose-water and Saffron on a clean page and carrying that with oneself during the year brings happiness and blessings.

During Norouz celebrations, the people of Pakistan set special tables, beautified with sweets and fruits and children receive gifts from the adults.

In Tajikistan, in particular in Badakhshan too, Norouz is held and celebrated splendidly. Tajikistan has in fact been part of the Iranian territory before and so the Tajik people regard Norouz as their ancestral national 'Id (festival or feast) and call it a great 'Id. The people of Tajikistan start making preparations for Norouz several days before that. They

clean their houses carefully, and for the first day of Norouz , they prepare a special breakfast which includes various kinds of sweet foods, hoping for a sweet year ahead. After breakfast, they hang a red cloth over the doors of their houses, believing it to be a sign of success and happiness. Then they open the windows to let the fresh



spring air in. All members of Tajik families wear new clothing on Norouz . Also, children are taught to say 'Happy Spring' to their parents politely. In Badakhshan Norouz is celebrated for three days during which the people visit each other, exchange gifts and wish each other happiness.

In Afghanistan, Norouz traditions are held the way they are held in Iran and it can be said that some of the customs related to Norouz are observed by Afghan people with great eagerness. In Iran, the Afghan brothers and sisters (who have migrated to Iran) show much interest in Norouz and celebrate Norouz very eagerly.

In the Azerbaijan republic,

Norouz is celebrated each year starting from March 20 and ending on March 22nd. The families there prepare themselves for Norouz since a few weeks ahead. This tradition is vividly reflected in some poems which are recited by them on the occasion of Norouz. Every family and person is cheerful on Norouz and express good



feelings and best wishes for the others. These traditions are really thought-provoking, since they convey many meaningful messages, including the message of kind-heartedness, benevolence and pure thoughts the fruits of which are good words, kindness, and being well-wishers towards all. In fact, the Norouz customs and traditions lead the peoples towards honesty, righteousness and purity of intention. The poems composed by Azerbaijan (and other) poets about Norouz show such desirable attitudes. In Azerbaijan Norouz celebrations also include such sports as horse-riding, archery, playing with ropes over rivers and the like, all of which add to the attraction of Norouz for

the people of Azerbaijan.

And for the people of Kyrgyzstan, Norouz is a sacred 'Id. They celebrate it with much splendor. In their country, Norouz is celebrated on just March 21st . During the 70 year rule of Communists, (the former USSR) the Norouz traditions was apparently wiped out there. But in fact,



and fencing. It should be noted that in the past, under the rule of the Communist, people were prohibited from celebrating Norouz and so they had to limit their Norouz ceremonies to gathering-together in homes. Yet being of a lasting nature, Norouz never died in those people's memories and continued to live to gain significance and increased attention after the end of the Communists' domination over the Kyrgyz and the others. Norouz has been left for them as a great tradition by their forefathers. On Norouz, the night and the day become equal and light overcomes darkness.

In Turkmenistan, Norouz is celebrated every year on March 21st. Following the independence of Turkmenistan, Norouz has gained great importance and has since been celebrated by the people, especially since the 'Norouz-Nameh' of Khayyam was translated into their language, giving

the Turkmen knowledge about Norouz. Also the writing and publication of numerous articles on Norouz by Turkmen researchers, led the Turkmen to learn more and more wisdom behind the ancient Norouz tradition. In



the wake of the independence of Turkmenistan, Norouz was recognized as a national festival in the country and is now honoured by both the youth and the elderly there. The Turkmen have a saying which goes: "Norouz gives the good-tidings of the new year."

The Turkmen too have special ceremonies and customs for Norouz, including preparing special foods which bear the name of Norouz, such as 'Norouz Koja', 'Norouz Yarmah' and Samanou. Wrestling, horse-riding, playing chess, and so on are also part of the Norouz ceremonies there. Visiting which take place for Norouz also form an inseparable part of

that tradition and show that Norouz has become mingled with the culture of the Turkmen people and is now a national tradition for them. Makhtumqoli Faraghi and Shaidai are among Turkmen poets who have presented beautiful poems on Norouz.

The people of Kazakhstan, too, regard Norouz as their national 'Id. On March 22nd each year, they come out of their houses early in the morning, gather in the cities' squares and express their



joy and happiness. The Kazakh believe that Norouz is the beginning of each New Year and have certain sayings about that such as: "Norouz is the day we have been awaiting for a whole year.", "Norouz - the day of the coming of blessings upon the earth." In Kazakhstan too, the people make their homes clean for Norouz and believe that cleaning attracts Divine favor and blessings. They also

try to fill their bowls and other vessels with water, milk and corns on the night before Norouz to receive more during the year. To these people, Norouz has always been a sacred 'id and if on Norouz it rains or snows, they take it as a good omen. Also, they customarily wear colorful new clothes for Norouz and prepare a special meal for Norouz and place a pot of water over which they recite Norouz prayers and the heads of the families are wished happiness



and success, for him and his family members. Also according to a Norouz-related custom, young men plant trees and clean the rivers and streams for Norouz. The Kazakh people hold the elders in great respect, yet customarily on Norouz daughters-in-law and sons-in-law become somewhat jocular towards their fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law. This behavior is not common among them

on the other days of the year. The people of Kazakhstan also believe in the significance of caring for the orphans and the disabled and exhibit this belief on Norouz quite markedly. Reciting poems in gatherings also form part of Norouz



traditions for them.

As for Norouz in Uzbekistan, it is an official holiday there. The people decorate their houses and streets and wear new clothes for Norouz. The Communist regime of the (former) Soviet Union regarded Norouz to be a religious festival and so banned it. As a result, the people had to go to particular distant places to be able to celebrate Norouz. That is why numerous places there have been given names relating to Norouz, such as 'Norouz Bolaqi' (Norouz fountain), 'Norouz Sa'i' (Norouz stream), 'Norouz Tappah' (Norouz hill) and so on. Though under the Communists' rule the people of



Uzbekistan had to follow their Gregorian Calendar, yet they continued to greet each other on every Norouz and to celebrate that secretly, and inside their houses. After Uzbekistan became independent, valuable works on Norouz began to be published and researches made on Norouz which connects many Muslims together, including Payame Norouz (the Message of Norouz) and Ne-shate- Norouz (the joy of Norouz). Cooking is also part of Norouz customs in this country, as it is in Iran, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan.

To conclude, history is witness to the fact that Norouz will not only not lose its glory and attraction, as time passes but also become stronger, more attractive and better celebrated, since this ancient tradition carries the message of hope and affection, benevolence and dynamism. Hoping for the time when all world peoples welcome and celebrate Norouz.

A Woman, as a Lovely Flower at Home

Mahjubah
Magazine

In the Holy Qur'an, we read that wives are to be sources of tranquility for men and that Allah places affection and mercy between married couples - husband and wife.

"Among His signs is [the fact] that He has created spouses for you from among yourselves so that you may console yourselves with them. He has planted affection and mercy between you; in that are signs for people

who think things over." The Holy Qur'an 30:21

As inferred from these Divine words, Allah – the Gracious God - has ordained marriage as the maker of an environment where the spouses find peace and consolation in each other and where the foundations of their fruitful life are to be laid; the life of true happiness embracing piety, chastity and mutual love, sympathy and

thus elevation of the soul and perfection of virtues, and raising upright, pious children. So, a woman, if properly trained and guided can successfully fulfill her Divinely-ordained role; the embodiment of elegance, love and Divine mercy and the life-giving fountain of tranquility and humane emotions.

And if, God-forbid, a woman has for any reason, been deprived of the needed teach-

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ings and/or gets exposed to immorality, for instance, through watching misleading films and reading materials which unfortunately are widespread today, due to the efforts of the enemies of God, she is most likely to lose her positive power in her marital life and instead turn into a source of emotional suffering for her husband and children. This rule of course equally applies to men; they need to avoid all immoral ways in order to be good husbands for their wives. So, immorality in all its manifestations can be regarded as the cause of the ruin of that blessed tree of love and affection planted by Allah between spouses for their happiness in both worlds. Also in the Holy Qur'an (2: 187) Allah has addressed men thus: *"They are libas (garments) for you while you are libas (garments) for them."* In Arabic, the word 'Libas' means covering, clothing, dress and according to Qur'anic commentaries, the verse of the Holy Qur'an implies that spouses should protect each other against moral deviations (sexual misconducts) through being sexually and also emotionally satisfying to each other and that they should beautify each other through pleasantness and proper guidance just as a beautiful dress makes one look nice. In this regard, numerous teachings have also been presented by the Infallible (AS), including the fol-

low-
ing:
"A woman should carefully cover her sexual charms (including her body, her hair, her makeup, ornaments, perfume and also soft pleasant tongue) from non-mahram men and in the presence of her husband make herself as attractive and lovely as possible (wearing her best, wearing perfumes and ornaments and also talking and acting coquettishly towards her husband)".

