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Social Activism
among the Teenage
Iranian Girls

Ramadan
Reform, Chastity



Nowruz the Guardian of Authentic Innate, Human, and Iranian Identity



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O He who changes the hearts and eyes

O He who directs the day and night

O he who changes the year and states

Change our state to the best state



لَسِيَ اَمْرًا عَلَيْكَ يَا مَسِيحَةَ نَدِ



In The Name of God



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A Season of Renewal: Ramadan and Nowruz

Dr. Z. Osati

As the editor-in-chief of this month's issue, I find it a privilege to celebrate two profound occasions that mark renewal, reflection, and joy: Ramadan and Nowruz. Though they stem from distinct cultural and spiritual traditions, their overlapping themes of growth, gratitude, and togetherness unite people across boundaries.

Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, calls us to reflect on our relationship with ourselves, others, and the Divine. It's a time for self-discipline, charity, and inner peace—a period when communities come together for shared meals and moments of spirituality, transcending differences to focus on unity and compassion.

On the other hand, Nowruz, the Persian New Year,

heralds the arrival of spring with its vibrant symbolism of renewal and hope. Families gather around Haft-sin tables adorned with items representing life, prosperity, and love. It's a reminder to embrace new beginnings and to honor the cycles of nature that connect us all.

This rare intersection of Ramadan and Nowruz in the same season offers a powerful opportunity to reflect on the shared values of gratitude, renewal, and togetherness that these celebrations embody. Let us embrace the beauty of diversity while finding inspiration in the harmony these traditions offer.

May this season bring you peace, joy, and countless reasons to celebrate.

Warm regards



Nowruz and Man's Innate Disposition

By: Hojjat al-Islam Mohammad Mahdi Imanipour

President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and Chairman of the Policy-making Council of Interreligious Dialogue of the Islamic Republic of Iran



Nowruz is an ancient festivity with a long history over a vast area.

Even though geographical borders and divisions have separated lands and created distinct territories known as countries, the Nowruz festivity, which originated and flourished in a region called the Iranian Plateau, is deeply rooted in the historical and ancient civilization of a large region of the world, and that is the reason that this festivity remains

prevalent today in such countries as Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraqi Kurdistan, Syria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Albania, Pakistan, and among the Parsis and Shias of India and parts of China; all of which fall within the cultural and geographical sphere of Nowruz. Of course, these days, Nowruz has expanded its historical territory and is no longer limited to its ancient geography.

A significant amount of research has been conducted on the history of Nowruz and the reasons for its enduring presence. Among the dimensions that have garnered considerable attention in this field are the natural and economic geography of the Iranian region. Traditions like Nowruz have been shaped by geography and environment, factors that political influences and invasions by neighboring tribes have failed to alter. Many traditions and beliefs are rooted in geography, where natural, climatic, and livelihood factors play a major role, and religious elements have subsequently added a religious dimension to them.

Interestingly, even after the advent of Islam in Iran, the non-Iranians who ruled Iran got submerged in certain aspects of Persian culture and civilization after a short while and not only began to honor and respect a number of Iranian traditions and festivities - the most important and noteworthy being Nowruz - and joined the Nowruz celebrations, which marked the arrival of New Year. As a result, Nowruz persisted as a key civil holiday among the Persian population to mark the new year and continued to be celebrated during the Samanid and Buyid Islamic dynasties as well as later Turkic and Mongol dynasties that ruled the region and spread the festival throughout Central Asia. Hadiths (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) have also been recorded that Muhammad (PBUH) accepted a Nowruz gift and blessed the day.

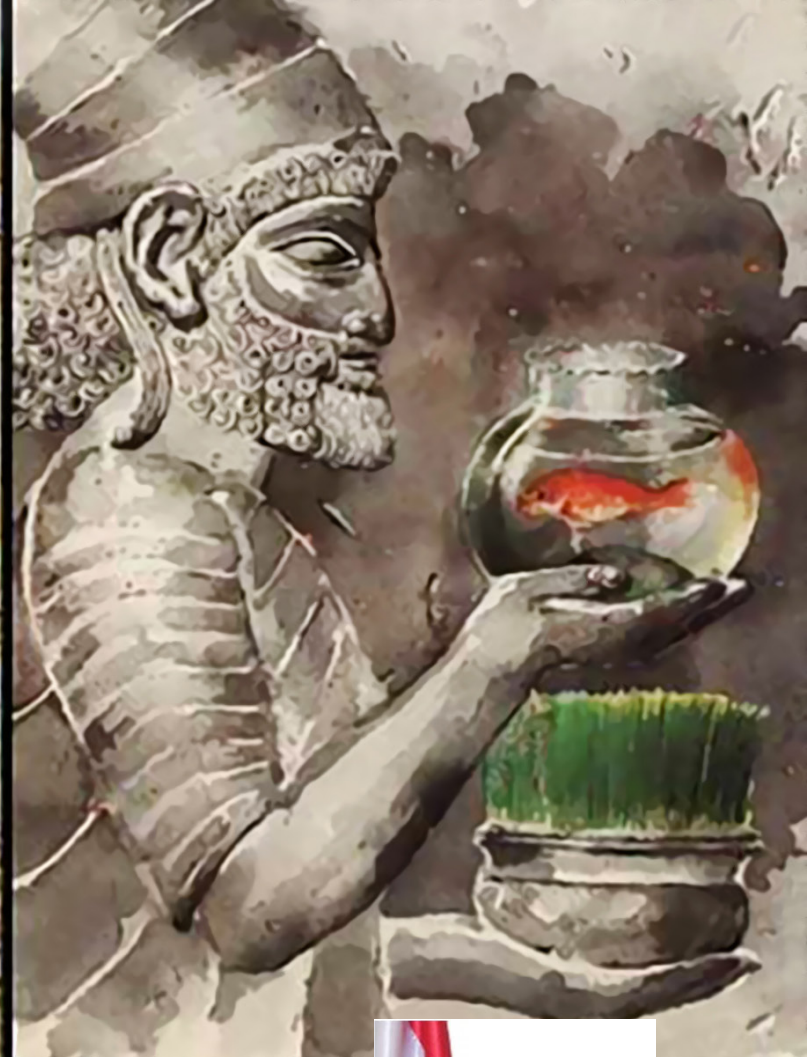
It should also be noted that at the time of the advent of Islam, the structure and system of the Iranian bureaucracy and court were such that the non-Iranian rulers were left with no option but to abide by them. According to historical evidence, they followed the regulations established during the reign of the Sassanid king, Khosrow I (also known as Anushirvan) not only in terms of land taxes but also in terms of jizya, and took advantage of the precise and developed Iranian tax system. In addition to the tax system that the aforementioned rulers adopted from the Iranians, they also inevitably adopted the chronology system of the Iranians. In ancient Iran, the calendar was based on the solar year, whose months and seasons were fixed, and by implementing leap years, this stability was always maintained in the days, months, and seasons of the year, and consequently, all religious occasions, tributes, and celebrations were observed on their specific, predetermined dates.

However, it seems what caused Nowruz to persist in the hearts and minds of the people of this region was that Nowruz, in no way, contradicted the Islamic teachings and as a result, it came to be considered an Islamic-Iranian festivity. The proof of this fact is that this year, Nowruz coincided with Ramadan. While preserving the ancient tradition of Nowruz and celebrating the New Year, Iranians also adhere to the divine teachings of Islam and the Muhammadan Sharia. They welcome the spring of the Holy Qur'an and observe the fasting and other rituals of the blessed month of Ramadan. In this way, the spirit of adaptability and compatibility among Iranians has enabled them to embrace the lunar months of the Islamic calendar while maintaining their ancient commitment to the solar year, feeling no conflict between the two systems.

Last but not least, what has made the Nowruz ritual last and survive in the minds and thoughts of a wide range of people is the wisdom and rationality present and inherent in this festivity, which resonates deeply with the nature and innate disposition of the Iranians. This is also the reason for the connection of Nowruz with religion, as religion itself symbolizes complete wisdom intertwined with human nature. This profound harmony is why Nowruz has persisted throughout history, overcoming all obstacles and challenges, and has never been forgotten.

Happy Nowruz





Nowruz in the Early Centuries of Islam

By: Dr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan in Iran



Nowruz is one of the oldest and most significant festivities of the Ajams (non-Arabs, particularly Persians). Throughout the millennia of civilization, it has embodied the ancient customs, religious beliefs, worldviews, spiritual and moral values, and historical and cultural heritage of the Iranian and Tajik people. Across history, especially during critical moments when the cultural essence of the Iranian people was on the brink of annihilation, this ancient festivity played a vital role

in preserving culture and civilization while safeguarding national dignity. This mission of Nowruz manifested fully and in all its dimensions during the early centuries of Islam, following the advent of Islam in Persia.

The spread of Islam in Persia created a significant barrier against Zoroastrian fundamentals in all aspects, including the celebration of Nowruz, and brought an end to the religious dominance of Zoroastrianism. However, due to certain factors, the

Nowruz festivity did not only survive but also gradually became a widespread tradition across much of the Islamic world.

The first factor was the prominent popularity and humanitarian aspect of Nowruz, which was initially perceived to be opposed to Islamic values by some Arabs. In fact, the festivity of Nowruz has been deeply intertwined with people's lives since ancient times, embodying joy and happiness, purity and warmth, kindness and benevolence, as well as chivalry

and generosity. Such values are universally valid and respected by all tribes and clans, regardless of their religious affiliation. Recognizing the passion and enthusiasm of the people of Greater Khorasan for Nowruz, as well as its inherent virtues, this ancient festivity was ultimately legitimized and permitted following the advent of Islam, despite its portrayal of the Ajams' ancient mythological and historical traditions.

As mentioned by Abu Rayhan al-Biruni in his *Asarul-Baqiah* (Vestiges of the Past), a tradition portrays the positive view of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) toward Nowruz. Al-Biruni narrates that during Nowruz, a silver plate of halva was offered as a gift to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Prophet asked, "What is this?" They replied, "This is a gift from Persia marking Nowruz." The Prophet responded by saying, "Yes, Almighty Allah revived the dead and ordered the clouds to rain. Here, sprinkling water became a custom on this day." The Prophet of Islam then ate the halva and said, "Make every day Nowruz!" (7: PP. 279, 556). In another tradition, it is narrated that on Nowruz Day, some halva was sent to Imam Ali (AS) as a gift. The Imam asked what the occasion was, and his companions replied that it was a Nowruz gift from the Iranians. The Imam then said, "I wish every day was Nowruz for us" (1: V. 11, P. 248).

Undoubtedly, the Ajam continued to celebrate Nowruz even after the advent of Islam. As a matter of fact, the humanitarian aspect of Nowruz, during the early days of Islam, often transcended oppression, enmity,

and resentment, inspiring peace, reconciliation, coexistence, and tolerance between the Arabs and Iranians. The evidence for such characteristics of Nowruz is found in a tradition recorded in the book 'The History of Qom' in which it is stated that a group of Arabs, led by Abdullah and Ahwas, the sons of Sa'd ibn Malik ibn Amir al-Ash'ari, arrived in the city of Qom on Nowruz in the year 94 AH/712 CE. The governor of Qom received them warmly and invited the leaders of the corps to celebrate this great festive occasion. The culture of Nowruz, which heralds peace and tolerance, prevailed over arms and weapons, and a compromise was reached between the local people and the Arab corps (10: pp. 242–244). This episode best illustrates why Nowruz has endured through ages of tumult; a resilience rooted in the humanitarian essence of this ancient ritual.

The survival of Nowruz after the advent of Islam in Iran is also linked to its timing, which marks the beginning of the solar calendar. The Persian New Year coincides with the first day of spring and the beginning of the farming season. Since the solar months align more closely with the seasons compared to lunar months, which cycle through all the seasons, it was more practical for taxation purposes. Therefore, the Arabs, whether willingly or otherwise, adopted the solar calendar as the system for collecting taxes and tributes from farmers and regulating the financial affairs of their fledgling caliphate. They relied on Nowruz as the beginning of the cultivation and agricultural cycle. Moreover, since the

Arabs lacked sufficient experience in state affairs, Hormuzan, an Iranian frontier governor who had been captured during the battle with the Muslims, played a significant role in implementing crucial fiscal and institutional reforms based on the Sassanid administrative framework. These changes helped establish the first Islamic divan during the caliphate of Umar (634-644 AH/13-24 CE).

Following the establishment of the first Islamic institution, the Arab rulers recognized the significance of the Iranian legal system and sought to preserve certain pre-Islamic governing traditions to benefit the administrative structure of the Islamic caliphate. During the Umayyad rule (133-141 AH/661-750 CE) and particularly after the Abbasid dynasty came to power (750 CE), several divans of tribute were established based on the Sassanid administrative structure. The Ajams (non-Arabs, particularly Persians) were employed, and the responsibility of managing these divans was entrusted to them. This contributed to the spread of Ajam traditions within the administrative structure of the caliphate. As a result, Nowruz, which marked the beginning of the fiscal and agricultural year and is considered a significant Iranian state tradition, was recognized and preserved throughout the caliphate from the early centuries of Islam.

Some customs of Nowruz, particularly the tradition of offering Nowruz gifts, originated from the humanitarian aspect of the celebration and later became part of court rituals. This practice gained considerable prominence in the



Islamic Caliphate. As mentioned earlier, several traditions highlight the practice of offering Nowruz gifts to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and Imam Ali (AS). Even after the advent of Islam, the Ajam continued to observe Nowruz rituals, exchanging Nowruz gifts among themselves and presenting them to uninvited Arab guests. Initially, this practice was more of an emotional aspect, rooted in the spirit of honoring Nowruz traditions. However, during the Umayyad era, some Arab rulers exploited this tradition to reinforce taxation and replenish their treasury. As a result, the financial dimension of this custom overshadowed its emotional and humanitarian aspects. In his book, *Subh al-A'sha*, Ahmad ibn Ali Qalqashandi has noted that the first caliph to institutionalize the tradition of Nowruz gift-giving during the Umayyad era was Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, the governor of Iraq (14: V. 2, P. 420), who was infa-

mous for his ruthlessness.

During the Umayyad era, Nowruz gradually became integrated into the fabric of the caliphate, introducing the historical and spiritual values of the Ajam to the broader Muslim community. Since the tradition of Nowruz is deeply rooted in the history, culture, and civilization of pre-Islamic Iran, it is intricately connected to ancient Iranian mythology and legendary kings and heroes, such as Jamshid and Fereydun. It recounts portions of the history of these kings, their battles, and revives the atmosphere that fosters a connection with the spirituality of ancient Iran within the Islamic dominion.

In this context, an Arabic-language poet of Persian origin, Ismail ibn Yasar (d. 132 AH/749 CE), despite the Umayyad's strong Arab fanaticism, drew upon the glorious history of the Iranians and evoked memorable past events as the central theme of his

poems. He skillfully incorporated Persian concepts and spirituality into Islamic poetry.

مَنْ مِثْلُ كَشْرَى وَسَابُورِ الْجَنُودِ مَعَا
وَالْهَرْمَزَانَ لِفَخْرٍ أَوْ لِعَظِيمِ

أَسْدُ الْكِتَابِ يَوْمَ الرُّوحِ إِنْ رَحَفُوا
وَهُمْ أَذْلُوا مُلُوكَ التُّرْكِ وَالرُّومِ

“Who can compete with Khosrow and Shapur and Hormozan in decency, greatness, and strain?!

They fight like lions in battle, the lions to which the Turks and Romans surrendered.”

(5: V. 4, P. 423)

Meanwhile, through the efforts of Iranian scholars, the first Pahlavi Islamic works were produced, including a significant book on the history of the Sassanid kings. This book contained illustrations of 27 Sassanid kings, along with their records and advice. It was translated in 113 AH/731 CE for the Umayyad caliph, Hisham ibn Abdul Malik (106-126 AH/724-743 CE), who warmly received it (17: P. 99).

The spiritual and cultural adaptations that emerged during the Umayyad rule preserved the pre-Islamic Persian glory and identity, including Nowruz and its traditions. These adaptations laid the groundwork for the Ajam spiritual movement within an Islamic framework.

Therefore, the Ajam tradition of Nowruz was fully revived, and by the time of Al-Mansur's ascension to the throne as the second caliph of the Abbasid dynasty (137-159 AH/754-775 CE), it was officially celebrated across the Abbasid state. At the same time, fertile ground was created for the broader Islamic society to become fully

aware of Nowruz and its customs. Additionally, a widespread movement to translate Persian Islamic works into Arabic emerged within the Islamic Empire, playing a significant role in preserving and reviving Ajam history, culture, and civilization.

