

# The Mythological Foundation of Nowruz

By: Dr. Yaghoub Yasna<sup>1</sup>

---

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

Nowruz represents a kind of genesis for human beings, because the world moves out of the atmosphere of winter silence and stagnation that had slowed down the movement of life, made some plants take refuge in their roots and seeds, and many animals go into hibernation. With the arrival of Nowruz, plants blossom and animals come out

*1. Research Scholar and Faculty Member of the Al-Beroni University of Afghanistan*



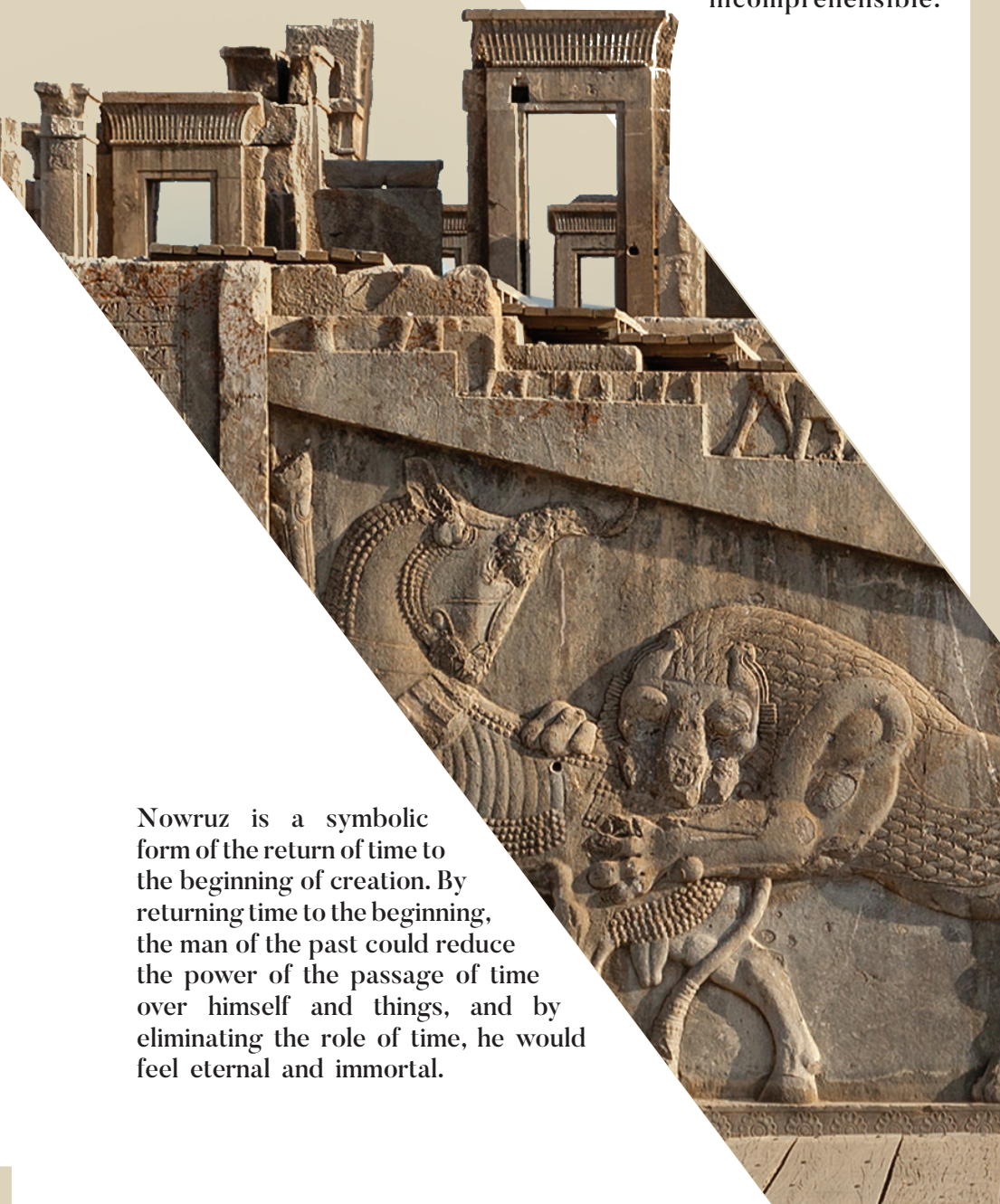
of numbness, and life begins to flourish again. And in what better way can one experience genesis and the process of creation.

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

Contemporary man sees time as arising from the change in things, which is a physical phenomenon, but ancient man considered time to be something that was independent of other things. Based on this understanding of time, he formulated a strategy against time that allowed ancient man to understand creation and time. This is because understanding the creation in the absence of understanding time and vice versa is somewhat incomprehensible.

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

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





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

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

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

Nowruz is not unrelated to human understanding of the relationship between seed and soil. This relationship is naturally established in every

spring season. Growth and procreation allow man to reach an understanding about creation, and with that understanding, he begins to understand time, but not a linear time and rather a rotating and repetitive time; in the sense that in every Nowruz, time completes its repetition and returns to the beginning of genesis and eternal creation.

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