Indeed, a woman's being loving and coquettish to her husband (and also her acting in a dignified manner towards the other men) can be regarded as a key to her success in her marital life. Certainly no man desires a nagging, arrogant and unloving wife and no normal man can love a wife who, God-forbid, seems to be interested in attracting the other men. No doubt, if every woman observes the Divine teachings regarding her duties as a wife, the rate of divorce will fall amazingly.

Of course, as per Divine teach-

ings, husbands should mutually be loving, considerate and loyal to their wives and should also try to make their appearance nice and neat for their wives. The best of men of all times, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has set the best example for men in this regard too. Here let's read certain Ahadith

Indeed, a woman's being loving and coquettish to her husband (and also her acting in a dignified manner towards the other men) can be regarded as a key to her success in her marital life

from Her Holiness Hazrat Fatimah (SA): "Being a good wife has, for a woman, the reward of the struggles in the way of Allah."

"Observing Hijab perfectly exalts a woman towards Allah."





HEALTHY LIVING

A balanced diet is a cornerstone of health. Women, like men, should enjoy a variety of healthful foods from all of the foods groups, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, low-fat or fat-free dairy and lean protein. But women also have special nutrient needs, and, during each stage of a woman's life, these needs change.



● Eating Right

Nutrient-rich foods provide energy for women's busy lives and help to reduce the risk of disease. A healthy eating plan regularly includes:

- At least three ounce equivalents of whole grains such as whole-grain bread, whole-wheat cereal flakes, whole-wheat pasta, brown rice or oats.
- Three servings of low-fat or fat-free dairy products including milk, yogurt or cheese; or calcium-fortified plant-based alternatives.
- Five to 5-and-a-half ounce equivalents of protein such as lean meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, beans, lentils, nuts and seeds.
- Two cups of fruits — fresh, frozen or canned without added sugar.
- Two-and-a-half cups of colorful vegetables — fresh, frozen or canned without added salt.



● Iron-rich Foods

Iron is one of the keys to good health and energy levels in women prior to menopause. Foods that provide iron include red meat, chicken, turkey, fish, spinach, beans, lentils and some fortified ready-to-eat cereals. Plant-based sources of iron are more easily absorbed by your body when eaten with vitamin C-rich foods. So eat fortified cereal with strawberries on top, spinach salad with orange slices or add tomatoes to lentil soup.

● Folate (and Folic Acid) During the Reproductive Years

When women reach childbearing age, they need to eat enough folate (or folic acid) to help decrease the risk of birth defects. The requirement

for women who are not pregnant is 400 micrograms (mcg) per day. Including adequate amounts of foods that naturally contain folate, such as citrus fruits, leafy greens, beans and peas, will help increase your intake of this B vitamin. There also are many foods that are fortified with folic acid, such as breakfast cereals, some rices and breads. Eating a variety of foods is recommended to help meet nutrient needs, but a dietary supplement with folic acid also may be necessary. This is especially true for women who are pregnant or breast-feeding, since their daily need for folate is higher, 600 mcg and 500 mcg per day, respectively. Be sure to check with your physician or a registered dietitian nutritionist before taking any supplements.

 For healthy bones and teeth, women need to eat a variety of calcium-rich foods every day. Calcium keeps bones strong and helps to reduce the risk for osteoporosis, a bone disease in which the bones become weak and break easily 

● Daily Calcium and Vitamin D Requirements

For healthy bones and teeth, women need to eat a variety of calcium-rich foods every day. Calcium keeps bones strong and helps to reduce the risk for osteoporosis, a bone disease in which the bones become weak and break easily. Some calcium-rich foods include low-fat

or fat-free milk, yogurt and cheese, sardines, and calcium-fortified foods including plant-based milk alternatives, juices and cereals. Adequate amounts of vitamin D also are important, and the need for both calcium and vitamin D increases as women get older. Good sources of vitamin D include fatty fish, such as salmon, eggs and fortified foods and beverages, such as milk, plant-based milk alternatives, some yogurts and juices.

● Foods and Beverages to Limit

Women should avoid excess added sugars, saturated fat.

- Limit sweetened beverages, including regular soft drinks, candy, cookies, pastries and other desserts.
- Eat fewer foods that are high in saturated fat. Opt for low-fat or fat-free dairy products and lean proteins instead of their full-fat counterparts. Cook with olive oil instead of butter and coconut oil. Incorporate more plant-based protein foods, such as beans, lentils into your diet.

● Balancing Calories with Activity

Since women typically have less muscle, more body fat and are smaller than men, they need fewer calories to maintain a healthy body weight and activity level. Women who are more physically active may require more calories.

Physical activity is an important part of a woman's health. Regular activity helps with muscle strength, balance, flexibility and stress management. As with any part of raising children, no one does a perfect job with nutrition. As a parent, grandparent or

adult caregiver, you can help to raise healthy eaters during these critical years by doing your best to:

- Serve regular, balanced meals and snacks with a variety of nutrient-rich foods.
- Provide calm, pleasant meal times where adults and children can talk together.
- Remove distractions such as television, phones and tablets so that your attention is on each other.
- Allow children to use their internal signals to decide how much and what to eat from the foods you set out for each meal.
- Explore a variety of flavors and foods from different cultures and cuisines.
- Share an appreciation for healthful food, lovingly prepared and shared with others.
- Make simple food safety, such as washing hands, part of every eating occasion.
- Teach basic skills for making positive food choices away from home.
- Find credible food and nutrition resources when you don't know the answer.

While this may seem like an intimidating to-do list, two family habits go a long way to making all this happen: regular family meals and involving

kids in nutrition from the ground up.

• **Make Family Meal Times a Priority**

Sometimes a very simple act can have important, long-lasting benefits. According to parenting and health experts, that is exactly the case with family meal times. Eating and talking together helps to:

- Foster family unity
- Prevent behavior problems at home and school
- Enhance academic success
- Improve nutrition
- Promote healthy weight for kids

With that impressive list of benefits, it's worth making the time and effort to enjoy more family meal times each week. Look for easy ways to add just one family meal to the schedule. If evenings seem too hectic for family dinners, set aside time for a weekend breakfast or lunch. After a month or two of this new pattern, you can add another family meal each week. Before you know it, you will be eating together on most days.

• **Start by Assessing Your Food Choices and Lifestyle**

Keep track of what you eat and drink and how much physical activity you get so you can identify

behaviors you would like to change.

• **One Large Goal can Seem Overwhelming**

Break big goals into smaller, more specific goals and include a list of realistic changes in your daily routine to achieve these specific goals. For instance, divide big and vague goals like "I will eat better" into smaller, more specific goals like "I will eat one more piece of fruit per day." Remember, while your goals should be challenging, they should also be reachable.

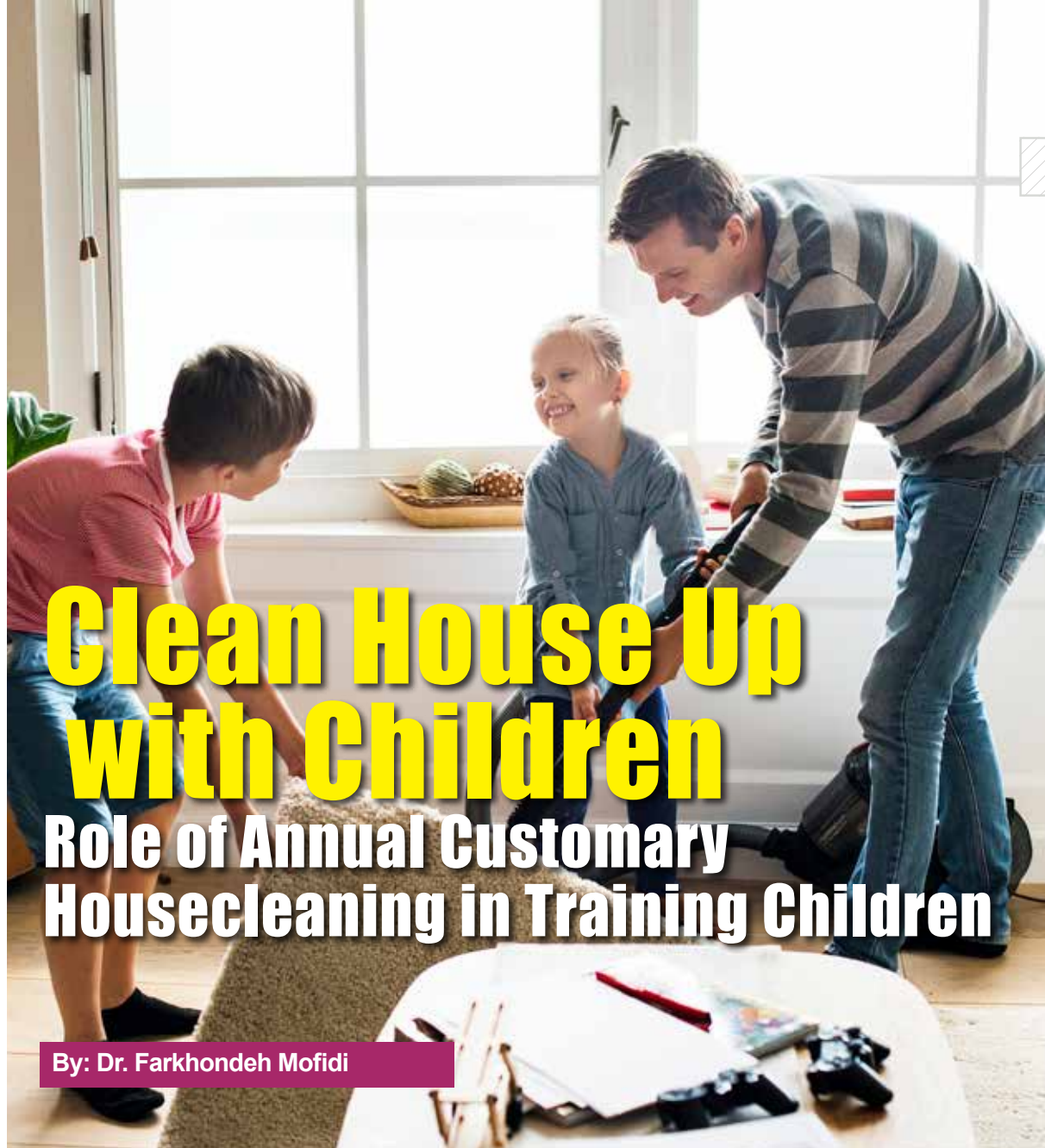
• **Make Sure the Goals You Set are Measurable**