In the book *Kitab al-Fihrist*, by Ibn al-Nadim and other Arabic reference sources, the names of 25 translators are recorded who translated Pahlavi works into Arabic, introducing the heritage of the Ajams to the Islamic society of that era. Additionally, these sources mention the translation of over 60 historical, literary, and ethical books from the pre-Islamic period into Arabic.

However, the actual number of translations of Ajam works up to the Islamic period must have been significantly higher, as the authors of these sources often did not specify the titles of the works translated. Instead, they simply noted that certain translators had “translated some books from Persian.” Among these translations were important sources of knowledge about the history and civilization of the Ajam, such as *Khodai-nameh*, *Taj-nameh*, *Ayeen-nameh*, *Gah-nameh*, and similar works, which undoubtedly contained detailed information about Nowruz and its ceremonies. In this context, the first books on Nowruz and Mehregan, exploring the origins and customs of these ancient traditions, were written in Arabic literature by authors of Iranian origin, many of whom were also translators of Pahlavi works into Arabic. One of these books, titled *علل اعياد الفرس* (*The Origin of Iranian Celebrations*), was written by Zadoyeh ibn Shahoyeh Is-

fahani (زادويه ابن شاهويه اصفهانی). In his book, *The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries* (الآثار الباقية عن القرون الخالية), Al-Biruni has cited this work three times, referencing it for information on the old Iranian days and months, the celebration of Nowruz, the month of Shahrivar (the sixth month of the Solar Hijri calendar), and the day of Azar Jashn (3: PP. 70, 282, 289).

Zadoyeh ibn Shahoyeh is also renowned as the translator of *Khodai-nameh* from Pahlavi to Arabic (7: P. 305). It is certain that Zadoyeh wrote his book on Nowruz and other Ajam celebrations within the same context as *Khodai-nameh*.

Another translator of *Khodai-nameh*, Musa ibn Isa Kasravi (second half of the ninth century), also wrote a book titled *Al-Niruz and Al-Mehrejan* (Arabic version of Nowruz and Mehregan), which served as a reference for the author of *Tarikh-e Tabarestan* (*The History of Tabarestan*), citing the story of Zahhak (6: P. 83). It appears that Musa ibn Isa Kasravi regarded both *Khodai-nameh* and *Al-Niruz and Al-Mehrejan* as reliable sources of knowledge about the ancient Ajam festivals. Later authors, including Allama Jahiz in *Al-Mahasin wal Azdad*, and Al-Biruni have frequently cited Kasravi, providing detailed descriptions of Nowruz and Mehregan (7: PP. 231-235; 3: P. 291).

During the same period, another book on Nowruz and other Ajam festivals, titled *الاعیاد والنوا ریز* (*Festivals and Nowruz*), was written by Abulhussain Ali ibn Mahdi Kasravi, an Iranian author (7: PP. 163-164).

Ibn Nadim confirms that another book on Nowruz and

Mehregan, titled *Al-Nowruz and Al-Mehregan* (the same name as the aforementioned book by Musa ibn Isa Kasravi), was written by Ali ibn Harun Munajjem during the same period (7: P. 161). Unfortunately, these four books have not survived, but they made an unprecedented contribution in their time and the following centuries by raising awareness in the Muslim community about the ancient Ajam ceremonies and promoting them in an Islamicized format.

At that time, thanks to the efforts of patriotic Ajams, such books were translated from Pahlavi to Arabic. From the second half of the 8th century onward, Nowruz and other Ajam festivals began to appear in Arabic prose works, which elaborated on the origins of Nowruz and how its customs gained popularity.

As supporting evidence, we can refer to two well-known books that have survived and are attributed to Jahiz, an Arab scholar. The first book is *Al-Mahasin wa al-Azdad* (*Merits and Demerits*), which includes a special section titled *Mahasin Al-Niruz and Al-Mehrejan* (*Merits of Nowruz and Mehregan*). The author recounts ancient stories about the origins of Nowruz, tracing it back to the reign of Jamshid, and Mehregan, dating back to the reign of Fereydoun. He also explains the customs of Nowruz and concludes this section by mentioning some details about Barbad Khonyagar (the musician) and his songs.

The second book is titled *Kitab al-Taj fi Akhlaq al-Muluk* (*The Book of the Crown on the Ethics of Kings*), which draws on Sassanid literature and is regarded as



a primary source in the Islamic worldview for researching political and moral thought up to the advent of Ajam Islam. This book includes a special section titled *Hadaya Al-Mehrejan wa al-Niruz min Al-Malik wa Lah* (Nowruz and Mehregan Gifts from the King and to Him), which explains the custom of exchanging Nowruz gifts between Ajam kings and various classes of society (16: PP. 219-223).

At first glance, the valuable information about Nowruz and its ceremonies in the aforementioned books appears to reflect the pre-Islamic history of this festival. However, it actually represents the revival of Nowruz during the Abbasid era. This is strongly supported by references in the sources that highlight the preservation and observance of Nowruz customs during that period. As Nowruz gained official recognition in the Abbasid era, it was gradually accepted by official

religious circles as a celebration that did not conflict with Muslim beliefs. In the works of Islamic thinkers, both Sunni and Shiite, narrations often portray Nowruz as a celebration in harmony with Islamic principles.

Most of these narrations have been compiled by the Iranian scholar Reza Sha'bani in a study titled *Nowruz Rituals* (13: PP. 158-180). It is worth noting that, due to the perceived harmony between Nowruz and Islamic teachings, this ancient celebration came to be regarded by Islamic scholars as a day marking significant events, such as the beginning of creation, God's covenant with His servants, the landing of Noah's ark on Mount Judi, the construction of the Kaaba by Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham), and the revelation of Gabriel to the Prophet of Islam, among others. These attributed virtues Islamicized the ancient festival of Nowruz and ensured its preservation along with its rituals.

In this way, Ajam Nowruz gained Islamic legitimacy and revived not only the specific rituals of Nowruz but also many traditions of Ajam culture and civilization from the pre-Islamic era. The status and significance of Nowruz during that time extended far beyond a mere popular celebration. It represented the essence of Ajam culture within the Islamic context and served as an active factor in fostering intercultural dialogue between the Ajam and the Arabs.

This mission of Nowruz is vividly reflected in the Arabic literature of the Abbasid era, particularly in poetry. Prominent Arabic-speaking poets, including Abu Nuwas (d. 815), Walibah ibn al-Habab (d. 786), Ibn Rumi (836-896), Ibn Mu'taz (861-908), Abu Tammam (788-845), Buhturi (821-897), Hassan ibn Wahab (d. around 850), and others, composed odes praising Nowruz and its rituals. They then presented these poems to the rulers of their time, following the ancient Ajam tradition.

Writing verses about Nowruz became so prevalent in Arabic poetry of that era that the Arabic-speaking Iranian writer, Hamza Isfahani (883-961), compiled a collection of these poems titled *Al-Ash'aar ul Sayerah Fi Al-Niruz wal-Mehrejan* (Popular Poems Describing Nowruz and Mehregan). Although this collection has not survived, it gained significant fame at the time and was cited and referenced by medieval scholars, including Abu Rihan al-Biruni (3: PP. 51 and 79). The poems composed in Arabic about Nowruz (and Mehregan) served as a cultural bridge, introducing themes and concepts from

pre-Islamic Persian-Tajik literature into Arabic prose and poetry. They also acted as an effective means of fostering spiritual and cultural connections between the Ajams and the Arabs.

Following this spiritual dialogue, a new genre of Arabic poetry, known as Nowruziyat, emerged. This marked a transformation in poetic themes, shifting from the repetitive imagery of desert and arid landscapes to vivid depictions of the enchanting beauty of spring and the lush splendor of gardens.

On the other hand, this dialogue played a crucial role in preserving and reviving the traditions of Ajam culture and spirituality within the framework of an Islamic worldview, while also fostering cultural solidarity between the Ajam and the Arabs. As a result, pre-Islamic Ajam history, along with its political and spiritual heritage, gained credibility and significance alongside the values of Islamic civilization. Figures such as Rostam-i Dastan, symbolizing courage; Khosrow Anushirvan, representing justice; and Bozorgmehr Bakhtkan, embodying wisdom—along with other Ajam mythological and historical heroes, many of whom were Zoroastrians—found their way into Islamic Persian and Tajik literature.

Thus, the Arab dominance in Greater Khorasan was ultimately overshadowed by the Ajam cultural influence within the realm of Arab Muslim civilization. There were fundamental differences between these two forms of dominance. The first was established through military force and conquest, while the second was achieved through the power of



culture, dialogue, and spiritual harmony. In this transformation, Nowruz played a pivotal role in shaping identity and creating prestige.

Thus, following the spread of Islam in Greater Khorasan the Ajam culture had its influence in the entire realm of Muslim civilization and Nowruz played a pivotal role in shaping identity and creating prestige.

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Nowruz

the Guardian of Authentic Innate, Human, and Iranian Identity

By: Dr. Hossein Divsalar

Celebrated across a vast region, including Iran, East Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, Nowruz is an ancient festival rich in tradition. Due to its historical significance and cultural importance, it was recognized as an international festivity by the United Nations General Assembly on February 22, 2010, and named "International Day of Nowruz".

مجلس ولایت و آداب
تصویر و نگار
و الهام و الهام
و الهام و الهام



Throughout history, despite various challenges and obstacles, Iranians have consistently preserved their language, culture, traditions, customs, and ceremonies. One of the reasons for the enduring stability of Nowruz lies in its deep connection to ancient national and territorial traditions. Nowruz serves as an opportunity to spread kindness, peace, friendship, and the unity of hearts.

According to the customs of this ancient festivity, the inhabitants of the spiritual geography of Nowruz take advantage of nature's renewal to cleanse the material aspects of life and remove the rust of resentment from their hearts. Fortunately, this year, this ceremony of purity and cleanliness coincides with the spring of the heart and soul, i.e., the holy month of Ramadan.

As the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, has stated, "Ramadan is a unique opportunity among the months of the year for individuals to guide their souls - amidst the numerous factors and causes that lead to neglect of God and His path - toward ascension, elevation, and closeness to God Almighty." Therefore, the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan is truly a great Eid for Muslims, and it is fitting for believers to congratulate one another on the arrival of this blessed month. This year, as the spring of nature coincides with the spring of prayer and the Qur'an, it is especially appropriate that, with the changing of the year and our entry into the threshold of Ramadan - the month of divine mercy and forgiveness - we also strive to turn away from the shortcomings, deviations, ugliness, and evils within ourselves and our lives.

Nowruz is deeply rooted in symbolism, and its Haft-Sin table is intricately connected to ancient myths. When analyzing and studying this transnational festivity, it is essential to pay attention to the intertwining of Nowruz and its customs with these myths. In Iranian culture, the table of Haft-Sin symbolizes family unity, and Nowruz begins with the preparation and decoration of this table. This tradition represents the honoring of family bonds and conveys a message of renewal and dy-

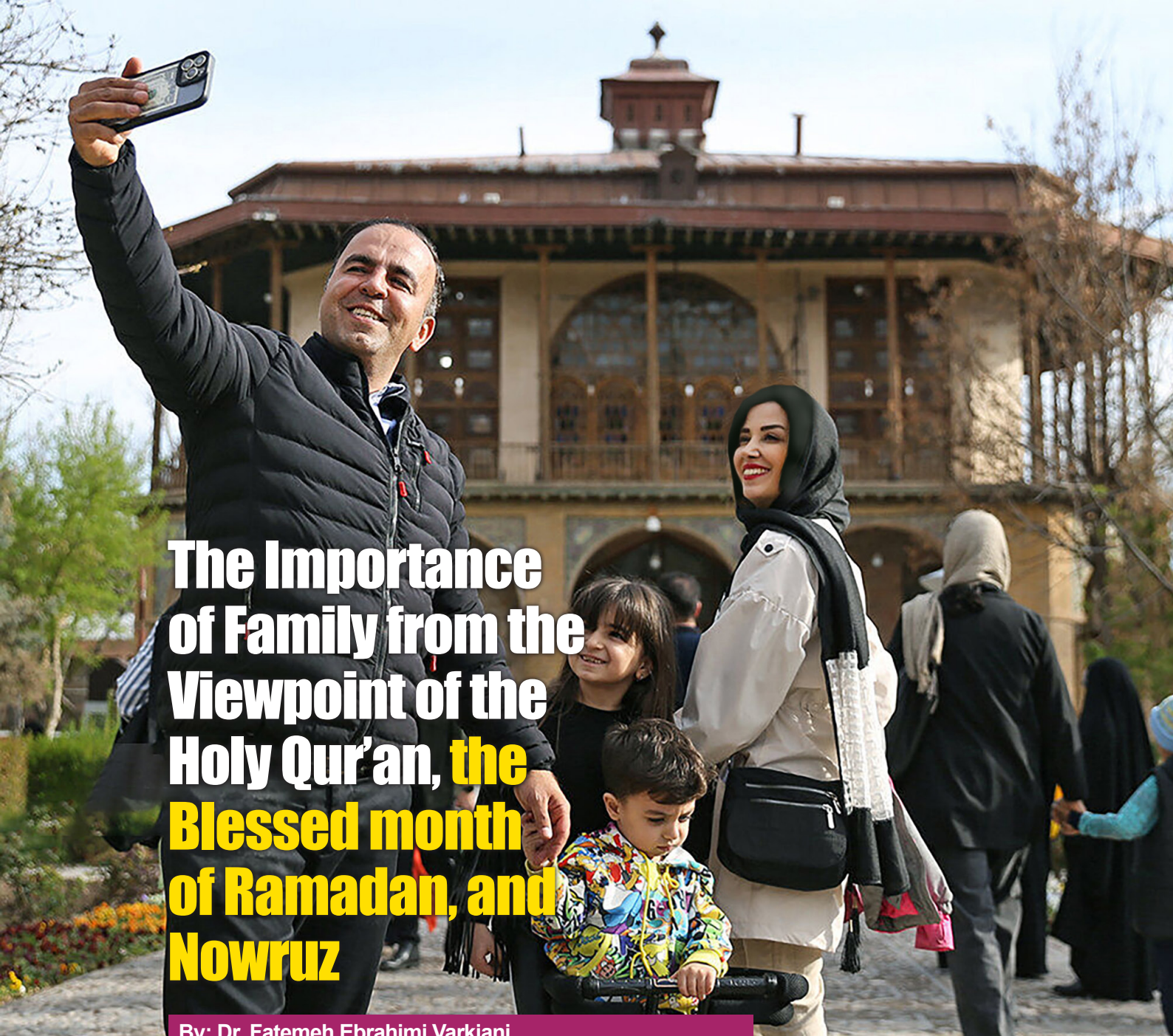
namism within the family; a vital need in today's world.

The rituals of this ancient festivity serve as a foundation for alleviating mental pressures and fostering psychological well-being in society. By the same token, this timeless celebration embodies freshness, vitality, friendship, and reconciliation. It symbolizes the revival of hope and a new beginning, offering an opportunity to come together, rekindle friendships, restore and strengthen bonds, revive cherished traditions, and deepen our connection with nature.

In today's world, where human relationships have faded amid the whirlwind of daily busyness, this ancient tradition can bring us closer together and remind us of the value of cultural and family roots. Respect for nature and the preservation of this miraculous creation begins in mid-Esfand (Iranian month) with tree planting and continues until the last day of Nowruz. These practices connect individuals to nature, reminding them that their lives depend on the continuation of nature's vitality. By emphasizing family-centeredness, joys, and smiles are shared, and a sense of empathy is nurtured and strengthened.

In a world where everything is changing rapidly, the identity-building traditions of Nowruz reconnect us with our innate human essence, preserve our connection to our heritage, and remind us of our authentic cultural values. As a shared global tradition, Nowruz unites many peoples and, despite the transformations brought by modern life, reconciles them with their moral, authentic, and innate identity. Nowruz always serves as an opportunity for a fresh start, creating joyful moments with loved ones, fostering connections with the subcultures of diverse ethnic groups, and ensuring social vitality and a strong bond with cultural heritage.

This celebration is an opportunity to strengthen cultural diplomacy in the civilizational field of Nowruz, and we should use this opportunity to move forward with convergence and synergy in the development of activities and cooperation in accordance with the policies of our states about greater interaction with our neighbors.