The goals must provide answers to "How much?" or "How many?" so you can easily review and track your progress. Evaluate your progress every week or two, and update your plan based upon your current progress or circumstances. Make sure you are giving yourself enough time to achieve each smaller goal so you are not discouraged if you haven't met them.

• **Seek Help from a Qualified Health Professional**

A registered dietitian nutritionist is your best source of reliable and up-to-date food and nutrition information. www.eatright.org





Clean House Up with Children

Role of Annual Customary Housecleaning in Training Children

By: Dr. Farkhondeh Mofidi

Annual customary house cleaning is an old and beautiful Iranian tradition which is somehow the case in other countries and people welcome the New Year or any other special ceremony through cleaning their house up. Meanwhile, as our great Prophet says “Cleanliness Is next To Godliness”, the cleanliness has always enjoyed a special position in our lives as Muslims. Traditionally, all members of a family including children and even neighbors and relatives used to participate in performing the annual cleaning

tasks and people gave each other a hand to clean the thoroughfares, roofs, basements, home appliances, etc. Customarily, prettification of houses, shops, streets, Bazaars and neighborhoods usually was associated with a public enthusiasm. Dusting and decontaminating was not limited to the physical places, but people tried to purify their souls through reconciling and intensifying their friendships in such days when everywhere were clean. But today the main problem is that new technologies and employment of all fam-

ily members in tandem with the changed traditional household structure into modern the forms have changed the public activities and have replaced the traditional beautiful group and social customs with estrangement and individual activities. Hence, today many families prefer to recruit professional cleaners and workers for cleaning their houses on the threshold of the New Year. It seems that they think that there is not enough time for performing such shared activities like the old days. Certainly, a deep pondering

“ Children, particularly little ones, learn the rules from their parents through benchmarking, imitating and resembling them. Acts, insights and beliefs of parents can play decisive roles in the training fate of the children. ”

on our ancestors' intention makes it clear that they had always tried to take advantage of the social life practices and skills to make more relationships, friendships, cooperation, coordination with other people, because they believed that such activities were useful to meet their both social and individual needs. The modern life, which is specified with the welfare-seeking desire and neglecting the social participation components, deprives us of the opportunity to transfer our beautiful traditional and family-based customs to the coming generations and our children are dispossessed of social living benefits and enjoyment of the social and family activities. How

well it would be if we specify some time for cleaning our house with our children before this New Year.

● Role of Children and Parents in the Annual Customary House-cleaning

Family is a social institution that follows all rules of a social organization, as all family members share in its activities and advantages. Children, particularly little ones, learn the rules from their parents through benchmarking, imitating and resembling them. Acts, insights and beliefs of parents can play decisive roles in the training fate of the children. Thus, children will be trained successfully if their parents fulfill their social

and individual duties and commitments very well. For cleaning the house, for instance, it is necessary to keep our kids in touch with the works and consider some duties, even trivial, for them; it helps them to learn that all activities of house and family are done through cooperation and coordination. Some parents keep their children away of such activities; hence they will be deprived of the enjoyment achieved in the end of the process and feel no sense of responsibility for keeping the house clean. It is necessary to invite them to participate in conducting works which in turn lets them to enjoy decision making and performing affairs experiences. Any discrimination between girls and boys in conducting these affairs would be detrimental. Asking their idea about internal affairs of the house will prepare them for some more serious roles in the future. Certainly, using such method



our children will be successful in the lessons and skills necessary for better living.

Persians, Afghans and other groups start preparing for the Norouz with a major spring-cleaning of their houses, the purchase of new clothes to wear for the new year and the purchase of flowers (in particular the hyacinth and the tulip are popular and conspicuous.)

In association with the “rebirth of nature”, extensive spring-cleaning is a national tradition observed by almost every household in Iran. This is also extended to personal attire, and it is customary to buy at least one set of new clothes. On the New Year’s day, families dress in their new clothes and start the twelve-day celebrations by visiting the elders of their family, then the rest of their family and finally their friends. On the thirteenth day families leave their homes and picnic outdoors.

During the Norouz holidays peo-

ple are expected to visit one another (mostly limited to families, friends and neighbors) in the form of short house visits, which are usually reciprocated.

Typically, on the first day of Norouz, family members gather around the table, with the Haft Seen on the table or set next to it, and await the exact moment of the arrival of the spring.

At that time gifts are exchanged. Later in the day, the first house visits are paid to the most senior family members. Typically, the youth will visit the elders first, and the elders return their visit later. The visits naturally have to be relatively short, otherwise one will not be able to visit everybody on their list. A typical visit is around 30 minutes, where you often run into other visiting relatives and friends who happen to be paying a visit to the same house at that time. Because of the house visits, you make sure you have a sufficient supply of pastry, cookies, fresh

and dried fruits and special nuts on hand, as you typically serve your visitors with these items with tea or sherbet. Many Iranians hold big Norouz parties in a central location as a way of dealing with the long distances between groups of friends and family.

Some Norouz celebrants believe that whatever a person does on Norouz will affect the rest of the year. So, if a person is warm and kind to their relatives, friends and neighbors on Norouz, then the New Year will be a good one. On the other hand, if there are fights and disagreements, the year will be a bad one.

One tradition that may not be very widespread (that is, it may belong to only a few families) is to place something sweet, such as honey or candy, in a safe place outside overnight. On the first morning of the New Year, the first person up brings the sweet stuff into the house as another means of attaining a good new year.

Friendly Talks

By: Yasamin Rezaiyan

Hope for Your help make our hearts calm. Anytime I get worried, I try to find more hope to calm down and relax. It is a great blessing. It is like a miracle. You create springs, and they give us thousands of blossoms. It is You who creates beauty, freshness and day green plants.

You also create winters and I like them for the white pure snow. But spring gives me a sense of beauty, encourages me to look for Your signs, Your power everywhere. You are the God of all and everything. You create the nice springs which warms our bodies, just as Your name warms our hearts. I call You my Kind God to find hope and pray to You to bless us with the rain of Your Mercy and change our condition into the best of conditions. We hope for Your greatest Miracles.



I like Norouz

By: Ruhullah Nosrati

I like Norouz, because it reminds me of the freshness of nature, cleanliness of houses, and the pure excitement of the love of life, of nice talks, of seeing children happy with their new pretty things and of sharing good things with the others. On Norouz, I feel revived and refreshed and I would like to share my nice feelings with all of you - my friends and pray for a happy and prosperous new year for all.



The Sweetness of Hope's Miracle

By: Lika Sharifi Sadeghi

Seconds, minutes and hours declare the approach of a new year. The amazing changes provoke one's thoughts, making the past memories join aspirations for the future, thus creating hope for a better life in the hearts. Each year can be regarded as memorable in its own right, since in that we taste the sweetness of hope and its miraculous effects upon our lives. Hope is in fact the Elixir of life. It is hope that motivates us to work and help and progress. Without hope, everywhere will be dominated by loss, sense of futility and ruin. I pray to God to grant more and more hope, patience and knowledge to all of us, without each of these three no one will prosper.



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The Earth Rotates

By: Azadeh Haqqoo

The arrival of Norouz makes me think more deeply about the wonders of creation, such as the rotation of the earth and this gives me the nice feeling of being able to move faster and faster towards goodness and changing for the better. I desire the best for all my friends and wish them lasting happiness.

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Freedom of Thought in the Holy Qur'an

Mahjubah
Magazine

By: Hussein Muhammadi

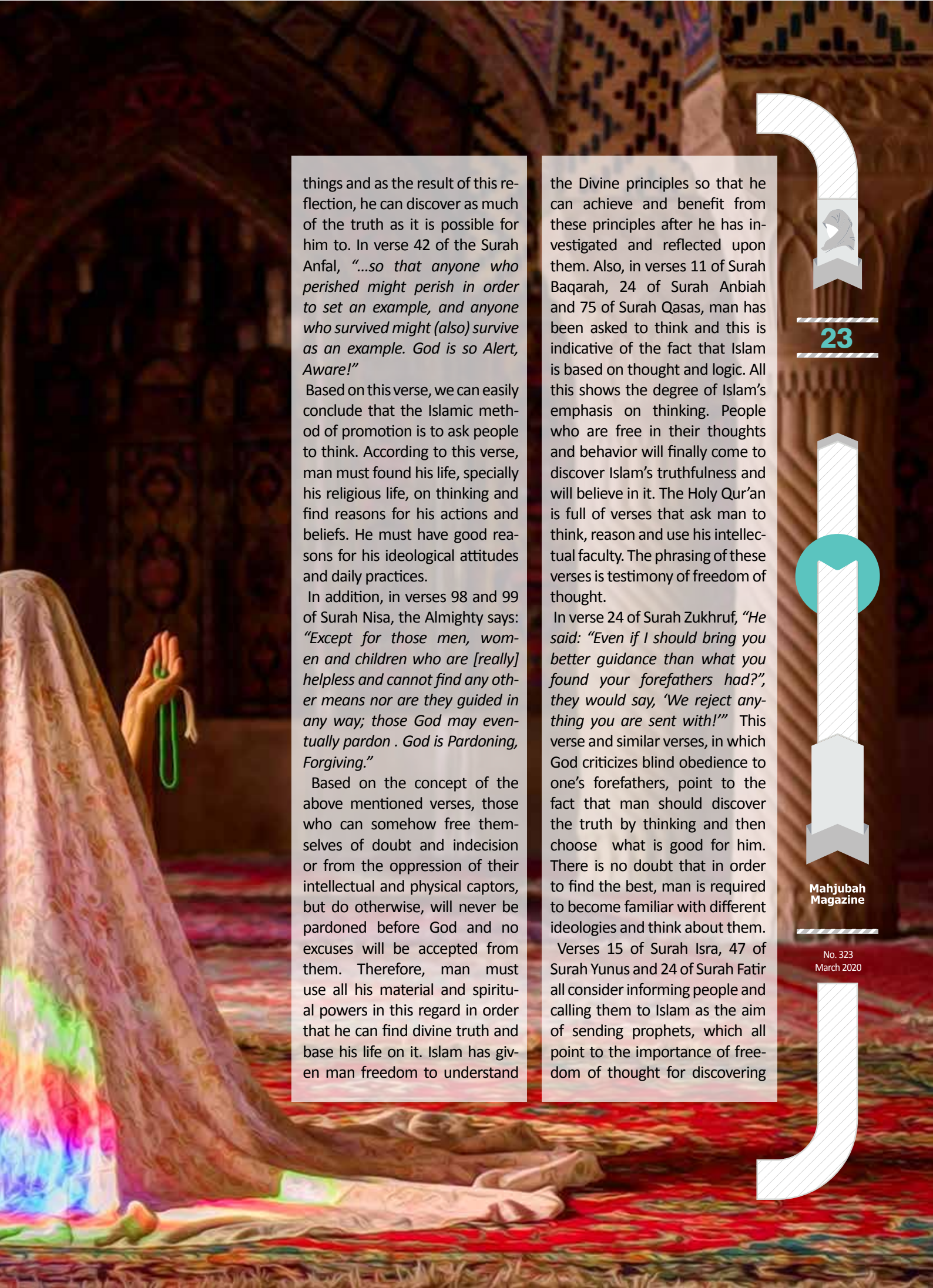
Thinking is one of the most important high faculties in human beings, which requires a proper social ground for its growth and development. Modern man considers social liberties as one of his aspirations and goals and continually attempts to achieve and preserve these and other kinds of liberties. Freedom of thought implies a number of things among which we can mention the following: preparing the ground, information and the means for facilitating free thinking, as well as removing the obstacles of thinking. In the Islamic culture, there are several narrations from the Prophet (PBUH) and Imams (AS) that praise thinking. For instance, we have it in our traditions that one hour's thinking is superior to seventy years spent praying. In this essay, we will discuss this concept in order to clarify whether Islam accepts or rejects freedom of thought.

Man is generally free to make his own decisions and there is nothing that threatens this freedom. In other words, this freedom lies in selecting the ways of logical thinking, without being affected or forced by the others, the

information and the misleading means, to move in a particular direction towards certain good or bad outcomes. Each of these factors is considered a type of limitation to freedom of thought, because these external factors will cause man to be led towards a particular result, while if he had been free he would have achieved a different and even the opposite result.

Freedom of thought also implies removing the internal factors that restrict the intellect, particularly carnal desires and blind pursuit of one's habits. All these factors are restrictive barriers to the intellect and push it towards certain predetermined results. Of course, it must be noted that the freedom of thought is also associated with the thinkers and their followers and supporters.

Thinking ability is the result of man's intellect. Freedom of thought is the result of the same human faculty that enables him to think. This faculty must necessarily be free. Man's development and evolution is dependent on this freedom. Thought is logic. Because man is a thinking creature, he can ponder on various



things and as the result of this reflection, he can discover as much of the truth as it is possible for him to. In verse 42 of the Surah Anfal, *"...so that anyone who perished might perish in order to set an example, and anyone who survived might (also) survive as an example. God is so Alert, Aware!"*

Based on this verse, we can easily conclude that the Islamic method of promotion is to ask people to think. According to this verse, man must found his life, specially his religious life, on thinking and find reasons for his actions and beliefs. He must have good reasons for his ideological attitudes and daily practices.

In addition, in verses 98 and 99 of Surah Nisa, the Almighty says: *"Except for those men, women and children who are [really] helpless and cannot find any other means nor are they guided in any way; those God may eventually pardon . God is Pardoning, Forgiving."*

Based on the concept of the above mentioned verses, those who can somehow free themselves of doubt and indecision or from the oppression of their intellectual and physical captors, but do otherwise, will never be pardoned before God and no excuses will be accepted from them. Therefore, man must use all his material and spiritual powers in this regard in order that he can find divine truth and base his life on it. Islam has given man freedom to understand

the Divine principles so that he can achieve and benefit from these principles after he has investigated and reflected upon them. Also, in verses 11 of Surah Baqarah, 24 of Surah Anbiah and 75 of Surah Qasas, man has been asked to think and this is indicative of the fact that Islam is based on thought and logic. All this shows the degree of Islam's emphasis on thinking. People who are free in their thoughts and behavior will finally come to discover Islam's truthfulness and will believe in it. The Holy Qur'an is full of verses that ask man to think, reason and use his intellectual faculty. The phrasing of these verses is testimony of freedom of thought.

In verse 24 of Surah Zukhruf, *"He said: 'Even if I should bring you better guidance than what you found your forefathers had?'; they would say, 'We reject anything you are sent with!'"* This verse and similar verses, in which God criticizes blind obedience to one's forefathers, point to the fact that man should discover the truth by thinking and then choose what is good for him. There is no doubt that in order to find the best, man is required to become familiar with different ideologies and think about them.

Verses 15 of Surah Isra, 47 of Surah Yunus and 24 of Surah Fatir all consider informing people and calling them to Islam as the aim of sending prophets, which all point to the importance of freedom of thought for discovering

the truth. This demonstrates that using superior thought man can achieve better results. Islam does not just pay lip service to freedom of thought; as a result of thought the truth of Islam glows brighter.

Considering the above-mentioned verses, it is clear that Islam not only respects thinking and freedom of thought, but also considers freedom of thought as necessary for salvation. Since Islam is based on reasoning and logic, it calls man to God through the use of reasoning and encourages him to think before accepting the truth of Islam.