The Importance of Family from the Viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an, the Blessed month of Ramadan, and Nowruz

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The coincidence of the blessed month of Ramadan, the spring of the Quran, with the spring of nature and the celebration of Nowruz - along with its traditional rituals, particularly the emphasis on kinship and family bonds- inspired me to explore the importance of family from the perspective of the Quran. Following this, I aim to discuss the unique opportunity that the blessed months of Ramadan and Nowruz provide to strengthen familial ties. From the perspective of all divine religions, in-

cluding Islam, the family is considered to be the very foundation of society. The basic pillars of this foundation are a man and a woman, whom God created with a shared human identity. As such, no institution is more beloved to God Almighty than the family. The family serves as the cornerstone for preserving national, cultural, and moral traditions, as well as the center for nurturing emotions and raising a healthy and righteous generation. Religious teachings place great importance on maintaining these close

family bonds and firmly oppose their disintegration. Honoring parents and preserving the ties of kinship are emphasized in numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an. The integrity of the family system in Islam ensures the enduring connection of its members throughout their lives. The relationship between a child and their parents and ancestors, and vice versa, is sustained within the family unit, reflecting its profound significance in Islamic teachings.

In the modern era, as family life faces various threats and challenges, psychologists and sociologists have reached an important conclusion: one of the most effective ways to protect humanity from the numerous threats and mental and psychological problems stemming from the Western lifestyle is to preserve the warm and loving family unit. Fostering a sense of belonging and love among individuals toward this vital institution and its members is essential for maintaining emotional stability and societal well-being.

Members of stable and transcendent families are considered to be the strongest supporters of one another. In this approach, individuals move beyond individualism and materialism, adopting a spiritual perspective that prioritizes the growth and transcendence of their family members alongside their own personal development. This collective mindset fosters a harmonious balance between self-improvement and the well-being of the family as a whole.

In such a family, all individuals enjoy equal human rights. From this perspective, the family becomes a sacred institution, described in the Holy Quran as a profound covenant. This "deep covenant" signifies that in cases of moral agreement, family members live together in a dignified and honorable manner, while in cases of moral disagreement, they part ways with respect and goodwill. This approach ensures that the sanctity of the family is preserved, regardless of the circumstances.

One of the important and key concepts in family studies is the concept of solidarity, i.e., unity, harmony, and loyalty that arise from shared interests, feelings, empathy, and collective actions. Islam emphasizes that the marital bond should have a divine purpose rooted in mutu-



al respect, compassion, and a commitment to fostering a spiritually fulfilling and harmonious relationship.

Islam establishes clear and concrete principles for family life. It places great importance on preserving lineage and societal structure, ensuring that the family is neither undermined by external forces nor weakened from within. Women play a central role in establishing the family, bringing affection, warmth, guidance, and emotional connection to the household. This ensures that the foundation of the family is built on the axis of love and friendship. In this framework, the role of women is elevated as the embodiment of divine beauty, complementing and harmoniz-



and sincere visits - has always held a special place among Iranian Muslims. Similarly, during Nowruz, Iranians have, since ancient times, placed great emphasis on visiting and meeting relatives, reinforcing family bonds and fostering a sense of unity and belonging.

During the blessed month of Ramadan, each family hosts an Iftar gathering to honor and strengthen kinship ties. With the father and grandfather as the central figures, they invite all relatives - including aunts, uncles, cousins, and their children - to come together and share a hearty and joyful time.

Today, all Iranians and Muslims recognize that this beautiful tradition and ritual contribute to better mental and emotional well-being. The coincidence of Ramadan and Nowruz this year provides a unique opportunity for Iranians to place even greater emphasis on this cherished tradition.

The glorious moment of breaking the fast with family members centered around grandparents, including uncles, aunts, cousins, and their children, strengthens the beautiful feelings of togetherness, love, and empathy. Setting the Iftar table, eating together, praying together, and then engaging in family activities fosters deeper attachment and affection among family

members, reinforcing the bonds of the extended family. This sense of connection and warmth represents the very essence of humanity that has been lost in the modern era; a loss that has contributed to isolation, loneliness, and even despair.

Maintaining relationships with relatives and kinship ties, as a healing prescription of the revealed religion of Islam, serves as the only way for humanity to escape the impasse of loneliness and disconnection. During Nowruz, Iranians uphold the cherished tradition of visiting relatives, making efforts to travel near and far to meet their loved ones and celebrate the New Year together. It is customary for the younger members of the family to visit the elders first, a practice that reflects deep respect for seniority and tradition. Iranians welcome each other with open arms, exchanging heartfelt wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year. At the end of the visit, the elders often give children and young people a gift or money as an "Eidi" (festive gift), symbolizing their blessings and good wishes for the year ahead.

It is hoped that people around the world will embrace this good and meaningful tradition of Iranians and Muslims and benefit from its potential.



Ramadan: The Spring of the Holy Quran. How?

Dr. Seyyed Mohammad Akrami

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Introduction

Should one continue to recite the Holy Qur'an during the blessed month of Ramadan? Or should one meditate on it, or perhaps do both? It is customary for those who fast during this month to recite one 'Juz' (part) of the Holy Qur'an every day. I leave the answer to this question to the understanding of the dear readers. Of course, both practices are virtuous and deserving of divine reward. During the holy month of Ramadan last year, I had the opportunity to discuss the verses of the Holy Qur'an related to health, which, thanks God,

were well received. These discussions were later broadcast in more comprehensive three-minute sessions on the Fahma program of the Qur'an Network on Iranian Radio.¹ I hope these discussions will soon be compiled into a book. Imam Reza (AS) is quoted to have said: "Whoever recites one verse of the Qur'an in the month of Ramadan, it is as if they have recited the entire Qur'an in other months."² It seems that this narration, in addition to emphasizing the recitation of the Qur'an during Ramadan, also highlights the importance of contemplating its verses.

The Qur'anic Verses Related to Genetics

Several verses in the Holy Qur'an refer to this expansive and significant field of science. It should be noted that this author does not claim to be an interpreter of the Qur'an but merely presents his personal reflections in order to seek feedback from scholars.

A- Absence of Gender Superiority

The phrase 'خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا' (He created for you mates from your own selves) has been repeated three times in the Holy Qur'an.³ The repetition of this phrase appears to underscore the importance of the subject. Its practical outcome, in brief, is as follows: the absence of gender superiority, i.e. neither men nor women are superior to one another, justice, man's vicegerency of Allah; and the manifestation of divine power. However, the genetic beauty revealed through these verses lies in the genetic similarity between men and women. Women possess two X chromosomes, one of which is naturally inactive. Men, on the other hand, have two chromosomes: an X and a Y. The Y chromosome contains only about 50 genes, while the X chromosome carries approximately 1600 genes.

If this was not the case, the organs of male and female bodies would be vastly different. The Holy Qur'an emphasizes that this similarity fosters peace and harmony between the two. In two verses, the same concept is highlighted in praise of the Holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH), using the expressions 'مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ' (from their own selves) and 'مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ' (from your own selves), respectively.⁴ This signifies that God has granted the believers a great favor by sending a messenger from among themselves. In this way, Muslims are able to communicate more effectively, understand more deeply, and derive greater comfort from him. A more detailed explanation of this matter would require more time and patience than can be afforded in this article.

B - Nature and Nurture

The issue of 'Nature and Nurture' in human life-concerning qualities and actions- has been extensively debated by scholars, with discussions often centered on which factor holds greater importance and influence. This matter has been most eloquently addressed in the Holy Qur'an, using min-





imal words, in the description of the life of Hazrat Maryam (peace be upon her). In the words of the Holy Qur'an: فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَمَّلَهَا زَكْرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكِ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (Thereupon her Lord accepted her with a gracious acceptance, made her grow up in a worthy fashion, and He charged Zechariah with her care. Whenever Zechariah visited her in the sanctuary, he would find provisions with her. He said, 'O Mary, from where does this come for you?' She said, 'It comes from Allah. Allah provides whomever He wishes without any reckoning.'⁵)

By explaining the process of planting and germination, we can observe that, in addition to good seeds - which represent genetics - factors such as water, food, air, light, and nutrients play a crucial role in the development of human beings, as well as in their actions and behavior. This concept is further clarified in the Qur'anic verse referring

to special sustenance, which symbolizes the environment. Agriculture encompasses three stages: planting, growing, and harvesting, all of which are metaphorically expressed through the idea of germination.

This author aims to use these two examples of verses from the Holy Qur'an to draw the attention of the readers of this magazine to deeper contemplation on the Qur'anic verses, particularly with a focus on health. It is hoped that we will seize the golden opportunity of the holy month of Ramadan to reflect more profoundly on the creation of humanity.

C - Verses and Hadiths on Fasting and Health

In the second part of this article, I will discuss verses related to fasting and health. In verses 183 to 187 of Surah Al-Baqarah, the obligation of fasting is mentioned, highlighting its existence since earlier times. Fasting is described as a means of attaining

piety. The obligation of fasting is waived for those who are ill or traveling. Another verse states that fasting men and women will receive forgiveness and a great reward from God.⁶

It has been narrated in a hadith from Imam Baqir (AS) that Islam is founded on five pillars, one of which is fasting.⁷ In another instance, he states: "Zakat is obligatory for everything, and the Zakat of the body is fasting."⁸

In the commentary of verse 153 of Surah Al-Baqarah, where God commands the believers to seek help from prayer and patience, Imam Baqir (AS) said: Patience is fasting. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said in a short hadith: "Fast until you become healthy (9). Imam Ali (AS), too has said: "Fasting is one of the two causes of health.

In the commentary of verse 153 of Surah Al-Baqarah, where God commands believers to seek help through prayer and patience, Imam Baqir (AS) has explained that patience refers to fasting. The Holy Prophet (PBUH), too, has said in a concise hadith: "Fast so that you may attain health".⁹ Similarly, Imam Ali (AS) stated: "Fasting is one of the two foundations of health".¹⁰

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "The stomach is the home of all ailments, and abstinence and forbearance are the best remedies."¹¹ It is evident that the hadith refers to the entire digestive system, but for the sake of brevity and perhaps to align with the understanding of the Arabs at that time, only the stomach is mentioned.

Concluding Remarks

By examining recent articles in medical science that discuss the significance of fasting, it can be concluded that fasting from the morning call to prayer (Fajr) until the evening call to prayer (Maghrib)- by abstaining from food and drink- helps regulate the body, allows the digestive system to rest, facilitates the elimination of waste products, and enhances the immune, nervous, and hormonal systems.

Of course, these benefits are distinct from the spiritual advantages of fasting. It is evident that fasting softens the human spirit, strengthens willpower, and moderates instincts. These effects have been extensively discussed in numerous articles published in reputable journals. Fasting has been shown to aid in the treatment of conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, hyperlipidemia,

digestive disorders, metabolic syndrome, and atherosclerosis.

In the second part of this article, an effort has been made to briefly highlight some key points related to fasting and health, encouraging our dear readers to explore and investigate this important topic further. It is hoped that God Almighty will include our names among those who truly observe fasting. I am confident that your feedback will contribute to a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of this subject.



Endnotes

- 1 - <http://radio.iranseda.ir/Program/?VALID=TRUE&ch=15&m=053111>
- 2 - Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 93, P. 346
- 3 - Surahs: Rum 21; Nahl 72; and Shura 11
- 4 - Surahs; Aal-e Imran Verse 183 and Tawbah, Verse 187
- 5 - Surah Aal-e Imran, Verse 37
- 6 - Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse 184; Surah Al-Ahzab, Verse 35
- 7 - Safinat al-Bihar, Vol. 2, P. 43
- 8 - Wasa'il al-Shia, Vol. 7, P. 289
- 9 - Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 59, P. 267
- 10 - Ibid.
- 11 - Ibid, Vol. 62, P. 290

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Nowruz, the Festivity of Cultural Bonds and Convergence among Nations

By: Dr. Salman Rostami, Cultural Expert of the I. R. Iran at the ECO Cultural Institute

Although political borders are respectable, the cultural connections among the countries where Nowruz is celebrated are too profound to be overlooked. Nowruz is a legacy rooted in shared rich cultural traditions established by our ancestors, and this precious legacy is an expression of the shared cultural life between the Nowruz-celebrating countries.

Anyone in cultural Iran who seeks the roots of their cultural and historical identity must pay visits to Marv, Abivard, Mehneh, and Sarakhs, and explore the history and civilization of their ancestors in Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khujand. Therefore, celebrations such as Nowruz should be seen as an opportunity to immerse oneself in a shared culture.

The mystical whispers of Kamal Khujandi continue to resonate in our ears, and the voice of Anvari Abivardi flows from the plains of Qaraqum; much like the roaring rivers of Seyhoun (Syr Darya) and Jeyhun (Amu Darya).

Keeping in view such strong bonds of friendship and unity among Nowruz-celebrating countries, it is possible to emphasize the necessity and importance of a common presence in global culture.

Being an ancient and precious heritage, Nowruz shines like a brilliant jewel in the history of human civilization—a festivity that, with the arrival of spring, heralds the rebirth of nature and the renewal of life. Rooted in Iranian culture and civilization, this timeless

ritual stands out as a symbol of solidarity and friendship among many nations.

Nowruz is celebrated in many countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, and even parts of India and China. Each of these nations welcomes this ancient celebration with its own unique ceremonies and customs. However, the core theme of Nowruz—renewal, friendship, and reconnection with nature and people—remains the same everywhere.

In Iran, setting the Haft-sin table with symbols such as Sib (apple), Sabzeh (sprout), Samanu (wheat pudding), Senjed (oleaster), Sir (garlic), Serkeh (vinegar), and Somagh (sumac) represents good wishes for the new year. In Afghanistan, people welcome Nowruz by cooking samanuk (samanu) and holding a rose festival in Mazar-e-Sharif. In Tajikistan, a flower-carving ceremony is held, in which young people celebrate the beginning of the new year by collecting spring flowers and presenting them to their elders. In Azerbaijan and Turkey, the festival of jumping over the fire on Chaharshanbe Suri (the last Wednesday of the year) and cooking local dishes are part of the Nowruz rituals. In Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, street performances and folk festivals transform the face of cities during Nowruz.

Nowruz also has a special place in Persian literature and other regional languages. Great poets such as Hafez, Saadi, Rumi, Ferdowsi, and Rudaki have described spring and Nowruz in their works.

With all its symbols and rituals, Nowruz is more than a simple celebration; this ancient festivity serves as a bridge between the past, present, and future. By transcending geographical and cultural boundaries, it connects nations and conveys a universal message of peace, love, friendship, and solidarity.

In a world where differences and borders often lead to division, Nowruz demonstrates how a cultural celebration can transcend boundaries and bring nations closer together. This cultural closeness creates a platform for greater interaction among countries and contributes to fostering global peace.

In his messages on the occasion of Nowruz, UN Secretary-General António Guterres described this ancient festival as a symbol of new beginnings, the rebirth of nature, and an opportunity to promote peace and solidarity among nations. In his message, he stated: “Nowruz marks a new beginning; a new day, a new

year, the arrival of spring, and the rebirth of nature.” He also emphasized that Nowruz brings together millions of people from different nations, promoting dialogue, good neighborliness, and reconciliation during these challenging times. Guterres expressed his hope that Nowruz will bring peace, tranquility, health, and happiness to all people in the world.

Therefore, Nowruz has not only been a symbol of unity and solidarity in the past but has also maintained its significance as a cultural asset in today’s world. This festivity bridges the past and the future, uniting people from East to West, from Central Asia to the Middle East, in a profound cultural convergence. Such a legacy, which has endured for centuries, will undoubtedly continue to serve as a messenger of peace, friendship, and unity in the future.

Nowruz also holds a special place among ECO member states. This organization, which includes Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, recognizes Nowruz as shared cultural heritage. In these countries, Nowruz is celebrated with diverse ceremonies and customs that reflect the region’s cultural and historical richness.

In Pakistan, Nowruz is known as “Alam Afroz” and is particularly celebrated among the country’s Shia and Persian-speaking communities. People mark the day by wearing new clothes, visiting friends and family, and preparing traditional dishes. In Turkey, especially in the eastern and southeastern regions, Nowruz is celebrated as a symbol of spring and the rebirth of nature. People welcome the New Year by lighting bonfires and jumping over them as part of the festivities. In Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, Nowruz is celebrated with street gatherings, musical performances, and folk dances. People welcome spring by preparing traditional dishes such as ‘Nowruz Koje’ and ‘Somalaq’ and strengthening social bonds by visiting each other. Highlighting the significance of Nowruz as a shared cultural heritage, ECO organizes numerous programs to commemorate this ancient tradition. For instance, in recent years, Nowruz celebrations have been held in Tehran with the participation of the ECO Secretary-General and ambassadors of member countries. These events underscore the importance of this festivity in strengthening cultural ties and fostering unity among the nations of the region.