● The Scope of Freedom of Thoughts

Islam leaves freedom of thought unbounded. But this voluntary act of thinking is realized in two different ways: one is the proper way which leads to man's progress and perfection; the other is the wrong way which results in retrogression and decline. Therefore, Islam talks of useful and right thoughts in growing terms and criticizes useless and wrong thoughts, but it leaves both options open to the free man. Now, if man decides not to heed these warnings and involve himself in evil thoughts, he is

“Islam talks of useful and right thoughts in growing terms and criticizes useless and wrong thoughts, but it leaves both options open to the free man.”



still free and will not be punished as long as he has not put these thoughts into practice. However, as soon as he puts his evil thoughts into practice he will be punished for his wrongdoing and that is because he has adversely affected the external world with his malicious and corrupt thoughts. Practicing evil thoughts disturbs other people's thoughts and prevents them from achieving the truth, which is deemed an offence and thus punishable by law.

In the Holy Qur'an, numerous subjects have been introduced as proper, some examples of which are as follows: in verses 8 of Surah Rume, 42 Of Surah Zomar and 24 of Surah Yunus,, God has advised man to think about his creation, life and death and the essence of the universe. Also, in verses 6 of Surah Fath, 12 of Surah Hijarat

and 103-105 of Surah Kahf,, the Almighty has prohibited us from indulging in idle speculation and being deceived by appearances. In these verses, God has reproached those who are deeply involved with appearances and have restricted their thoughts to superficial things; it has been stated that these people will not benefit from their thoughts. Therefore, in Islam constructive and beneficial thoughts, but not harmful ones, are highly valued. Accepting freedom of thought in Islam does not entail accepting everything that results from exercising this freedom because if man uses some suspect and unsubstantiated assumptions, he may sometimes come to the wrong conclusion. The Qur'an has repeatedly prohibited man from using suspect premises and invalid conclusions. It has criticized those



who follow their suspicions. In verse 36 of Surah Yunus, God says that speculation will never obviate man's need for the truth. Thus from a Qur'anic perspective, it is senseless to have freedom to follow one's suspicions, because suspicions even if they initially lead to the truth, may subsequently lead one astray. Of course from the Qur'an's point of view this attitude to doubtful conclusions takes on a different form when these conclusions affect the individual on the one hand and society on the other hand. That is to say, if doubtful conclusions prove harmful to society, they will be legally punishable. However, if the effects are only limited to the individual, then the individual himself or herself will have to suffer from their worldly and other-worldly consequences. Those who rely on doubt-

ful premises must naturally be prepared to expect their unwanted consequences. The foregoing discussion holds true for people who deliberately choose to use their dubious premises and conclusions; however, if somebody unknowingly considers uncertain premises as certain, he is not, from a Qur'anic perspective, to suffer the other-worldly consequences; he is considered among the helpless and may finally enjoy the Almighty's mercy. To sum up, from a Qur'anic perspective, definite conclusions are respectable. Whatever man considers doubtful is not suitable to serve as the basis of his decisions and those who rely on their conjectures have been reproached in the Holy Qur'an. In verse 12 of Surah Hojarat, addressing the believers, God says: "You who believe, refrain from

conjecturing too much: even a little suspicion forms a vice. Do not spy on one another, nor let any of you backbite others. Would one of you like to eat his dead brother's flesh? You would loathe it! Heed God, for God is Relenting, Merciful!" Thoughts that are born out of carnal desires are not acceptable. The Qur'an calls man to piety in order to help him to avoid these thoughts. In verse 29 of Surah Anfal, God says: "You who believe, if you heed God, He will grant you a Standard, absolve your evil deeds for you, and forgive you. God possesses such splendid bounty!" The effect of carnal desires on the thought has made the Qur'an warn man against these desires and advise him to keep them under control. Demonstrating the relationship between following one's suspicions and carnal desires in verses 23,24 of Surah Najm, God says: "They are only some names which you and your forefathers have called them; God has not sent down any authority for them. They merely follow conjecture and something their souls fancy. Yet guidance has already reached them from their Lord. Or may man have anything he hankers for?"

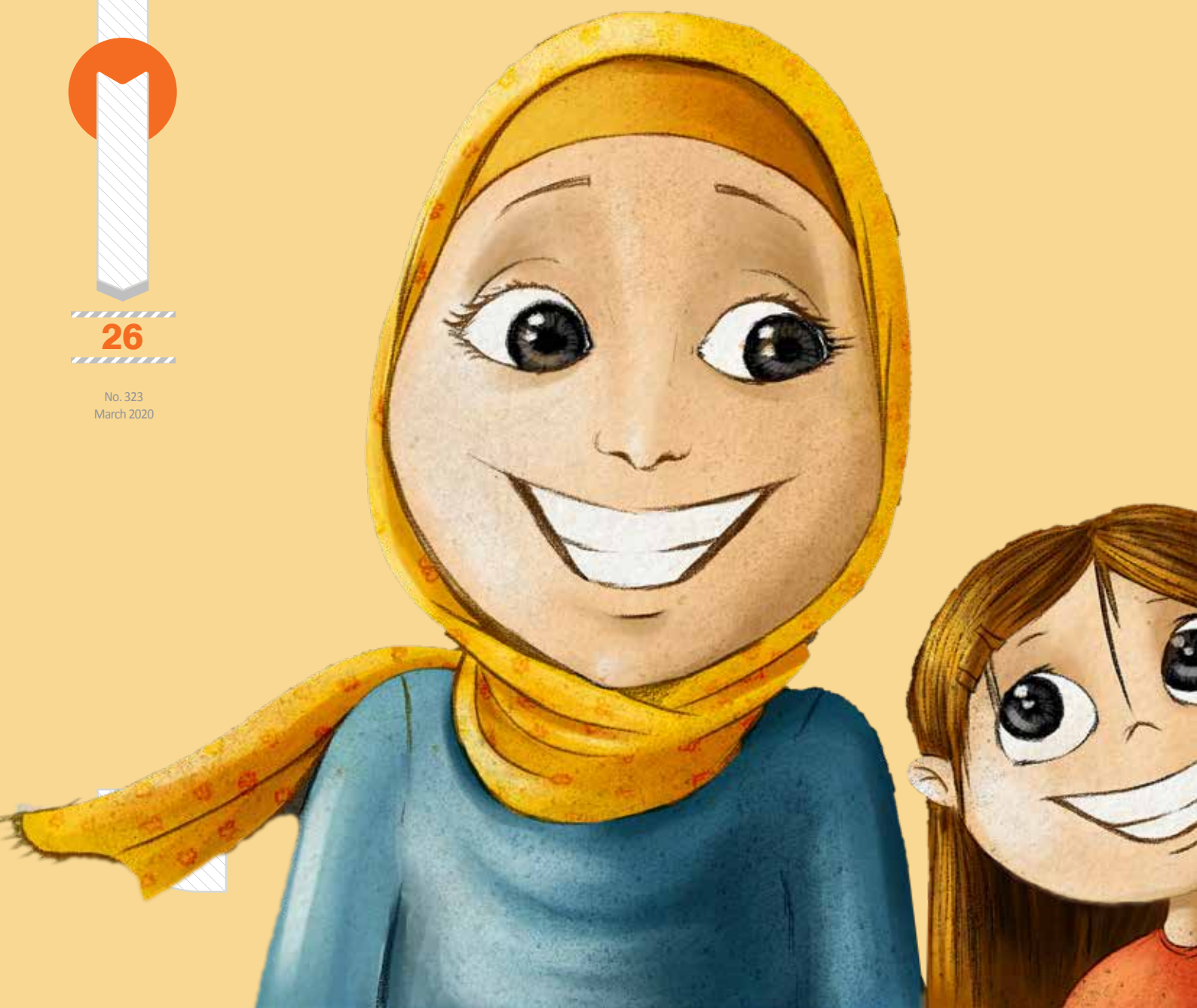
Freedom of thought also implies removing the internal factors that restrict the intellect, particularly carnal desires and blind pursuit of one's habits.

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How to Help Your Child with Negative Thinking

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School is one of the most potent influences upon the social and emotional development of our children. Peer pressures, teacher evaluations, academic challenges, and a host of other forces await our kids every day. These forces shape children's evolving repertoire of life skills in a variety of ways. Sometimes the impact is favorable; for example, warm and healthy friendships can spur the continued growth of empathy, perspective-taking, and mutuality. On the other hand, the potential negative impact of teacher criticism or peer rejection can threaten academic motivation and self-acceptance. While it is reasonable for parents to try to shield youngsters from the negative influences of school, teachers, and guidance counselors are in the best position to do so.

In my role as a child psychologist, I am often in contact with the teachers and school counselors of those children I treat. I try to share my understanding of my patients so as to "lengthen the shelf life" of therapeutic intervention. Often there are certain school requirements and triggers that children do not possess adequate skills to manage, i.e., sharing attention, complying with rules, containing energy, accepting critical feedback, being the object of teasing, etc. Teachers and

counselors are eager to help and receptive to my suggestions for school-based intervention. When I explain my coaching model and *Parent Coaching Cards*, they invariably ask how such coaching might be implemented in the school. This article will discuss one of the major points that I have offered in response to this question.