Happy Nowruz

Ramadan Reform Chastity



By: Dr. Abolfazl Eghbali

The holy month of Ramadan is one of the most auspicious times of the year for self-improvement and individual as well as social reform. During this month, Muslims strive to draw closer to God by engaging in acts of worship such as fasting, prayer, and supplication. During the days and nights of Ramadan, believers make a greater effort than usual to embody the religious principles of Islam in their conduct. Hijab and chastity are also among the divine commandments for Muslims, particularly for women.

From an Islamic perspective, it is believed that the hijab (veil) carries positive and unique functions, both in the individual dimension for women and in the social dimension for the family and society. In this note, we will highlight some of these functions in both the individual and social realms.

A) Personal Functions of Hijab (Veil)

1 - Enhancing the Woman's Personality

In the system of creation, every being is endowed with a unique set of characteristics that distinguish

it from others. The veil helps emphasize and preserve the distinct identity and dignity of a woman, allowing her personality to shine in a manner that aligns with her innate nature and values.

As a being, a woman possesses unique characteristics that distinguish her from a man. One such characteristic is her sexual attractiveness. The female body has historically been an object of attraction for men, who have often sought to possess it. However, it is important to recognize that a woman is not merely defined by her physical beauty or sexual appeal; she also possesses a distinct personality and human identity that transcends her physical form.

When a woman appears in public without observing proper covering and instead emphasizes her sexual attraction, she indirectly communicates that her worth lies primarily in her physical appearance. In such cases, will her true personality and human identity be acknowledged? By concealing her external charms and beauty, the hijab shifts the focus toward her inner qualities and human

essence. It redirects attention from the superficial to the profound, allowing her personality and transcendental attributes to take center stage. When encountering a woman in hijab, the conversation no longer revolves around sexual attractiveness or physical features like beautiful eyes and eyebrows. Instead, her dignity, intellect, and moral character become the focal points of recognition.

2 - Ensuring the woman's Security

It is evident that women who present themselves in society without adhering to modesty are more vulnerable to inappropriate behavior from lustful men compared to those who observe the hijab. Statistics on rape and harassment in Western societies, where the hijab is less common, support this fact, showing a higher incidence of such incidents among women who do not observe the hijab compared to those who do. When women appear in society with modesty and chastity, lustful men are less likely to consider harassing or abusing them, as the veil acts as a barrier that discourages such behavior.

Conversely, a woman who appears in public without a veil and does not restrict the gaze of non-mahram men inadvertently allows lustful individuals to feel emboldened to harass or harm her. Imam Reza (AS) emphasized this point in a narration, stating that the purpose of the veil is to prevent men from being incited and to avoid the security issues that arise from such situations. The hijab, therefore, serves as a protective measure, safeguarding women's dignity and reducing the risk of harassment.

3 - Enhancing the Woman's Attractiveness and Value

We know that the harder something is to obtain, the more desirable and valuable it becomes, while what is easily accessible tends to be perceived as less valuable and significant. For instance, gold is more valuable than bricks or many other materials because it is rare and difficult to access. If gold were as abundant and easily found as stones or bricks, it would undoubtedly lose its value. Similarly, when a woman is easily and freely accessible, her worth diminishes in the eyes of others. Conversely, the more effort and restraint required for a man to approach a woman, the more she is valued

and respected.

One of the functions of the hijab is to create a barrier between men and women, making it more challenging for men to access a woman's attractions. This, in turn, enhances her desirability and value. The concept of true love is also rooted in this logic. Men are naturally more inclined to love and respect women who embody modesty, dignity, and self-respect, rather than those who readily make themselves available.

In Western societies, where access to women is often unrestricted and unchallenged, the value of women has significantly declined. This is one of the reasons why genuine love has faded and become marginalized in such cultures. The hijab, by preserving a woman's dignity and creating a sense of reverence, helps maintain her value and fosters deeper, more meaningful connections based on respect and admiration.

4 - Making the Wife More Admirable for Her Husband

When a woman carelessly displays her beauty and charms to others outside her marital relationship, it inevitably diminishes her husband's love and admiration for her. In contrast, a woman who, out of loyalty and respect for her husband, observes modesty in her attire and behavior when in the presence of non-mahram individuals, and reserves her beauty exclusively for her husband, becomes more attractive to him.

5 - Relieving Women from Unnecessary Stress and Expenses

One of the natural tendencies of women is the desire to wear makeup and enhance their appearance. In societies where the hijab is not observed and women feel compelled to present themselves without modesty, a significant amount of energy, time, and money is spent on makeup and beautification before they step into public spaces. This can lead to unnecessary stress and financial burden. On the other hand, in a society where women observe the hijab and enter the public sphere with modesty, the need for extensive makeup and beautification is significantly reduced.

6 - Providing Equal Opportunities for Women to Enjoy Tranquility and Happiness



Another psychological characteristic of women is their innate need to be noticed and appreciated. However, not all women are blessed with the same level of physical beauty, as this is largely determined by genetic factors beyond their control. In societies that place excessive emphasis on physical appearance, women who are less conventionally attractive often face neglect, as those with more striking features naturally draw greater attention. This imbalance can lead to feelings of despair, inadequacy, and even mental depression among women who feel overlooked. The hijab, by shifting the focus away from physical appearance and toward inner qualities, helps create a more equitable environment. It ensures that all women, regardless of their external beauty, are valued for their character, intellect, and contributions. This fosters a sense of tranquility and happiness, allowing women to thrive without the pressure of conforming to unrealistic standards of beauty. By promoting equality and dignity, the hijab empowers women to find fulfillment and self-worth beyond superficial judgments.

B) Social Functions of Hijab

1 - Strengthening the Family Foundation

The hijab plays a vital role in strengthening family bonds and solidifying the foundation of the family. When a man is constantly exposed to the appearances of women other than his wife or encounters various sexual stimuli outside the home, he may

gradually become less satisfied with his spouse. This dissatisfaction arises because his wife, while possessing her own unique beauty, may not embody all the external charms and adornments of the women he sees in society. Over time, this can erode the cohesion of the family, potentially leading to its weakening or even disintegration. The hijab allows a man to focus more on his family, fostering a deeper connection with his spouse and children. At the same time, it frees him from unnecessary distractions, enabling him to dedicate more time to spiritual growth and contemplation of transcendental truths. Therefore, the hijab can be considered a logical social necessity.

2 - Motivating the Desire for Married Life

The hijab maintains the motivation to marry and makes men accept the responsibilities and difficulties of forming and managing a family. One of the problems we face in society today is that men do not intend to get married.

The hijab plays a significant role in maintaining the motivation for marriage and encourages men to accept the responsibilities and challenges associated with forming and managing a family. One of the pressing issues in modern society is the reluctance of men to commit to marriage. When women observe the hijab and present themselves with modesty and dignity, it fosters an environment where men are inspired to seek a meaningful and committed relationship.



Khadija (pbuh)

By: Dr. Reyhaneh Sadat Raesi

Lady Khadija (Khadija bint Khuwaylid) was the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the first person to accept Islam. She was a wealthy and noble merchant in Mecca, known for her intelligence, integrity, and generosity. Khadija supported the Prophet both emotionally and financially during the early years of his prophethood, enduring hardships and persecution alongside him. Her unwavering faith and dedication earned her the title of “Mother of the Believers.”

Before the advent of Islam, Khadija, was considered one of the women of the Quraysh tribe to the extent that she was called the Lady of Quraysh women. Before marrying Prophet Muhammad, Khadija was engaged in trading, with Muhammad working in her caravan. Khadija later proposed Muhammad for his hand in marriage and they marry afterwards. This was 15 years before Muhammad’s prophethood. Khadija is the first wife of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and the mother of Zahra and is known as Umm al-

Mu’minin (mother of the believers). She was the first woman to believe in the Prophet (PBUH) and who prayed with Imam Ali (PBUH) behind them. Khadija (PBUH) used all her wealth to propagate Islam. The Prophet (PBUH) described her by saying: “There will be no one like Khadija. When people denied me, Khadija confirmed me and helped me with her wealth to advance the religion of God. God ordered me to give good news to Khadija about her emerald palace in heaven, where there is no suffering or hardship.” Lady Khadija passed away on the 10th of Ramadan in the 10th year of prophethood (around 619 CE). Her death was a profound loss to the Prophet, and the year of her passing is remembered as the “Year of Sorrow.” Khadija (pbuh) died three years before emigration to Medina, at the age of 65 in Mecca due to the difficult conditions of the Valley of abu Talib, where they had been under economic blockade by the polytheists for three years.



Ramadan, the Spring of Worship, Coincides with the Spring of Nature

By: Narges Yavaran

Contemplating the blessed verse, 'وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ' (I did not create the jinn and humans except to worship Me), which points to the ultimate purpose of creation, can serve as a profound motivation to pursue the paths of worship and gain a deeper understanding of

religious teachings. Through reflection and reasoning on this path, one can take a step, even if small, toward achieving ultimate perfection, i.e., true servitude to God Almighty.

Among the recommended acts of worship emphasized in the verses of the Qur'an and narra-



tions is fasting. The blessed month of Ramadan is the month in which fasting has been made obligatory. The obligation of fasting during the days of Ramadan is explicitly stated in verse 185 of Surah Al-Baqarah. In the words of the Holy Qur'an, 'شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ، وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْهُدَى وَالْفُرْقَانِ، فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ' (The month of Ramadan is one in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance to mankind, with manifest proofs of guidance and the Criterion. So let those of you who witness it fast in it).

In the coming days, the spring of worship and devotion coincides with the spring of nature. Reflecting on the beauty and renewal of nature brings greater softness to the soul and prepares it for greater worship and devotion. The servitude of God, the Creator and Giver of Life, as mentioned in narrations, is likened to the revival of inanimate nature in spring. Similarly, on the Day of Judgment, God will resurrect humanity, allowing them to experience the true reward of their devotion and servitude in their ultimate existence.

The holy month of Ramadan offers a tremendous opportunity for every believer to advance on the path of worship and devotion to Allah by

fulfilling both obligatory and recommended acts of worship. It is the month in which the Holy Qur'an was revealed, and when every fasting soul is in a state of worship, whether asleep or awake. In this month, the reward for reciting a single verse of the Holy Qur'an is equivalent to reciting the entire Qur'an, and its nights of power (Laylat al-Qadr) are better than a thousand months of worship. It is the month whose dawn prayers illuminate the soul and elevate the human spirit.

What distinguishes this year's holy month of Ramadan from previous years is that it coincides with the arrival of spring, and just as nature is revived during this season, the customs and rituals of Ramadan; fasting during the day, sitting on prayer rugs at night, reciting prayers, and shedding tears at dawn while reflecting on the words of Imam Sajjad's (AS) supplication, such as the Du'a of Abu Hamza al-Thumali, can cleanse the hearts and minds of believers from moral vices and replace them with virtuous humane qualities.

The holy month of Ramadan is indeed a time of profound spiritual significance and reflection for Muslims around the world. It is a month of fast-

ing, prayer, and devotion, during which many important events in Islamic history are commemorated. These events include the birth of Imam Hasan (AS), the eldest son of Imam Ali (AS) and Hazrat Fatima (AS) on the 15th of Ramadan; the demise of Hazrat Khadija (SA), the beloved wife of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and a steadfast supporter of Islam; and the martyrdom of Imam Ali (AS), the Commander of the faithful, on Laylat al-Qadr (Nights of Power).

es, virtues, and teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt (the family of the Prophet). During Ramadan, Muslims strive to deepen their connection with Allah, seek forgiveness, and reflect on the lessons of these sacred moments.

The Holy Prophet of Islam, Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH), delivered a sermon to the people in the final days of the holy month of Shaban, saying: "Ask your Lord with sincere intentions and pure hearts, free from sins and wrongdoings,



The last ten nights of Ramadan include Laylat al-Qadr, or the Night of Power, which is considered the holiest night of the year. According to the verses of the Holy Qur'an, this night is better than a thousand months. It is the night when angels and the Holy Spirit descend by the permission of their Lord, a time when the heavens and the earth draw closer together, and the inhabitants of the heavens descend to the earth. These are the nights in which worship, Tahajjud (keeping vigil), and staying awake in devotion are equivalent to the worship of an entire lifetime.

These events serve as reminders of the sacrific-

to grant you the success of fasting sincerely. In this great month, remember the hunger and thirst of the Day of Judgment. Give charity to the poor and needy, honor your elders, show mercy to your children, be kind to your relatives, and treat the orphans of others with compassion so that they may show kindness to your orphans after you. Whoever among you provides Iftar to a fasting believer in this month will receive from Allah the reward of freeing a slave and the forgiveness of his past sins. Indeed, Allah grants this reward to the one who facilitates the breaking of the fast, even if it is with half a date or a sip of water.

O people, whoever improves his character in this month will walk on an easy path on the Day when steps will falter. Whoever lightens the workload and service of his employees and workers, God will make his reckoning easy on the Day of Judgment. Whoever restrains his evil from others, God Almighty will withhold His wrath from him on the Day of Judgment. Whoever honors an orphan in this month, God will honor him on the Day of Judgment. Whoever

gazing at what is forbidden, and avoid quarreling with one another. Do not envy, backbite, swear falsely, curse, oppress, act foolishly, or succumb to sadness. Do not neglect the remembrance of God and prayer, and remain silent about what should not be said. Be patient, uphold truthfulness, and distance yourself from evil individuals. Refrain from slander, lying, hostility, suspicion, and gossip. Consider yourselves destined for the Hereafter, and eagerly await the reappearance of the



maintains ties of kinship with his relatives in this month, God will connect him to His mercy on the Day of Judgment. And whoever severs his kindness to his relatives in this month, God will cut off His mercy from him on the Day of Judgment.”

Imam Sadiq (AS) has also been quoted regarding the ethics of fasting, saying:

“Fasting is not merely abstaining from eating and drinking. Rather, the fasting person must keep their ears, eyes, heart, skin, and all parts of their body free from forbidden acts and even from what is considered abominable.

Prevent your tongues from lying, your eyes from

Qa’im of the Household of Prophet Muhammad (Imam Mahdi). Long for the rewards of the Hereafter and prepare righteous deeds as provisions for your journey to the Hereafter. May your hearts be at peace, your bodies serene, your souls humble, and your hearts softened, like a servant who fears his master. Fear the punishment of the Hereafter and strive to earn God’s mercy and forgiveness.

O fasting person, your heart must be free from defects, your inner self from deceit and dishonesty, and your body from impurities. During fasting, purify yourself for the sake of God and cleanse your heart from the love of anything other than Him.



Ramadan

Rebirth for the Soul

Seyyedeh Fahimeh Hashemi

Abstract:

Ramadan, as one of the most important months of the Islamic calendar, provides an opportunity to revise personal and social life. This article examines the various spiritual and social dimensions of Ramadan and analyzes its effects on the individual and society.

Introduction:

Ramadan is not only a month of fasting, but it is also a good time for self-purification and closeness to God. This month, with its own characteristics,

allows Muslims to distance themselves from their daily routine and revise their behaviors and beliefs.

Ramadan's spiritual aspects:

Days of Ramadan: Fasting in Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam. This act not only means refusing to eat and drink but also serves as an opportunity to control the soul and strengthen the will. Fasting can help the person achieve self-knowledge and increase empathy for the needy.

Worship and Prayer: In the month of Ramadan,

Muslims are encouraged to pray more, especially the special prayers for this month. These acts of worship bring more closeness to God and strengthen the spiritual feelings of people.

Reciting the Quran: The month of Ramadan is known as the month of the Qur'an. Muslims are encouraged to recite and understand the Qur'an during this month. Reciting the Qur'an can bring spiritual peace and guidance.

Nights of Destiny: The Nights of Qadr (Laylat al-Qadr) are among the most important nights of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was revealed. Prayer and worship on these nights hold significant value and reward and are an opportunity for divine forgiveness and mercy.

Asceticism and Repentance: Ramadan is an opportunity for self-improvement and a revision of behaviors and actions. Muslims are encouraged to repent for their sins and return to God. This process can lead to internal peace and mental satisfaction.

Sense of Empathy and Solidarity:

With fasting, people become more aware of the needs of the needy, which can strengthen the sense of empathy and solidarity in society. This feeling enhances affection and positive communication among individuals in the community.