● How Internal Language Reflects a Child's Negative Thoughts

The overriding goal of my work with all children, and ADHD kids in particular, is to teach them emotional and social skills for successful coping. My coaching model leans heavily upon empowering one's "thinking side" and strengthening one's watch over the "reacting side. One critical way this is accomplished is through the development of constructive internal language: an internal language without negative thinking. Internal language is what we silently think to ourselves. It takes on a constructive quality when it is used in the service of coping with life demands.

Unfortunately, many children are more accustomed to using internal language as a release valve when faced with challenges, rather than as a pathway to effectively contend with the challenge. For example, when various school pressures build up, students are more likely to think or say to themselves, "this is awful...I can't do this...I'll nev-

er make a friend, etc." These negative thinking internal statements may temporarily relieve pressure by projecting responsibility and forfeiting participation. But, in the long run, they just perpetuate problems by drawing a child away from the construction of solutions.

● Changing a Child's Negative Thinking to Positive Thinking

Children can be coached in how to use their internal language in all phases of emotional and social skill-building. The school is the ideal place to conduct such coaching due to the presence of demands and the support of teachers and counselors. One of the first steps is to help children identify their constructive internal language. It may be referred to as their "helpful thinking voice" to distinguish it from some of the self-defeating thinking that goes on in children's minds. Teachers or counselors might explain that the "thinking voice" helps to solve problems and make good decisions while the "unhelpful voice" can actually make problems worse or lead to bad decisions. An example can make this clear:

Suppose a boy sat down to do his worksheet of ten problems and realized that he could not do three problems on the page. Two thoughts come to mind:
A. "This is impossible, I'll never get a good mark on this. Why even bother trying?"
B. "Well, just because I can't do these three doesn't mean I

shouldn't try my best."

"A" can be characterized as the "unhelpful voice" and "B" as the "helpful thinking voice."

Next, children might be presented with the following dichotomy to reinforce their understanding: Examples of the Mind's Two Voices

1. In Response to Academic Challenge Helpful Thinking Voice:

"This looks hard and probably even too hard for me to do... but I'll never know unless I try. I'm going to take it step by step and just forget about how hard it is so I can keep trying."

Unhelpful Voice:

"This looks hard and probably even too hard for me to do...I'm definitely not going to be able to it. I hate this stuff and can't see why we have to learn it."

Often there are certain school requirements and triggers that children do not possess adequate skills to manage, i.e., sharing attention, complying with rules, containing energy, accepting critical feedback, being the object of teasing, etc.

2. In Response to Social Challenge Helpful Thinking Voice:

"They don't like me and I don't like the way they are treating me. Maybe I'm different from them and they can't deal with that. Or, maybe they just don't

really know me yet, and they'll change their minds when they get to know me better."

Unhelpful Voice:

"They don't like me and I don't like the way they are treating me. They're idiots and I feel like smashing them. If they say one more mean thing to me, I'm definitely going to make them pay for what they're doing to me."

3. In Response to Emotional Challenge Helpful Thinking Voice:

"Things didn't work out...again. This is getting really frustrating. It's hard to understand why it's happened to me this time. Maybe somebody else can help me figure it out. Who should I ask?"

Unhelpful Voice:

"Things didn't work out...again. Why does this always happen? This is so unfair. I can't believe it. I don't deserve it. Why me?"

Most children will recognize how in each example, the initial thoughts are identical, but the resulting internal dialogue is completely contrary. The discussion then focuses on the imaginary scenarios that might lead to each one of these examples, and the specific phrases that each voice utilizes. In the case of the helpful thinking voice, words and phrases such as "step by step," "maybe" and "hard to understand" are offered to stress the importance of plotting a strategy to cope, making the option of change seem viable, and expressing the quest to make sense out

of circumstances. In contrast, words and phrases such as "definitely," "hate," "idiots," "feel like smashing them," "always," and "unfair" reveal the emotionally charged and absolute thinking of the unhelpful voice.

The helpful thinking voice examples also demonstrate the attempt to construct solutions to the problems faced by the child in question. In the academic challenge, the child adopts a strategy of minimizing awareness of difficulty. In the social challenge, the child adopts the perception of things changing for the better in the future. In the emotional challenge, the child decides to pursue helpful consultation.

Once children grasp the importance of constructive internal

In the social challenge, the child adopts the perception of things changing for the better in the future. In the emotional challenge, the child decides to pursue helpful consultation.

language, they will be better able to benefit from the school-based coaching of social and emotional skills. Future articles will address the next steps in that progression.

Source: motivateus.com

The Rose Returns

KHWAJA HAFEZ-e SHIRAZI

Returns again to the pleasantries the rose, alive from the dead;
Before her feet in obeisance is bowed the violet's head.

The earth is gemmed as the skies are, the buds zodiac band,
For signs in happy ascendant and sweet conjunction spread,

The rose's season bereave not of wine and music and love,
For as the days of a man's life her little week is fled.

The faith of old Zoroaster renews the garden again,
For lo, the tulip is kindled with fire of Nimrod red.

The earth is even as 'Eden, this hour of lily and rose;
This hour, alas! Not an 'Eden's eternal dwelling-stead!

The rose with Solomon rides, borne aloft on wings of the wind;
The bulbul's anthem at dawn like the voice of David is shed.

Fill high the bowl to our lord's name, 'Imad-ud-Din Mahmud;
Behold King Solomon's Asef in him incarnated.

Beyond eternity's bounds stretch the gracious shade of his might;
Beneath that shadow, O Hafiz, be thine eternity sped.

Translated by: Walter Leaf



Rosewater Extraction in the Heart of the Desert

Translated by: Behrouz Khorram



researches on the essence extraction know-how by distillation.

The roses roll in water on the flame. The scent of rosewater is so condensed that causes a headache for many people and allergies for many others. But everybody enjoys these scents and roses.

Rosewater extraction is the 7 thousand old tradition of Kashan that still exists. From the second month of the spring until the beginning of summer is the time for picking the Mohammadi roses and extraction. When rosewater is extracted, there appears a layer of oil on the top which is used for making perfumes, and many perfume factories in the world use this product for their perfumes.

Rosewater has an amazing scent, but if it is too condensed, some might get a headache. The flowers are beautiful.

In order to extract rosewater, in every pot, 40 kilos of rose is mixed with 30 kilos of water. There is a flame under every pot. With the help of the heat, rosewater is produced and led through the pipes to the jars that are inside water. In the past the jars were made of clay and the pipes from reed, and the rosewater produced was of a higher quality. In those ages, rosewater extraction was done with a ceremony. The jars were carried to the river, and were put inside the water. Traditionally, they recited some prayers during the extraction, and it was kept hid-

Rosewater is extracted from a special rose called the Mohammadi rose which is unique for its scent and is rich in health benefits. Many believe that the Iranians were the first people who used distillation to extract rosewater and essence from rose, and they shared its knowledge with the others. Avicenna, the great Iranian scientist, made vast

den from some people's eyes. But now most of the sites are open. Two million tourists visit Kashan for enjoying the sight of rosewater extraction every year.

In other seasons, when there is not any rosewater extraction, they extract distillation from other flowers. The rosewater extraction industry of Kashan provides the rosewater that is used for the annual wash of the Ka'ba. Rosewater is exported to Europe too.

Kashan is hot and in the middle of the desert. It has an old and unique style. There are old structures there, and the Fin bathhouse is there. The streets of the city are full of advertisements by the rosewater extraction companies that welcome the visitors: "Here is the rosewater extraction site." , "The workshops and factories of rosewater extraction are located here." There is a large pot in every workshop that is connected by a pipe to a jar that is put in the water.

Ghamsar is in Kashan. The history of Ghamsar is interwoven with rosewater extraction. Although the center for rosewater extraction is recently shifted from Ghamsar to Niasar- another area in Kashan- the Ghamsar rosewater still is regarded unrivalled. In Ghamsar, the environment turns greener. The sides of the road are full of roses. One can smell the scent of the gardens. The roses are the sign and guide. They are the sign of Ghamsar.

Courtesy: Hamshahrionline



Travelling on the World

Rahmatllah Ali Rahimi Natanzi

"Say: "Travel around the earth and see how He began with creation; later on God raises up fresh growth. God is Capable of everything!"

The Holy Qur'an, 29: 20

Traveling can be classified into two kinds of spiritual and physical;

1- The spiritual traveling is when your physique is at home, but your heart and mind are traveling towards heavens and picturing earthly and celestial wonders. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah has called upon us to launch such a journey – the spiritual one: *"Have they not observed in the sovereignty over Heaven*

and Earth and whatever God has created of any sort, that perhaps their deadline maybe approaching? In what report will they believe later on?"