Collective Prayer: In the month of Ramadan, mass prayers are held, especially during Iftar and worship ceremonies. These prayers not only strengthen the collective spirit but also bring people closer to God.

Social aspects of Ramadan:

Family Relationships and Social Solidarity: Ramadan is an opportunity to gather families and strengthen family bonds. The collective Iftars and congregational prayers in mosques increase the sense of solidarity in society (Ali, 2021).

Helping the Needy: During this month, Muslims are encouraged to help the needy. This act not only reduces poverty in society but also reinforces a sense of social responsibility (Mohammed, 2020). This month sees Muslims paying more attention to

charity and helping those in need. Zakat and charity increase during this time, and people focus on helping others.

Increasing the Spirit of Cooperation and Empathy: Ramadan helps increase the spirit of cooperation and empathy among Muslims. People reinforce their sense of belonging to the community by holding community ceremonies and social activities. **Cultural Techniques:** Ramadan acts as an opportunity for cultural exchange and acquaintance with the different customs of Muslims in various parts of the world. These cultural interactions can lead to a better understanding and mutual respect between cultures.

Islamic Identity:

The month of Ramadan strengthens Islamic identity in Muslim societies. People reinforce their collective identity by participating in common worship and social activities.

Conclusion:

Ramadan, as a spiritual and social period, provides an opportunity for rebirth in the personal and collective life of Muslims. This month reminds us that through self-improvement and strengthening human relationships, we can achieve a better and more committed society. With the end of Ramadan, these teachings must continue in our daily lives to keep their positive effects stable. The end of this obedience, servitude, and rebirth of the soul is a great holiday called the Eid al-Fitr, marking the beginning of a new season and the emergence of a new human being to follow the path of evolution.

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This is Lebanon

Zohreh Yazdanpanah-Reporter

What follows is a heartfelt note by Zohreh Yazdanpanah, a reporter and documentary maker who had recently paid a visit to Lebanon.

Lebanon again; but this time, on the eve of the funeral and burial of the dear leader of the resistance, Martyr Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, and his longtime friend, Sayyid Hashem Safi al-Din. This comes in the aftermath of the Al-Aqsa Storm in Gaza and the heroic actions of Yahya Sinwar and Muhammad Deif, which marked the Israeli regime's humiliation and forced acceptance of a ceasefire and prisoner exchange. It also signifies the epic period of the return of the people of southern Lebanon to their homes, their renewed resistance, and their stand against Israeli Merkava tanks in post-Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah Lebanon. This is further set against the backdrop of the downfall of Syria, where supportless Syrians - especially women and children- have lost their homes and sought refuge in parts of southern Lebanon.

In an era when, in some corners of this universe, individuals devoid of any sense of humanity show no concern for the struggles of others, and through their thoughts and actions, inflict harm and harassment on others, it truly makes me sick.

However, on this planet, there are also human beings who, in anonymity and humility, have chosen to stand by others and embody the spirit of Saadi's poem—a poem so profound that it is inscribed on the wall of a meeting room in

the United Nations:

“Human Beings are members of a whole

In creation of one essence and soul

If one member is inflicted with pain

Other members uneasy will remain

If you have no sympathy for human pain

The name of human you cannot pertain”

Now, the question is: Which group and which ideology do we belong to? Where do each of us stand in this world, and what is our relationship with the people around us? In the universe, where the creation of man is certainly not and cannot be in vain, at this very sensitive moment in time, we may find ourselves standing where we should not be and not where we should be!

Travels increase experience and broaden the scope of thought, and if they are purposeful and combined with the search for truth, they must be seen, heard, and certainly narrated...

Perhaps, in addition to narrating the various developments in Islamic Iran, we should also include the narration of other significant issues, such as the progress of humanity and knowledge, fairness and chivalry, truth-seeking, freedom and justice, a sense of responsibility, honesty and integrity, gratitude, loyalty, and adherence to the covenant that God has taken from the souls—to worship none other than Him. This should also encompass the intellectual awareness and insight of some, as well as the regression



seen in others, whether in Iran or different corners of the world. Such a narrative could serve as a balanced measure of standards, particularly in shaping the way of thinking regarding the concept of waiting and the reappearance of the Imam of the Time.

The oppressed people in different corners of the world await the reappearance of the promised savior; the innocent women and children of Gaza, the oppressed people of Palestine, Yemen, and Syria, the Lebanese veterans and bereaved people, and the Syrian refugees in Lebanon, etc.

Me, the Hamra Hotel, and the Syrian Refugee Camp

Easy access to the internet is a challenge here, limiting my ability to provide detailed narratives. As a result, I am compelled to keep my accounts brief.

Sayyid Mustafa said: “Hajji has asked me to take you to Hamra.” He then added with a smile: “The Hamra Hotel.” I understood the meaning of his smile when we arrived at one of the Syrian refugee camps in Beirut. The camp is housed in what used to be a university; a four-story building that, after being closed for fourteen years, has now been reopened to accommodate Syrian refugees. The responsibility for managing this camp lies with jihadist groups. Among them are young people who have even brought their wives and small children to contribute to the effort.

One of them is Sheikh Ibrahim. He had previously gone to Syria with his wife and two-year-old child to assist Lebanese refugees. His second child was born in Syria. After the fall of Syria, they were among the last to leave and return to Lebanon. Now, in this camp, he serves as one of the ad-

ministrative officials, handling everything from electrical wiring to fixing room locks. I am currently staying in one of the rooms next to one of the active jihadist groups that have come to Lebanon to aid the refugees.

Meeting with the Sister of Martyr Imad Mughniyeh

We were informed of going to visit the sister of martyr Imad Mughniyeh, Nahida Khanum. I thought we would be guests at her house. When we arrived, we entered the Husseinayah, which was at the end of what looked like a parking lot to enter the building. The Husseinayah of Imam Hassan Mujtaba (AS), launching which had been the dream of a young man named Sadiq for years. Now the Husseinayah was underway and the young Haaj Sadiq was shedding tears for the loss of his martyred friends who once had a place in a corner of this Husseinayah. The last of them was Abu Turab. Haaj Sadiq had stories that are worth hearing and I had to go back to him.

We were informed that we would be visiting Nahida Khanum, the sister of the martyr Imad Mughniyeh. I assumed we would be guests at her home. However, upon arrival, we entered a Husseinayah located at the end of what appeared to be a parking lot leading into a building. This was the Husseinayah of Imam Hassan Mujtaba (AS), the realization of a dream that a young man named Sadiq had nurtured for years. Now, the Husseinayah was operational, and Haaj Sadiq, now older, was shedding tears for his martyred friends who once had a place in this very Husseinayah. The last of them was Abu Turab. Haaj Sadiq had many stories worth hearing, and I knew I had to return to him.

Nahida Khanum spoke about her three martyred brothers,





the last of whom was Imad, and later, Imad's son, Jihad Mughniyeh. She apologized several times for not being able to host us at her home. This was because Nahida Khanum's house in the suburbs had also been bombed, and...

Rawdat al-Shuhada' and Umm al-Maqamah

Today we were able to visit the Rawdat al-Shuhada' (Shrine of the Martyrs). I also went to the grave of Imad Mughniyeh's mother, which was next to the grave of his son. Haaiya Amina Khanum was truly the mother of the resistance. Nahida Khanum told us that when Imad was still a child, our mother fought along with the Mujahideen against the occupying Zionist regime. How much I love such martyr-raising mothers... May God have mercy on her, her three sons, and her grandson Jihad Mughniyeh, who was martyred in Syria...

Rawdat al-Hura

In Rawdat al-Hura, I first went to the tomb of Martyr Reza Awaza

In the time that has passed since the martyrdom of Reza Awaza, I have felt deeply indebted to him and his wife, Martyr Masoumeh Karbasi, who is buried in the Shah Cheragh Shrine in Shiraz. This is because their sacrifices have strengthened my motivation to continue walking the path of resistance.

Iranians have set up a Mawkib (a service station located in a Shiite religious site) in the name of Imam Reza (AS) right in front of the Rawdat al-Hura. Haaj Saeed, who founded the Imad Mughniyeh jihadist group, has come from Iran



over the past two months and set up this place.

Abis, An Eighteen-year-old Martyr

Can you believe that an 18-year-old martyr invited us to his home? Martyr Mohammad Mahdi Abbas Ramiti, known by the jihadi name 'Abis', was martyred in southern Lebanon just three months ago while combating the Zionist regime. Eighteen years is a very short life, but this young man's life compelled us to spend four hours in his house, listening to the stories narrated by his father, Abu Mahdi, and his mother, Umm Mahdi, who had dedicated their only son to the cause of serving the Imam of the Time (AS). They told us about a Narcissus flower that had grown in the part of their house struck by a missile and shared what inspired their son- who always wore a smile on his face- to choose this path.

The Martyrdom Place of the Dear Sayyid of the Resistance

We were returning from the house of martyr Mohammad Mahdi Abbas Ramiti and passing near the place where Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah had been martyred when Sheikh Abolfazl said, "Since we have come this far, let us also go and see this place." Perhaps, at that late hour- past 1:00 am- we had been invited by the dear Sayyid of the Resistance himself.

Under the light of our cell phones, we set foot on the wet hills surrounding the place and walked around it. I wondered what a threat Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah must have posed to the Zionist regime and the United States, who



had come after his life with trench-busting bombs! What they failed to realize was that Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah was, in fact, a school of thought and the spirit of resistance; a force that neither perishes nor fades into oblivion. One of the cameramen moved ahead, using his cell phone light to illuminate the area so we could see the place more clearly. I recalled a letter I had written to the dear Sayyid of the Resistance earlier that Friday at noon, unaware of the bombing of the Dahiya that had occurred in the afternoon and evening. The next morning, the news of Sayyid's martyrdom and the news of my letter to him were broadcast simultaneously on the news channels. From that day onward, I had yearned to be in the presence of the dear Sayyid of the Resistance; until tonight.

Thank you, Sayyid, for allowing me to come! But as the Iranian poet Shahryar (may God have mercy on him) has said in one of his poems 'Why so late!'...

The Tireless Jihadists

We are heading south with Sheikh Mohammad Mahdi and his family to Nabatiyeh. Sheikh Mohammad Mahdi, the leader of one of the jihadist groups, has come to Lebanon with his pregnant wife and their son, who is no more than a year and a half old, to assist Syrian refugees. He and his family live in a Syrian refugee camp as well. Their activities are extraordinary, and describing them goes beyond the scope of these notes. I will need to write about them in detail at another time and place. The group's cameraman, Mr. Mohammad Ali, is also accompanying us.

Abbas of the Resilient South

There was a burnt-out car next to the house and a photo of Martyr Abbas Mahmoud Faran, popularly known as Abu Sadeq. We asked the Martyr's brother for permission and entered the house to visit the Martyr's parents. A month before Abbas was martyred, the Israeli forces had struck the area around their house with a drone. The doors, windows, and glass of Abbas's parents' house were not spared. A month later, they targeted the municipality building. Five people were martyred in the building, one of whom was Abbas. His car, which had been parked in front of the municipality building, was also burned. The charred skeleton of the car, now placed in front of the steps of Abbas's parents' house, stands as a thorn in the eyes of the Zionists. Abbas had been married for two years but had no children. He was both the hope of his household and the hope of the local community during the difficult days of the war. There are many young men like Abbas in Lebanon, especially in the south...

It was the time of the Maghrib call to prayer, and the rain was pouring heavily. We made our way to one of the mosques in Nabatiyeh, the Qamar Bani Hashim Mosque, and prayed there. A picture of the Supreme Leader adorned the modest space of the mosque, reflecting the love and respect the Lebanese hold for the Islamic Revolution.

Haaj Mohsen, from America to Lebanon

We set off early in the morning. The further we moved from Beirut and closer to Baalbek, the colder the weath-

er became, and the snow-covered path made the scenery appear even more beautiful and serene.

Sheikh Mohammad Mahdi is handling some of the tasks for his jihadist group. After visiting Sayyidah Khoula in Baalbek, I went to meet Falatoonzadeh, Haaj Mohsen, who is widely well-known among Syrian refugees, local Lebanese, and Iranian jihadists in Baalbek. Even though he is extremely busy when he learns about my international activities, especially the book 'This is Syria: Voices of Women Narrators of the War' and my current presence in Lebanon, he refers to his own encounter with Syrian refugees in Lebanon and says with emphasis: "Continue the work on Syria; the Syrian issue is not over". Contrary to my expectations, he modestly allows us to have a short conversation between his works. The interview has not yet begun, and the cameramen do not miss the opportunity; Mr. Mohammad Ali and Mr. Ali also turn on their cameras. Haaj Mohsen both talks to me and handles the work of those who come to him for help.

Sheikh Mohammad Mahdi is managing some of the tasks for his jihadist group. After visiting Sayyidah Khoula in Baalbek, I went to meet Falatoonzadeh, Hajj Mohsen, who is widely known among Syrian refugees, local Lebanese, and Iranian jihadists in Baalbek. Despite being extremely busy, when he learned about my international activities- particularly the book 'This is Syria: Voices of Women Narrators of the War'- and my current presence in Lebanon, he reflected on his own experiences with Syrian refugees in Lebanon and emphasized: "Continue the work on Syria; the Syrian issue is not over." Contrary to my expectations, he graciously allowed us to have a brief conversation amidst his busy schedule. The interview had not yet formally begun, but the cameramen, Mr. Mohammad Ali and Mr. Ali, seized the opportunity; and turned on their cameras. Haaj Mohsen spoke with me while simultaneously addressing the needs of those who came to him for assistance.

He is from Dezful. He had gone to America with his wife and children to continue his studies. In 1998, he went back to Iran to see his family. But when he returned to America, the American government refused to give him a visa. Mr. Mohsen stayed in Iran while his wife and children were in America.

He is from Dezful. He had gone to America with his wife and children to pursue his studies. In 1998, he returned to Iran to visit his family. However, when he attempted to go back to America, the U.S. government denied him a visa. As a result, Mr. Mohsen remained in Iran while his wife and children stayed in America.

A letter from a young girl in one of the deprived areas of Khuzestan inspired him to dedicate six years to jihadi activities, helping the people in those underserved regions. This continued until five months ago, when the martyrdom of the beloved leader of the resistance, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, occurred. The martyrdom and the call for extending support to the deprived people of the region by the Supreme Leader made him go to Lebanon. From engaging in

jihadi activities to support Lebanese refugees to addressing the plight of Syrian refugees in northern Baalbek. He has remained deeply involved in Lebanon and has been working alongside his fellow jihadist brothers.

Handling the affairs of people who came to him in person and answering a constant stream of phone calls forced us to postpone the continuation of our conversation for a more suitable time. I made him promise to grant me a much more detailed interview on another occasion. As I took his photograph, I reflected on his words and the strategic perspective he has on his jihadi activities. His approach is marked by a comprehensive and deep cultural understanding of jihadi activities, which adds immense value to his efforts.

The World Honors the Dear Sayyid of The Resistance in Beirut

Beirut is in a state of unusual excitement these days. Everyone is eagerly awaiting Sunday's funeral ceremony. Lebanese people are pouring into Beirut from all over the country. In addition to political officials, individuals who stand by the resistance and honor the Sayyid of the Resistance are arriving in Beirut from various parts of the world. As the funeral draws nearer, Beirut grows increasingly crowded, and the anticipation among the people becomes more palpable. For many, attending the funerals of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyid Hashem Safi al-Din has become akin to an obligatory duty, much like the daily prayers (salat). In the words of the son of the Sayyid of the Resistance, Sunday's funeral is not merely a funeral; it is a declaration of stance and a renewal of the covenant with Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah...

The Morning of the Funeral

After we prayed the morning prayer, I tied my headscarf and put on the white robe I had received from the Lebanese youth the night before at Rawdat al-Hura, hoping it would help me spot the Iranian flag later. We then walked toward the hotel where entry permits into the stadium for press personnel were being distributed. The prayer ceremony for the sacred bodies of the beloved martyrs of the resistance, Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyid Hashem Safi al-Din is set to begin at 10 a.m. in the stadium, followed by the funeral procession outside. Today is a day of farewell and profound emotion.

Peace Be upon Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyid Safiuddin

The internet was down today, which is why I couldn't send the stories on time.