The Holy Qur'an, 7: 185

2- The physical traveling involves taking that troubles of a journey in which one's body has to move to other places. Certainly, there is much difference between the two kinds of traveling; imagine for example, going on pilgrimage to Mecca for seeing K'abah with your bodily eyes on one hand and sitting at home and thinking of K'abah on the other. Each kind has its own merits and conditions of course. Here, we will briefly talk about bodily or

physical traveling: physical traveling can be taken for various motives, such as for acquiring knowledge, for self-purification, for seeing the wonders of creation, for worship, for protecting one's faith, for trade and for recreation.

As for travelling for the acquisition of knowledge, suffice it to mention these Ahadith: "The one who leaves his home in search of knowledge, will be regarded by Allah as the one who is struggling in Allah's way till he returns home." and "Angels spread their wings for those who strive to acquire knowledge." According to men of understanding, one should seek the kind of knowledge which benefits him and the others in ways ordained for eternal salvation and leading to piety and true benefits for Allah's servants. Going on journeys with the aim of self-purification is also worthwhile, since some might think of themselves as being good-tempered and virtuous while resting at home, but when going through the hardships of a travel, they will find out their own shortcomings and faults, and thus feel the need for self-purification. Traveling for seeing the wonderful places and things in various parts of the world has its own benefits, since doing so can help a believer strengthen his faith in the oneness of the Creator. Of course this kind of journey can also be taken spiritually, as we are told in the Holy Qur'an: *"How many a sign do they pass by in Heaven and Earth, and pay no attention to them?"* (12: 105)

Worship-oriented journeys are indeed of great benefit. They include Hajj and pilgrimage to the shrines of Allah's messengers (AS), the Infallible Imams (AS) and the righteous. Also, there may be the motive of protecting one's faith in connection with beneficial travels, since there can be conditions (in a place) likely to harm one's faith and so leaving that place for a safer one will become necessary for the believer who wants to protect himself against temptations.

Traveling for trade is of merit and reward worthy as an act of worship out of the motives of earning halal livelihood for oneself and for one's dependents, yet if greediness and love of wealth penetrates the intention, that traveling will be in the direction of Satan and will cause the traveler to end up in remorse. And if one aims at recreation and so takes journeys it is allowable but, he had better try to gain other useful things through the journeys too. Of course, as per Divine decrees, the one who intends to go on a journey should justly settle all his affairs with the others; he should ask forgiveness from the other(s) whom he has annoyed and should also return anything people have entrusted him with. And obviously a traveler should take necessary provisions with himself. Likewise, he should avoid traveling alone. As for choosing one's co-travelers, we are advised by our Divine teachers to choose them from among pious, trustworthy people, who will be of help to us regarding our religious duties too.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been quoted: Three people make a group (Jama'at) and they should choose from among themselves one chief and that chief should be a good-tempered person and also be more experienced in traveling than the other two. And before the journeys, one should say goodbye to all relatives, friends and neighbors and advise them to trust Allah with their faith and safety and the end of their actions. Likewise, a traveler is advised to recite this prayer upon leaving home for a journey: "In the name of Allah. There is no force, nor any power but by Allah. O my Lord! I seek refuge in You against going astray or leading astray and against misleading and against being oppressed and oppressing and against becoming ignorant and leading the other towards ignorance." And also, upon getting on the vehicle, one is recommended to recite verse 13 of the chapter 43 of the Holy Qur'an, *"So you may mount on their backs. Then once you have mounted (or boarded) them, remember your Lord's favor and say 'Glory be to Him Who has subjected these to our [use]; we (ourselves) would never achieve it!'"*

According to narrations, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) of Islam used to always take his comb, tooth-brush, a mirror and things necessary for bathing and the like with himself while going on a journey and would recite this prayer after returning: "O Allah! we beseech You to place tranquility and good rizq for us here."

Women and Ancient Norouz

Mahjubah
Magazine

Dr. Fereydoon Jonaïdi

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 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. Here is an article from Dr. Fereydoon Jonaïdi* regarding woman and ancient Norouz, according to his own ideas and viewpoints.

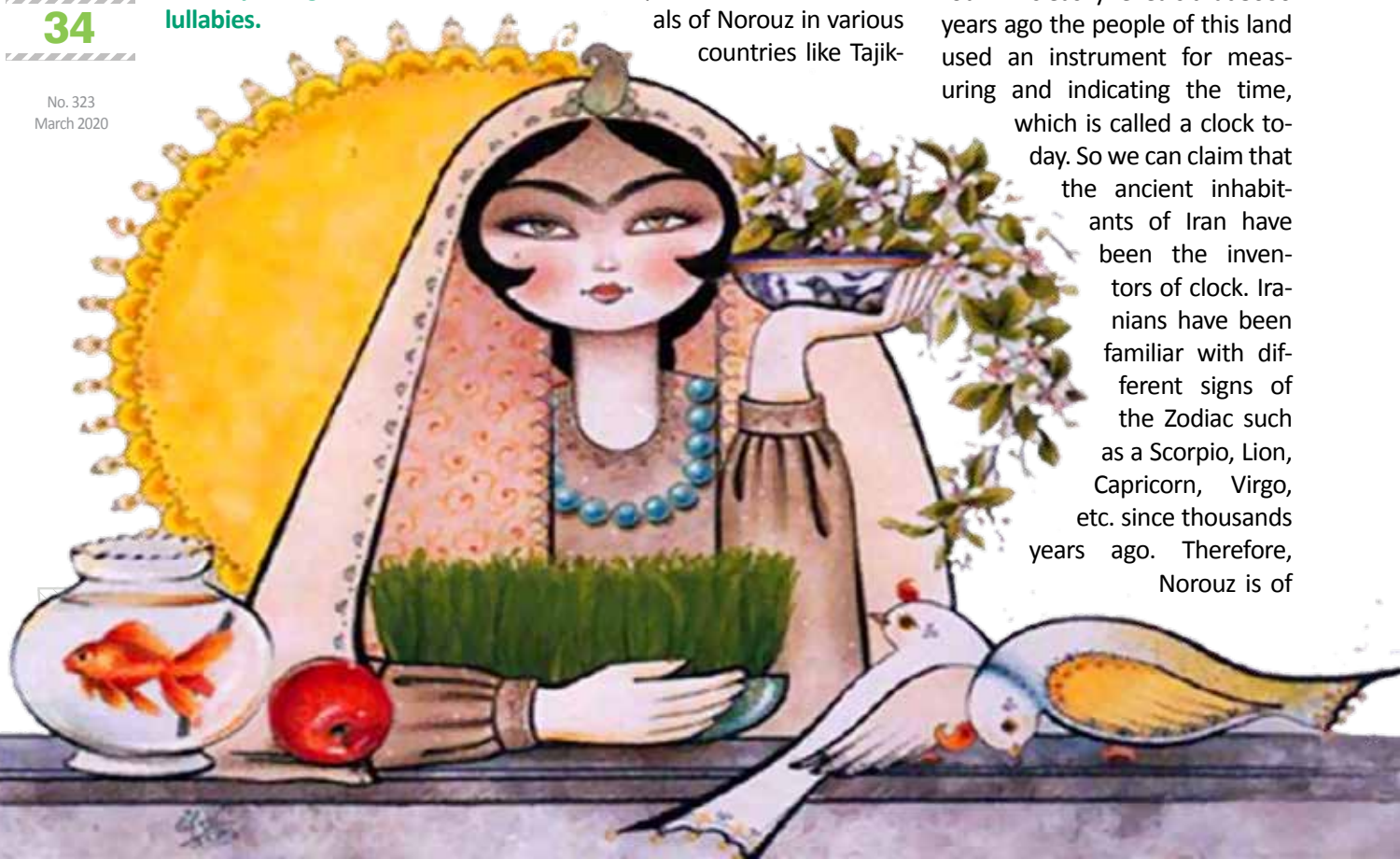
Norouz is one of the few traditional customs which have not been subject to changes during long periods of time. Today, so many Iranian people celebrate and perform traditional rituals of Norouz in various countries like Tajik-

istan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, etc. It has not changed from pre-Islamic to post-Islam 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).

What can be inferred from Ferdowsi's poems and other 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

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a great significance from viewpoints of astronomy, mathematics and astrology.

Regarding the relationship between women and Norouz, I could say, 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.

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 women's being considered as an integral and inseparable part of family and society.

Some orientalists claim that ancient Iran had goddesses of fertility and birth, but the fact is that 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. In Iranian ancient manuscripts there is no trace of anything called a goddess! However, European explorers, who unearthed some types of statues in Iran, wrongly thought of them



as goddesses, while in fact those statues 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.

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. At the end, 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.