After receiving our passes, we set off toward the stadium. The streets were filled with people and the yellow flags of the Hezbollah resistance. Men and women, old and young, Lebanese and non-Lebanese, were all making their way to the stadium. A shared cause- Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah, the beloved leader of the resistance - had brought everyone

together, uniting the religious and non-religious, Muslims and non-Muslims, on the same path.

When we arrived, the doors of the stadium had been closed due to the overwhelming crowd. In spite of having those passes, we had almost lost the chance of getting in but we finally managed to get in; especially after they discovered we were from Iran.



We could not confine ourselves to the seats marked for press people and a moment later, we were in the middle of the field and among the crowd. The stadium television was broadcasting all kinds of clips: Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah's speech, Sayyed Hashem Safiuddin's words, Hezbollah fighters' struggles against the Zionist regime's aggression, the song 'Salam Farmandeh' (Hello commander), etc. and...

We couldn't confine ourselves to the seats reserved for the press people, and moments later, we found ourselves in the middle of the field, immersed in the crowd. The stadium screens were broadcasting a variety of clips: Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah's speeches, Sayyid Hashem Safiuddin's words, Hezbollah fighters' struggles against the Zionist regime's aggression, the song Salam Farmandeh (Hello Commander), and more.

Political personalities from various countries arrived in groups. Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky also made an appearance. I wanted to take his picture but couldn't, so I decided to wait for another opportunity during the ceremony. Mr. Ghalibaf and Mr. Araghchi finally arrived as well.

After the recitation of the Holy Qur'an and poetry readings by several Lebanese poets, and the Yemeni poet Moaz al-Junaid, the Supreme Leader's message was read out.

I made my way to the closest part of the officials' stand, where the representatives of the Holy Shrine of Razavi were standing and holding the blessed flag of Imam Ali ibn

Musa al-Reza (AS). I was allowed to touch and kiss one of the flags. Finally, the hearse carrying the sacred bodies of the martyrs Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah and Sayyid Hashem Safi al-Din slowly entered the area. The crowd rose to their feet, tears streaming down their faces, and the sound of sobbing filled the air. The hearse carrying the bodies slowly circled the field, allowing people to bid farewell to the two

martyrs of the resistance. It felt as though the two martyrs had come to thank everyone who had gathered to honor them. Suddenly, five Israeli fighter jets appeared above the stadium, flying at a low altitude. With their deafening roar, they passed quickly over the crowd in an attempt to intimidate them. Instead of fear, the crowd raised their fists and the chants 'هيهات من الذله' (Far be it from us to accept humiliation), Death to Israel, and Death to America echoed powerfully through the air.

After circling the stadium, the hearse returned to the back of the stands. Once again, Israeli jets (this time four) appeared in the sky above the stadium. The crowd, undeterred, raised their fists once more and chanted 'Death to Israel' and ...

The crowd slowly began to leave the stadium, while the bodies were prepared for the funeral procession outside. They were to be taken to a burial site that had been meticulously prepared with round-the-clock effort over an extended period.

What a difficult yet glorious day it was today; the day of farewell to the beloved martyrs of the resistance.

The resistance is alive, and the grandeur of today's funeral is yet another testament to our unwavering belief that the resistance will emerge victorious on the battlefield.

And this is Lebanon

Beirut, February 24, 2025, 6 am

The Well-Being of Families During Nowruz

Dr. Zeinab Zare

In a world often divided by conflict and strife, festivals offer a much-needed respite. They bring joy, hope, and a sense of community, reminding us of our shared humanity. From the grandeur of Diwali in India to the festive cheer of Christmas around the world, these celebrations offer a glimmer of hope and a chance to celebrate life's simple joys. Nowruz, the Persian New Year, is one such festival that embodies the spirit of renewal, joy, and family unity.

Rooted in Zoroastrian traditions, Nowruz marks the arrival of spring and is deeply intertwined with themes of well-being, happiness, and communal harmony. The well-being of families during Nowruz is shaped by both historical traditions and contemporary cultural practices. Thus, this essay explores the

historical foundation of happiness during Nowruz, the role of Haft-Sin (هفت‌سین) in promoting family well-being, and how these traditions connect the past to the present through the lens of subjective well-being.

Initially, the concept of happiness and well-being in Persian culture dates back to the Zoroastrian era, where Asha (truth and order) was considered essential for a prosperous life. Zoroastrians believed that celebrating seasonal transitions with joy and gratitude ensured harmony between humans and nature (Boyce, 1979). The Achaemenid and Sassanian dynasties institutionalized Nowruz as a royal celebration, emphasizing generosity, forgiveness, and collective joy.



Historical records indicate that Persian kings held grand Nowruz ceremonies, during which they pardoned prisoners, distributed gifts, and welcomed people from all walks of life into the royal court (Briant, 2002). These practices reinforced communal well-being by promoting social cohesion and renewal. The notion of collective joy and gratitude aligns with modern psychological research, which highlights the positive effects of gratitude and communal celebration on subjective well-being (Seligman et al., 2005).

In addition, a central element of Nowruz celebrations is the Haft-Sin table, which symbolizes renewal, prosperity, and the well-being of families. Each item on the table represents a specific aspect of life and contributes to a sense of balance and happiness:

Sabzeh (سبزه - Sprouted Wheat or Lentils)– Symbolizes rebirth and renewal, encouraging families to embrace new beginnings.

Samanu (سمنو - Sweet Pudding)– Represents strength and patience, reminding families to support one another.

Senjed (سنجد - Dried Oleaster Fruit)– Associated with love and wisdom, reinforcing the importance of emotional well-being.

Seer (سیر - Garlic)– Signifies health and protection, promoting physical and mental well-being.

Seeb (سیب - Apple)– Symbolizes beauty and health, reflecting the value of self-care and familial harmony.

Somāq (سماق - Sumac Berries)– Represents the color of sunrise and patience, reminding families of the value of perseverance.

Serkeh (سرکه - Vinegar)– Stands for wisdom and aging, emphasizing the role of elders in guiding family members.

These symbolic elements serve as reminders of the values that contribute to a family's well-being, encouraging gratitude, patience, and love. Studies in positive psychology highlight the significance of rituals and traditions in maintaining a sense of identity and emotional security within families (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Despite modern societal changes, the fundamental essence of Nowruz—family unity and collective happiness—remains strong. In ancient times, families gathered to clean their homes (Khaneh Tekani - خانه - تکانی), prepare festive meals, and visit relatives to strengthen social bonds. Today, these traditions persist, with new adaptations such as digital connections enabling distant family members to share Nowruz

moments.

Moreover, psychological studies emphasize the importance of cultural celebrations in enhancing emotional resilience and reducing stress (Fredrickson, 2001). Nowruz rituals, including gift-giving and family feasts, provide emotional security, particularly in times of hardship. The act of Did-o-Bazdid (دید و بازدید - visiting loved ones) fosters social support, a crucial factor in mental well-being.

A unique aspect of Nowruz is the tradition of reading classical Persian poetry, particularly the works of Hafez. His verses inspire hope, love, and introspection, fostering emotional and spiritual well-being. Many families practice Fal-e Hafez (فال حافظ), where they randomly select a poem from his Divan and interpret it as a reflection of their fate and aspirations. Some uplifting verses include:

امشب دلم میخواهد که باز سرکنم
آن عاشقی که منزل او مهر و وفا بود

“Tonight, my heart desires to begin a new
That love whose home was kindness and faithfulness.”

In addition to poetry, reading the Quran is also a common spiritual practice during Nowruz, offering guidance and reflection on the themes of gratitude and renewal.

In conclusion, Nowruz, with its rich traditions and deep cultural roots, is a celebration of well-being that has endured for over 3,000 years. The festival not only strengthens family bonds but also enhances subjective well-being through communal joy, symbolic rituals, and spiritual reflection. In a rapidly changing world, Nowruz remains a beacon of hope, unity, and renewal, embodying the timeless values that contribute to a flourishing and harmonious society.

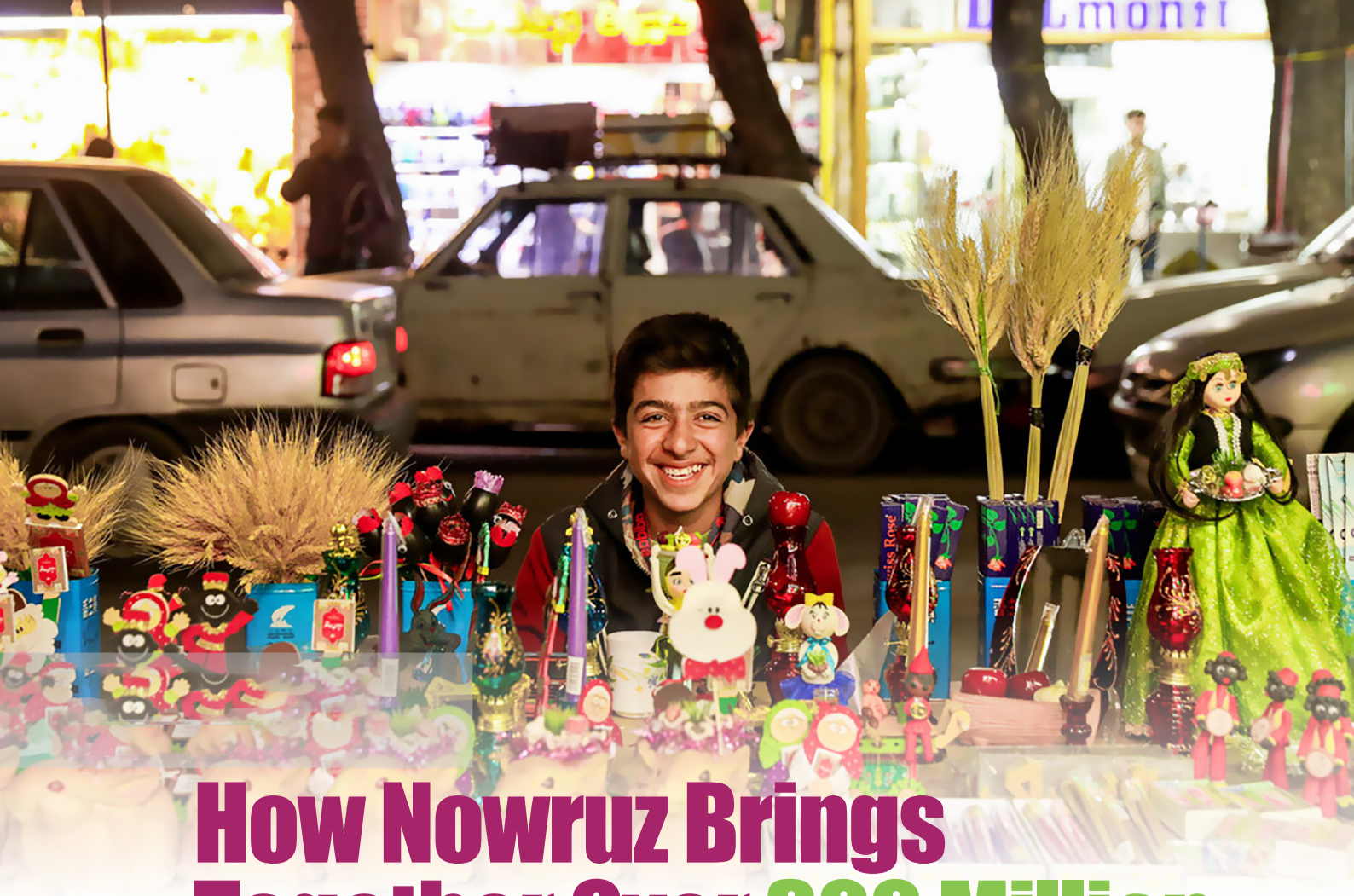
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How Nowruz Brings Together Over 300 Million People Worldwide

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Abstract

Nowruz, celebrated by over 300 million people worldwide, is one of the oldest festivals in human history, marking the arrival of spring and the renewal of life. Originating in ancient Persia and deeply rooted in Zoroastrian traditions, Nowruz has evolved over millennia, spreading across Iran, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Balkans, South Asia, and diaspora communities worldwide. Despite regional differences, the festival retains its core themes of renewal, balance, unity, and harmony with nature. Recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Nowruz transcends ethnic, national, and religious boundaries, bringing people together through shared customs such as the Haft-Sin table, fire-jumping ceremonies, festive meals, and community gatherings. This article explores the historical and cultural roots of Nowruz, its expansion across civilizations, and its role in fostering social unity in both traditional and modern contexts. It examines how Nowruz has adapted across different regions while maintaining its universal themes of rebirth and continuity. Additionally, the study highlights Nowruz's significance in contemporary global society, where it serves as a symbol of cultural resilience, intercultural dialogue, and ecological consciousness. In a world facing cultural fragmentation and environmental challenges, Nowruz remains a powerful testament to the enduring human need for renewal, peace, and shared heritage.

Keywords: Nowruz, Cultural Heritage, Renewal and Rebirth, Global Celebrations, Unity and Tradition

1. Introduction

Nowruz, an ancient festival observed by over 300 million people worldwide, is more than just a New Year's celebration. It is a cultural, social, and historical event that brings together diverse communities through shared traditions and symbolic rituals. Rooted in Persian civilization and spanning across Central Asia, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and parts of the Balkans and South Asia, Nowruz has transcended national and ethnic boundaries, fostering a sense of unity among its celebrants. Recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, Nowruz continues to serve as a bridge between generations, cultural identities, and historical legacies.

Unlike many national holidays that are defined by political or religious affiliations, Nowruz is deeply tied to the natural world, celebrating the arrival of spring and the renewal of life. Its observance on the vernal equinox, when day and night become equal, is symbolic of balance and harmony—both in nature and in human existence. The very name “Nowruz” means “new day” in Persian, reflecting the festival's theme of fresh beginnings and the universal human desire for renewal and transformation. As Richard Foltz notes, “Nowruz embodies the fundamental human recognition of cycles, change, and continuity—an understanding that transcends cultures and civilizations” (Foltz 68).

For many communities, Nowruz is not merely a date on the calendar but a deeply ingrained cultural experience that strengthens social bonds and reinforces collective identity. Families engage in age-old traditions such as preparing the Haft-Sin table, performing thorough spring cleaning known as “khood-neh-tekouni,” and visiting relatives and neighbors to exchange good wishes. The Haft-Sin table, a key element of Nowruz, is set with seven symbolic items, each beginning with the Persian letter “S,” representing prosperity, health, rebirth, and renewal. The placement of Sabzeh (sprouted wheat or lentils) on the table reflects an agricultural past where the festival was closely tied to planting and the rebirth of nature. Similarly, the tradition of Chaharshanbe Suri, where people jump over bonfires, symbolizes purification and the burning away of negativity to make way for a fresh start. These customs, though

practiced slightly differently across regions, carry the same underlying meaning of rejuvenation and harmony with nature.

The global recognition of Nowruz as a cultural treasure was formally acknowledged by UNESCO in 2010, when it was added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The significance of this acknowledgment lies in Nowruz's ability to foster peace, cultural exchange, and mutual understanding among different nations. Today, the festival is officially recognized as a public holiday in several countries, including Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. It is also celebrated by Kurdish communities in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, as well as among diaspora groups in Europe, North America, and beyond. As Mary Boyce argues, “Nowruz is not just a Persian tradition; it is a universal festival of life, symbolizing the endless renewal of nature and the enduring spirit of human hope” (Boyce 112). In a world that is increasingly divided by conflict and cultural fragmentation, Nowruz offers a model for inclusivity, resilience, and shared celebration. Unlike many modern holidays that have become commercialized, Nowruz retains its deep cultural and spiritual significance, reminding people of their connection to nature and their shared heritage with millions of others. The communal aspect of Nowruz, from family gatherings to public festivities, reinforces a sense of belonging and collective joy that transcends national and linguistic differences.

2. The Historical and Cultural Roots of Nowruz

Nowruz's earliest recorded references date back to the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BCE), where it was celebrated as a royal and public festival. The Achaemenid kings would receive dignitaries from across the empire at Persepolis, marking the start of the new year with grand festivities. Nowruz was viewed as a sacred event, aligned with the vernal equinox, symbolizing the balance of forces in the cosmos. Zoroastrian beliefs, which emphasized the struggle between light and darkness, influenced Nowruz as a celebration of renewal and the victory of Ahura Mazda, the god of wisdom and light, over Angra Mainyu, the force of chaos and darkness.

According to Mary Boyce, a leading scholar of Zoroastrian studies, “Nowruz was deeply embedded in the Zoroastrian worldview, as it represented the re-



generation of nature, moral purification, and the reaffirmation of cosmic order” (Boyce 45). The festival was not merely a time of feasting but an occasion for spiritual and ethical renewal, a theme that continues to resonate today.

During the Sassanian Empire (224–651 CE), Nowruz became a central imperial festival, blending Zoroastrian rituals with new cultural elements. The Sassanian kings institutionalized Nowruz as an official holiday, emphasizing its significance in governance, social order, and cultural identity. Court chronicles described elaborate festivities, where the king would distribute gifts, grant amnesty to prisoners, and preside over celebrations that reflected the unity of the empire’s diverse peoples. Richard Foltz explains, “For the Sassanians, Nowruz was more than a seasonal change; it was an affirmation of the ruler’s divine mandate, a time when justice, prosperity, and renewal were ritually reaffirmed” (Foltz 78). The festival’s role in strengthening political unity contributed to its wide-

spread adoption across various regions.

With the expansion of Persian influence, Nowruz spread beyond its original cultural sphere, reaching Central Asia, the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, and parts of South Asia. The festival’s adaptability allowed different ethnic and religious groups to integrate it into their own traditions while preserving its fundamental themes of renewal and harmony with nature. In Central Asia, Nowruz became deeply ingrained in Turkic and Mongolian traditions, blending with local customs and agricultural practices. In the Caucasus, Nowruz was embraced by Azerbaijanis, Armenians, and Georgians, who incorporated it into their seasonal festivals. Among the Kurds, Nowruz became a symbol of cultural identity and resistance, particularly in the 20th century when nationalistic movements revived its importance. In South Asia, Nowruz was brought by Persian traders and settlers, influencing the Parsi communities in India and integrating into regional celebrations such as Jamshedi Navroz.



By the time of the Safavid dynasty (16th–18th centuries), Nowruz had become a fully accepted part of Iranian and Persianate cultural identity. The Safavids institutionalized it as a state festival, reinforcing its national significance. Today, Nowruz remains a key celebration in predominantly Muslim countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, and Azerbaijan, highlighting its ability to transcend religious divides.

Despite various political upheavals, attempts to suppress it, and periods of marginalization, Nowruz has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Even during times of colonial rule or ideological restrictions, people continued to celebrate Nowruz as an expression of cultural identity and historical continuity. Today, it serves as a reminder of how ancient traditions can endure through adaptation and community efforts. As UNESCO stated in its 2010 declaration: “Nowruz is a living tradition that has withstood the test of time, bringing together millions across diverse geographies in the spirit of peace, unity, and renewal”

(UNESCO, 2010).

3. Countries and Communities That Celebrate Nowruz

The largest celebrations of Nowruz take place in countries where it is recognized as an official public holiday. In Iran, the birthplace of Nowruz, the festival is the most significant event of the year, lasting for nearly two weeks. The celebrations include setting up the Haft-Sin table, performing spring cleaning (khood-neh-tekouni), fire-jumping on Chaharshanbe Suri, and visiting family and friends during Eid Didani. Schools and businesses close during the initial days, allowing families to fully engage in the traditions. Nowruz has been deeply embedded in Persian culture for over 3,000 years, and despite historical and political changes, it remains a cornerstone of Iranian identity. Afghanistan also observes Nowruz as a national holiday, where it is referred to as “Jashn-e-Nowruz.” The festival is particularly prominent in Mazar-e-Sharif,

home to the famous Red Mosque (Rawza-e Sharif), where elaborate ceremonies are held, including the raising of the Janda (sacred flag) to mark the beginning of the new year. Unlike Iran, where Nowruz is largely secular, Afghan celebrations often carry a stronger religious and mystical significance, blending Islamic traditions with Zoroastrian influences.

In Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, Nowruz is widely celebrated as part of Central Asian cultural identity. These countries were once part of the Persian cultural sphere, and their Nowruz traditions reflect influences from Persian, Turkic, and Mongolic civilizations. In Tajikistan, where Persian is the official language, Nowruz closely resembles Iranian traditions, with people preparing Haft-Sin tables, making Sumalak (a wheat-based dish symbolizing prosperity), and participating in festive games and poetry readings. In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, large public festivals are organized, featuring horse races, wrestling matches, music performances, and communal feasts. Nomadic influences are more visible in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, where Nowruz is associated with the rebirth of nature, livestock herding, and outdoor festivities.

Beyond Central Asia, Nowruz plays a crucial role in the cultural identity of Azerbaijan, where it is celebrated with great enthusiasm. Azerbaijani traditions include jumping over bonfires, baking special pastries like pakhlava and shekerbura, and setting up ceremonial tables with symbolic elements similar to the Haft-Sin. The Azerbaijani government recognizes Nowruz as a national holiday, and the celebrations are marked by fireworks, public concerts, and storytelling sessions about Dede Qorqud, a legendary Turkic figure associated with wisdom and renewal. Neighboring countries such as Armenia and Georgia also observe Nowruz in certain regions, particularly among Persian-speaking communities and ethnic Azeris.

In the Kurdish regions of Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, Nowruz carries a dual significance as both a cultural and political symbol. For Kurds, Nowruz is not only a celebration of the new year but also a representation of resistance and national identity, particularly in countries where Kurdish cultural expression has been restricted. In Iraqi Kurdistan, Nowruz is observed with mass public gatherings, torch-lit processions, and dancing, often incorporating elements of Kurdish folklore and history. In Turkey and Syria, Nowruz has at times been

met with government opposition, as authorities have viewed it as a symbol of Kurdish separatism. Despite this, millions of Kurds continue to celebrate Nowruz as a declaration of cultural survival and unity.

In the Balkans, Nowruz is celebrated among Albanian, Bosniak, and Turkish communities, particularly in Albania, Kosovo, and parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The presence of Nowruz in the Balkans is largely due to Ottoman influence, as Persian cultural traditions were introduced to the region through Turkish governance. South Asia also has a historical connection to Nowruz, particularly among the Parsi communities in India and Pakistan. The Parsis, descendants of Persian Zoroastrians who migrated to India to escape religious persecution, continue to observe Jamshedi Navroz, a variation of Nowruz that blends Persian and Indian traditions. The celebration includes lighting ceremonial lamps, visiting fire temples, preparing sweet dishes like ravo, and performing acts of charity. In addition to Parsis, some Muslim communities in northern India and Pakistan also acknowledge Nowruz, largely due to Persian cultural influences during the Mughal Empire.

Nowruz has also become a global celebration in diaspora communities, particularly in Europe, North America, and Australia, where large Persian, Afghan, Kurdish, and Central Asian populations reside. Major cities such as London, New York, Toronto, and Los Angeles host public Nowruz festivals, featuring traditional music, dance, poetry, and Persian cuisine. The ability of Nowruz to unite such a vast and diverse array of communities is a testament to its universal themes of renewal, hope, and togetherness. Whether celebrated in a village in Tajikistan, a Kurdish town in Iraq, an urban center in Turkey, or a diaspora gathering in the United States, Nowruz carries the same message of harmony with nature and the continuity of cultural traditions. The festival's global reach continues to grow, bridging historical traditions with contemporary realities in an ever-changing world.

4. Conclusion

Nowruz, as one of the world's oldest and most widely celebrated festivals, has successfully maintained its cultural significance across centuries, uniting over 300 million people in diverse regions. More than just a new year's celebration, Nowruz represents a deep connection between humanity and nature, symbolizing renewal, balance, and hope. From its ancient

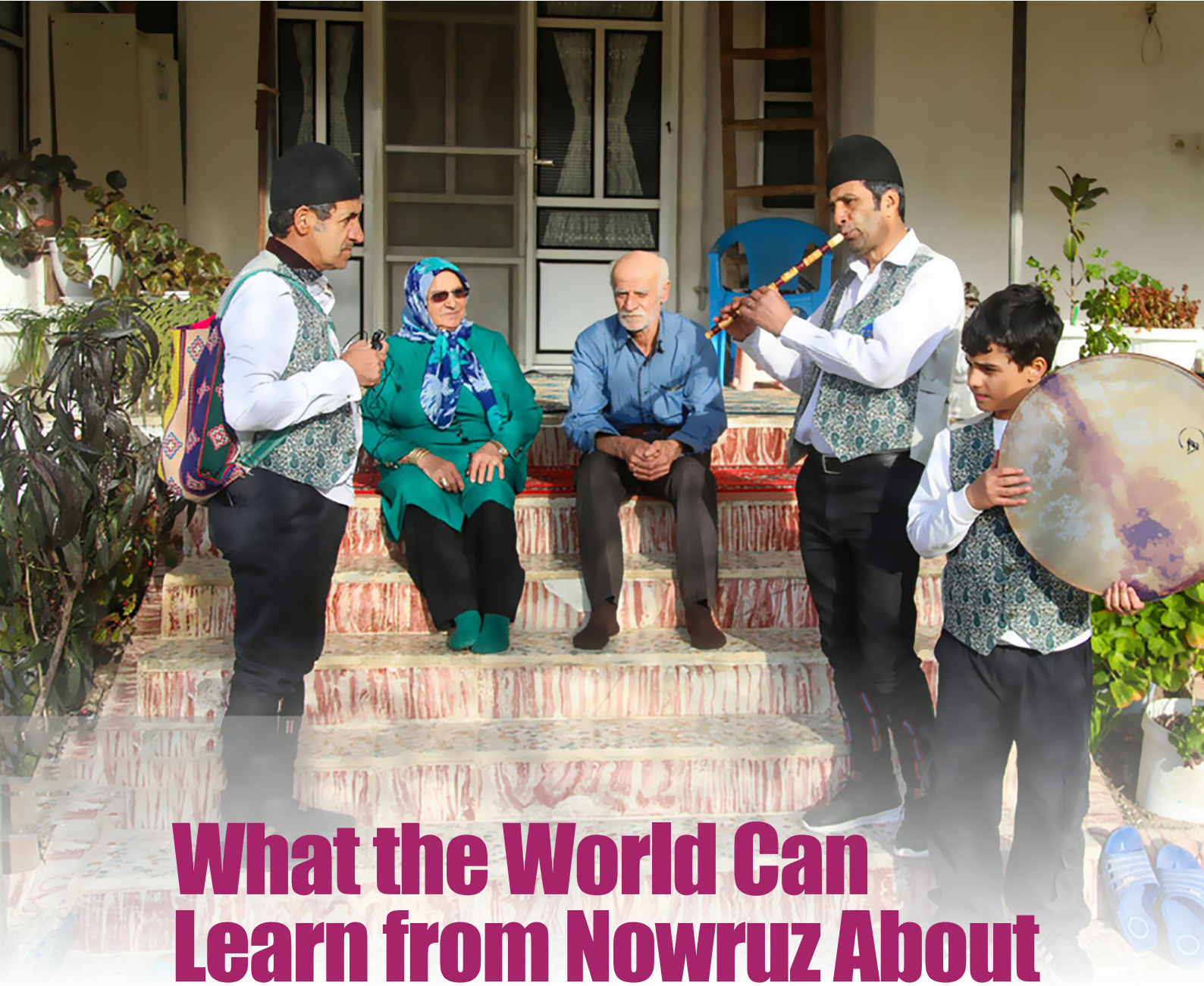


Persian roots in Zoroastrianism to its widespread observance in Iran, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, South Asia, the Balkans, and diaspora communities, Nowruz continues to serve as a bridge between historical traditions and modern identities. Nowruz's global recognition by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity further emphasizes its importance as a festival of peace, tolerance, and shared identity. As modern societies face increasing fragmentation, Nowruz provides a universal model of inclusivity and cultural continuity, reminding people of the value of tradition, community, and harmony with nature. In a world grappling with challenges such as climate change, cultural divisions, and political conflicts, Nowruz stands as a timeless reminder of renewal and hope. It teaches that just as nature regenerates with the arrival of spring, humanity, too, has the capacity to refresh, rebuild, and strengthen relationships. The enduring nature of Nowruz reflects not

only its historical significance but also its relevance in the modern era, offering a powerful example of how ancient traditions continue to inspire and unite people across borders. Whether celebrated in a bustling city in Iran, a village in Central Asia, or a diaspora gathering in North America or Europe, Nowruz carries the same message: a new day, a fresh start, and a collective celebration of life and renewal.

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What the World Can Learn from Nowruz About Harmony with Nature

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Abstract:

Nowruz, the Persian New Year, is more than a cultural tradition; it is a deeply symbolic ritual that reflects humanity's timeless connection to nature. Through the lens of mythological and archetypal criticism, Nowruz can be understood as a universal narrative of renewal and rebirth, echoing ancient myths and literary traditions across civilizations. Drawing on Carl Jung's theory of archetypes and Joseph Campbell's monomyth, this article explores how Nowruz embodies the cyclical journey of life, death, and renewal, mirroring similar patterns in

global mythologies and literature. The festival's core elements—such as the transition from winter to spring, the symbolic act of cleansing and purification, and the Haft-Sin table—serve as literary motifs that reinforce the human quest for balance with nature. By comparing Nowruz to other seasonal myths, including the Greek story of Demeter and Persephone and various indigenous renewal ceremonies, this study highlights the festival's role as a cross-cultural model of ecological harmony. Ultimately, the literary structures underpinning Nowruz offer insights into how storytelling en-

codes environmental consciousness, suggesting that this ancient festival remains a vital paradigm for contemporary discussions on sustainability, cultural resilience, and the human-nature relationship.

Keywords: Nowruz, Archetypal Criticism, Myth and Renewal, Ecological Harmony, Literary Symbolism

1. Introduction

Nowruz, the Persian New Year, is not merely a cultural festival but a profound reflection of humanity's intricate relationship with nature. Rooted in the cyclical rhythms of the Earth, Nowruz serves as a narrative of renewal, transformation, and balance—elements deeply embedded in literary traditions and mythological structures worldwide. From ancient Persian epics to global mythologies, the theme of nature's renewal has been an enduring archetype in literature and culture. This article explores Nowruz through the lens of mythological and archetypal criticism, focusing on how its rituals and symbols encode a universal message about ecological harmony.

Carl Jung's concept of archetypes suggests that recurring symbols and narratives in myths and literature are embedded in the collective unconscious of humanity (Jung, 1969). Nowruz, celebrated on the vernal equinox, aligns with the archetype of rebirth and renewal, a theme found in numerous mythological traditions. Joseph Campbell's theory of the monomyth, or the Hero's Journey, further emphasizes that human storytelling follows a cyclic pattern of departure, transformation, and return (Campbell, 1949). The seasonal shift in Nowruz mirrors this structure: winter symbolizes stagnation and decay, while the arrival of spring represents rejuvenation and hope.

In Persian literature, Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, often considered the national epic of Iran, is imbued with narratives that align human fate with the rhythms of nature. The myth of Jamshid, the legendary king who is said to have inaugurated Nowruz, signifies the renewal of time and cosmic order. Similarly, Rumi, the 13th-century Persian poet, frequently employed nature as a metaphor for spiritual awakening:

"Be like the spring breeze, carrying life wherever you go." (Rumi, trans. Barks, 1995)

Nowruz shares symbolic parallels with various sea-

sonal myths across cultures. In Greek mythology, the story of Demeter and Persephone illustrates the Earth's cyclical renewal. Persephone's descent into the underworld during winter and her return in spring signify the eternal return of fertility and growth (Graves, 1955). Claude Lévi-Strauss, a structuralist theorist, argues that myths serve as "codes" that reinforce societal values (Lévi-Strauss, 1963). The Haft-Sin table of Nowruz, with elements such as *sabzeh* (sprouted wheat) representing fertility and *apple (sib)* symbolizing beauty, functions as a structured narrative that encodes ecological wisdom into cultural practice. Through literary and structural analysis, it becomes evident that Nowruz is not just an Iranian festival but a mythological model of sustainable co-existence with nature.

Similarly, Joseph Campbell's *Hero's Journey* (1949) suggests that all great stories follow a cycle of departure, transformation, and return—a pattern visible in seasonal myths like Nowruz, where the world metaphorically "dies" in winter, undergoes transformation, and is reborn in spring. This universal narrative structure underpins many of humanity's most enduring stories.

By examining Nowruz through literary and mythological frameworks, we see that it:

- Encodes ecological wisdom into culture, teaching respect for nature's cycles.
- Functions as a literary and philosophical model for renewal and transformation.
- Connects humanity across civilizations through shared mythic structures.

As the modern world grapples with environmental challenges and cultural fragmentation, the wisdom of Nowruz remains more relevant than ever. It reminds us that renewal is not just seasonal—it is an essential part of human and planetary survival.