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The Value of Our Free-time

Dr. Gholamreza Afrooz



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Free-time can be the best ground for fruitful activities and at the same time if not used properly and wisely, it can cause many deviations and harms. So, careful attention must be paid to this issue, especially by parents and instructors who are responsible for the proper upbringing of children and youngsters. As a matter of fact, free-time or leisure should not be considered as a time for idleness and having nothing to do. Rather it should be regarded as an asset and a valuable capital to be used most profitably. So, proper planning for the free-time in summers and also in other times of the year is quite necessary. Obviously, no forced or hard-to-fulfil program

should be included in our plans for the free-time of our young ones and other family members. We can divide our free-time into several parts, using each for a useful activity, such as swimming, learning a foreign language and so on. It is to be mentioned here that if we take our children and youngsters to numerous classes (during their free-time), giving them no time to think for themselves and use their talents in creative ways, they will not probably sense the value of their own abilities and so will not become able to present creativity. A glance at the accounts about famous scientists and inventors is sufficient to give us a very significant under-

standing in this regard, namely that they experienced the first sparks of their creativity and talents in their free-time.

Besides, using free-time in suitable, fruitful ways can be a good remedy for psychological problems. As we know routine work and being too busy with studies and/or jobs may cause spiritual, mental fatigue, making one feel imprisoned in this world. Therefore, one needs to give him or herself some free-time for getting rid of undesirable feelings such as depression and find ways towards both physical, emotional well-being and spiritual elevation.

Contemporary Developments' Impact on Free-time

Dr. Muhammadreza Sharqi



Various developments in our times have apparently left their impact on individual members of the society as well as on the society as a whole. As a negative impact in this regard we can mention the so-called 'globalization' which is in fact a threat to personal and national identities in certain ways. People who are targeted by the deviating messages through the modern mass media (as part of the globalization) are likely to experience loss of beliefs or a weakened faith and identity. Here, we are referring to that (needed) identity whereby a person knows his/her true being, through knowing the reasons for his or her having been created and the Divine goal behind

his/her creation. Imam Ali (AS) has said in this regard "Allah bless the one who knows from where he or she is, where he or she is and where he or she will eventually go." Truly, these key questions deserve lots of thought and discussion and proper answers to them will result in one's getting to know his or her true, God-given identity. Certainly this Divine life-giving guidance nullifies the globalization propositions which can seriously endanger individual, as well as national identities, among other harmful things. Another problem in this respect is the negative effects of the globalization phenomenon upon families. Unfortunately, due to the influence

of the modern mass media, the warm and pleasant family environments are losing their attraction for family members in various ways, so much so that in some families children and young boys and girls are becoming deprived of the much needed communication with their parents. So parents are advised to take advantage of every opportunity, especially vacations to fill this undesirable emotional and spiritual vacuum or gap, since during that free-time they will be able to communicate with their offsprings more effectively than at other times when the children and the youngsters are busy with their lessons and also the elders may not have much free-time and energy left for this duty. Some thinkers believe that youngsters are attracted to computer and internet not just because they can find entertainment through them, but also because they do not receive enough attention from parents and do not experience pleasant communication with them. Moreover, it is advisable to give the students and young people a chance to share their own opinions on using their free-time with the parents and instructors, since they may have already learnt some managerial abilities while dealing with their studies in so far as the value of time is concerned.

Free-time and Needs

Dr. Mohsen Imani



Free-time should ideally be spent in ways leading to the fulfillment of certain undeniable human needs.

● The need for rest

Fatigue has been found to be the cause of many abnormal and aggressive conducts. So, children and youngsters should be taught to consider the time for rest and recreation as fruitful and not unnecessary. This way they will become able to use their free-time for, among other things and, taking a rest and getting rid of tiredness and fatigue.

● The need for recreation

Everybody needs some recreation

in order to become physically, mentally and emotionally fit for the fulfillment of his or her duties and job. It has been narrated that Imam Ali (AS) would (when possible) go outside Medina for recreation, this narration teaches us the lesson that we need to give part of our free-time to healthy recreations. Taking trips has also been recommended by the Infalible (AS) as being good for health. In a Hadith from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) we read: "Take trips to remain healthy." Obviously, even short trips on holidays can be very good for your family's well-being.

● The need for useful pastime

and relief

Having nothing to do often causes the siblings to quarrel with each other or with the elders at home. To prevent such an undesirable condition, we need to teach them to spend their free-time in various useful entertainments and pastime, thus getting them more interested in life at home.

● The flourishing of talents

Useful activities done in free-time can certainly bring about the flourishing of the children's talents. Through watching the children's behavior and show of interest, parents can also get to know their particular talents and abilities.

● The need for cultural growth

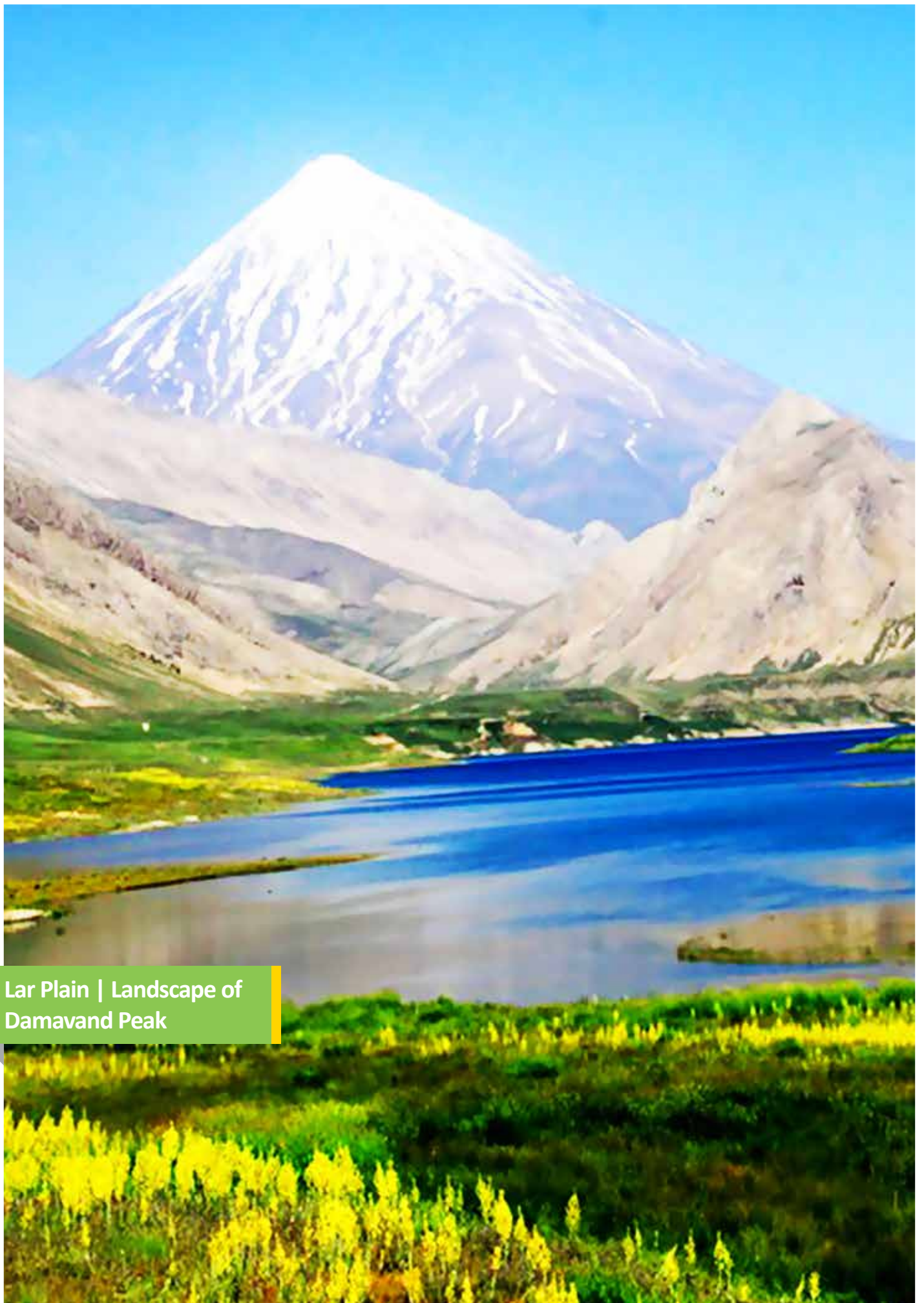
Pierre Bourdieu, a sociologist dealing with education has presented certain views on the effects of cultural matters on education and has regarded cultural richness of the family to be a contributor to children's progress in studies; taking the children to cultural centers such as theaters, museums and art galleries can be useful in enriching their cultural knowledge.

● Individual and social progress

Free-time is for you to be spent on what you think is best for your health and mood, and also what is best for the flourishing of one's particular talents. This way, one can also develop his/her abilities as an individual and as a member of a social group when taking part in matches and other social activities. No doubt, young people can learn many life skills through using their free-time in healthy competitions and other such activities.



Any day on which Allah is not disobeyed
and no sin is committed is an 'Eid.
Imam Ali (As)



Lar Plain | Landscape of
Damavand Peak