As the world faces ecological crises, the literary and philosophical underpinnings of Nowruz offer an alternative worldview—one in which human societies exist in harmony with nature rather than in opposition to it. Scholars such as Vandana Shiva (1997) and Amitav Ghosh (2016) argue that pre-modern ecological wisdom, embedded in cultural rituals and literature, must be reconsidered in contemporary environmental discourse. Nowruz, with its emphasis on cleansing, renewal, and reverence for nature, provides a compelling

framework for rethinking the modern world's relationship with the environment.

2. Nowruz and the Archetype of Renewal in Myth and Literature

The seasonal renewal of Nowruz, which represents the transition from darkness to light, barrenness to fertility, and stagnation to movement, aligns



with the archetype of rebirth—a pattern found in myths, religious texts, and literary traditions worldwide.

2.1. Nowruz in Persian Mythology: The Legend of Jamshid

In Persian literary tradition, Nowruz is linked to the myth of Jamshid, a legendary king of Iran in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. According to the myth, Jamshid was a just and enlightened ruler who, upon ascending the throne, brought prosperity, order, and peace to the world. His reign was marked by wisdom, divine favor, and the alignment of human civilization with nature's cycles. One year, on the vernal equinox, Jamshid sat upon a jeweled throne and was lifted into the sky by divine beings. As he shone like the sun, the Earth was rejuvenated, coldness disappeared, and life flourished anew—this miraculous event was marked as the first Nowruz:

“And on that day, the world was bathed in light,
The king of the world brought forth spring's delight.”

(*Shahnameh*, trans. Davis, 2006)

This myth represents a cosmic renewal, restoring nature's balance and ushering in a new era of prosperity. The rise of spring in Jamshid's myth symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, aligning human civilization with nature's cycles. As a cultural and literary archetype, Jamshid embodies the wise ruler who harmonizes his people with natural rhythms. Similar myths across civilizations depict



nature's death and rebirth, reinforcing themes of life's eternal return, fertility, and cosmic harmony.

3. Nowruz in Persian Poetry and Its Connection to Nature

Persian poetry reflects the rhythms of nature, capturing Nowruz's ecological and spiritual essence. Poets like Rumi, Hafez, Saadi, and Ferdowsi use imagery of spring, flowers, and flowing water to symbolize transformation, renewal, and humanity's connection to nature. Nowruz is not just a cultural event but a poetic representation of rebirth, deeply embedded in Persian literary traditions. Literature encodes an ecocritical awareness, linking emotions, spiritual awakening, and nature's revival. In Rumi's mysticism, Hafez's romanticism, and Saadi's moral reflections, spring serves as a literary archetype of renewal, illustrating life's eternal cycles of death and rebirth.

3.1. Rumi: Renewal as a Spiritual and Natural Force
Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273), one of the greatest Sufi poets and philosophers, often associated the

changing seasons with human transformation. For Rumi, spring and Nowruz were not simply external realities but reflections of an inner spiritual awakening. Just as the Earth awakens from the cold grip of winter, the human soul must also shed its burdens and embrace enlightenment.

“Be like the spring breeze, carrying life wherever you go.”



(Rumi, trans. Barks, 1995)

Rumi’s metaphor of the spring breeze signifies purification, renewal, and the transformative power of love and wisdom. The return of greenery, blooming flowers, and flowing rivers in spring mirrors the revival of the soul, urging humans to detach from material stagnation and embrace the spiritual flow of existence. Spring is also a symbol of divine generosity in Rumi’s poetry.

3.2. Hafez: Spring and the Symbolism of Joy

Hafez (1315–1390), one of the most celebrated Persian poets, often uses the imagery of spring and flowers as metaphors for love, joy, and divine beauty. His poetry reflects the literary tradition of Nowruz as a moment of rejuvenation, both for nature and the human heart. In his ghazals, the return of spring is synonymous with the return of happiness, freedom, and the celebration of life. “Come, let us be reborn like the flowers in spring.” (Divan-e-Hafez)

This verse captures the essence of renewal, not only in nature but also in the emotional and spiritual realms of human existence. Hafez sees Nowruz

as an opportunity to let go of sorrow and embrace the pleasures of life, much like the blooming of flowers after a long winter. His poetry encourages the reader to align with nature’s rhythms, celebrating the beauty of the moment and the cyclical nature of time.

3.3. Saadi: Nature and the Moral Teachings of Nowruz



Saadi (1210–1291), another great Persian poet, approaches Nowruz from an ethical and philosophical perspective. In his book, *Gulistan*, he reflects on the deep moral lessons nature offers, particularly the ways in which human conduct should mirror the balance and renewal seen in the environment. One of Saadi’s central messages is that just as spring revives the Earth, human beings must cultivate inner renewal by practicing kindness, justice, and wisdom. He frequently compares nature’s beauty and transience to the fleeting nature of human life, urging people to act with humility and awareness.

“The rose does not bloom forever, nor does the nightingale sing without pause.”

(*Gulistan*, Saadi)

This reminder of nature’s impermanence reinforces the idea that renewal is not merely an external event but a continuous moral and spiritual practice. The coming of Nowruz, in this sense, is not just a festive occasion but an ethical call to introspection, gratitude, and harmony with the world.

3.4. The Haft-Sin Table: A Literary and Symbolic



Structure

One of the most profound literary symbols associated with Nowruz is the Haft-Sin table. This carefully arranged display consists of seven elements, each beginning with the Persian letter “S,” representing different aspects of renewal, fertility, and prosperity. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963), in his studies on myth and cultural symbolism, argues that structured rituals like the Haft-Sin encode cultural and ecological wisdom into tradition. Each element on the table functions as a metaphor for the cyclical nature of life. Sabzeh (sprouted wheat or lentils) represents fertility and the renewal of plant life, emphasizing the connection between Nowruz and agricultural rebirth. Sib (apple) symbolizes beauty and health, serving as a reminder of nature’s nourishing and aesthetic gifts. The apple, often depicted in Persian poetry as a representation of the beloved’s face, further reinforces the literary significance of the Haft-Sin table.

Other elements, such as serkeh (vinegar, representing patience), saman (a sweet wheat pudding, symbolizing abundance), and sir (garlic, denoting protection against evil), also reflect cultural wisdom and the interconnectedness of human life with the natural world. The Haft-Sin table, much like the poetry of Rumi, Hafez, and Saadi, serves as a literary and symbolic representation of Nowruz’s deeper meanings. Through both poetry and ritual, Persian literary traditions emphasize that Nowruz is not merely a seasonal festival but a celebration



of renewal in all aspects of life—physical, emotional, and spiritual.

4. Nowruz as a Model for Ecological and Cultural Harmony

Unlike the extractive logic of contemporary societies, where nature is often viewed as separate from human existence, Nowruz fosters a perspective of interconnectedness, emphasizing that human well-being is inseparable from the health of the natural world. Its traditions, spanning thousands of years, reflect an inherent ecological wisdom that aligns with modern principles of sustainability and environmental ethics.

One of the most symbolic rituals associated with Nowruz is the practice of spring cleaning, known as “khooneh-tekouni,” meaning “shaking the house.” More than a simple household chore, this tradition represents purification and renewal, both physically and spiritually. Cleaning one’s home before the arrival of the new year is a metaphor for discarding the old and making space for new beginnings, but it also reflects a broader ethos of caring for one’s surroundings. In an age of mass consumption and environmental degradation, this practice serves as a reminder of the importance of mindful living and reducing waste, reinforcing a sustainable relationship with the environment.

Another ecological tradition within Nowruz is the ritual of growing sabzeh, or sprouted wheat, barley, or lentils. The act of nurturing a small patch of greenery



symbolizes renewal, fertility, and the human connection to the Earth. At the end of the celebrations, the sabzeh is typically released into running water, signifying a return to nature and the continuous cycle of life. This act reinforces an ancient understanding of sustainability—one that respects the Earth’s natural rhythms rather than disrupting them. The symbolism of sabzeh aligns with modern ecological movements that advocate for a return to organic and regenerative agricultural practices.

Fire-jumping, or “Chaharshanbe Suri,” is another key tradition that carries both ecological and symbolic meaning. During this festival, people leap over bonfires, chanting phrases that express a desire to rid themselves of negativity and absorb the strength and warmth of the fire. While this may seem like a purely cultural practice, it holds deeper environmental implications. Fire, in many ancient traditions, is viewed as a purifier, capable of cleansing both the body and the land. In a broader sense, this ritual reminds participants of the power of natural elements and the importance of maintaining a respectful relationship with them.

5. Conclusion

Nowruz, the Persian New Year, symbolizes a universal theme of renewal, as reflected in mythological narratives like Jamshid’s story in the Shahnameh, akin to myths of Demeter and Persephone, and Osiris. Persian poets such as Rumi, Hafez, and Saadi use springtime imagery to convey themes

of spiritual rebirth and personal transformation. Beyond literature, Nowruz traditions like growing sabzeh, fire-jumping, and spring cleaning promote ecological harmony, sustainability, and respect for nature. The Haft-Sin table further embodies ecological wisdom through its symbolic elements. Thus, Nowruz transcends cultural boundaries, offering timeless lessons on living harmoniously with nature and embracing life’s cycles of renewal.

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Iran from My Point of View

By: Professor Muna Jusufspahić

When I close my eyes and think of Iran, colors dance before my inner gaze: the turquoise blue dome of the Imam Mosque, the golden reflection of the sun on the ancient ruins of Persepolis, the deep red of Persian carpets. I hear the whisper of the wind carrying the scents of saffron and roses through the narrow streets of the bazaar.





Iran is for me a land of contrasts and mystery, a place where past and present intertwine in a complex dance of tradition and modernity. By writing these notes, I intend to open the door to a world that is often seen through the distorted lens of media and prejudice. Iran is not just a geographical concept or a political entity; it is a living mosaic of cultures, ideas, and dreams. Through this journey, I hope to discover not only Iran but also a new way of looking at the world around us, where differences become bridges and not obstacles.

Imagine being able to touch the walls of time. Beneath your fingertips, the rugged stone of Darius's Throne at Persepolis tells a story 2,500 years old. Here, in the heart of ancient Persia, a civilization was born that would leave an indelible mark on the world. The Persian Empire was not just a political power; it was an empire of ideas. From these desert expanses came the philosophies that have shaped human thought, from Zoroastrianism to Islamic mysticism. Poets like Rumi and Hafez spoke of love and wisdom in a language that still resonates in the hearts of people around the world.

For centuries, Iran has been a bridge between East and West, a meeting point of civilizations. The Silk Road and the Spice Route intersected here, as did ideas and beliefs. Persian art and architecture inspired builders from India to Spain, creating new forms of beauty that transcended cultural boundaries. But Iran's history is not just a story of glory and achievement. It is also a story of conquests, defeats, and resurgences.

Iran has survived waves of conquerors, including Alexander of Macedon and the Mongols, each time rising from the ashes, like the mythical 'Simurgh,' stronger and wiser. This rich historical tapestry makes Iran a unique laboratory of human experience. It teaches us that civilizations do not disappear; they transform, adapt, and continue to live on through the ideas they have created. In this sense, ancient Persia lives on, not just in museums and books, but in the hearts and minds of people.

Imagine Omar Khayyam sitting in the shade of a cypress, translating the secrets of the universe into quatrains. His words about the transience of life and the joys of the moment have traveled through the





centuries, touching souls from Tehran to Tokyo, and from Belgrade to Buenos Aires. Also, imagine Rumi's words about divine love, which spin the world in an ecstatic whirlwind. His poetry is not just art; it is a way of life, a philosophy that teaches that love is the core of all that exists.

The architecture and the poems carved on stone defy gravity and time. The Blue Dome of the Isfahan Mosque—the vault of heaven brought down to earth—a place where the material merges with spirituality.

What about carpets?! Every design reflects a dream: the maps of imaginary gardens, windows into worlds that exist only in the imagination of the weaver. When you walk on a Persian carpet, you travel through time and space, through legends and myths. Iranian art is not a static relic of the past; it is a living, pulsating force that is constantly renewing itself. In the works of contemporary Iranian artists, we see how ancient motifs are transformed and how tradition faces the challenges of the modern age—a living, breathing organism that continues to inspire, surprise, and create a symphony of the senses that reminds us that beauty has no boundaries.

Imagine standing at the crossroads of time, with stretched millennia of history behind you and the

rhythm of the 21st century in front of you. This is modern Iran—a country where the past and the future meet in an exciting, sometimes turbulent embrace. Tehran, the capital of this contrast, is a city where minarets of mosques cast shadows on the glass facades of modern buildings. In cafes hidden in quiet streets, here, tradition is not a petrified past but a living entity that is constantly reshaped in dialogue with the present. Now imagine Iran's youth: more than half of the population is under 30. This generation, born after the Islamic Revolution, carries within them a unique blend of deep respect for tradition and an eager desire for change.

In contemporary Iranian art, we observe a challenge between the old and the new. Contemporary Iranian artists use traditional forms of calligraphy and miniatures to express modern ideas, creating works that are both deeply Iranian and globally relevant. Yet this transition is not without its challenges, and it is precisely because of the existing challenges that the unique creativity and resilience that define the contemporary Iranian spirit are born.

Imagine Iran as a vast cauldron in which elements of the past and the present, tradition and innovation, are melted and mixed. From this cauldron emerges a new alloy—an identity that is both deeply rooted in



the rich Persian culture and open to the challenges of the global world. This is Iran today—a country that stands on the threshold of the future but never forgets where it came from.

Well, let's move on to the fourth and final point of the main part, "Iran as a metaphor for bridging differences"

Imagine a world map, not as a political drawing of borders, but as a colorful tapestry of cultures, at the heart of which lies Iran, like a precious stone. Iran is not just a geographical fact- it is a living metaphor for the possibility of connecting seemingly irreconcilable worlds. Situated at the crossroads of civilizations, it has been a meeting point between East and West, North and South for centuries, a bridge connecting the shores of diversity, and inviting to cross the abyss of misunderstanding and fear of the unknown. Iran has always been a place where different cultures have met, mixed, and transformed. Despite political tensions, the Iranian diaspora around the world is building bridges of understanding. Iranian students at Western universities, artists exhibiting in galleries from New York to Tokyo, and writers whose books win the hearts of readers on every continent- are all ambassadors of a culture that refuses to be confined by political borders.

But perhaps the most important lesson Iran offers us is one of complexity and nuance. In a world prone to simplification and polarization, Iran reminds us that reality is never black and white. It teaches us to seek beauty in paradox, wisdom in contradiction, and unity in diversity. Think of Iran as a prism through which we view the world. Iran, in its many manifestations—historical, cultural, contemporary—is not just a country or a nation. It is an idea, a call for dialogue, for understanding, for friendship that transcends borders. In this sense, "Iran from My Viewpoint" is not just a view of one country, but also a view of the world as it could be—a world where diversity is not a threat but an opportunity for growth.

As we close this short but rich walk through Iran—its history, culture, modernity, and symbolic meaning—we cannot help but ask ourselves: what does this country mean to us, here and now? My journey to Iran was not just an exploration of one country. It was a journey through the idea of what it means to be human in a world of difference. Iran teaches us that it is in this diversity—linguistic, cultural, philosophical—that our greatest wealth as a species lies hidden. When we think of friendship without borders, we cannot help but see Iran as an inspiration.



Social Activism among the Teenage Iranian Girls

What Is Voluntary Activism?

Scientific research shows that in the process of governing a society, recognizing and utilizing the full potential of its people is one of the most important- yet often overlooked- factors that can drive multifaceted progress within a community. Voluntary activism, in addition to being recognized as an effective means of supporting governments in the pursuit of societal improvement, also transforms the general culture of society from a merely demanding approach to an effective and service-oriented

one. In other words, through these activities, individuals learn to move beyond a passive and demanding attitude toward societal problems. They actively and effectively identify the issues and challenges around them and discover their role and place as members of their society in order to contribute to solving the existing problems.

Why Voluntary Activism for Teenage Girls?

Adolescence is a crucial period in every human life, marked by unique characteristics that, if



nurtured, can profoundly shape the trajectory of an individual's life and future and ultimately impact human society as a whole. One of the most significant characteristics of this period is the search for identity during adolescence. This drives individuals to explore their personal, social, and national identities, ultimately helping them define their relationship with existence and the world in which they live.

Therefore, one of the specific needs of teenage girls during this sensitive age of identity formation is the ability to recognize their identity as a member of a family, a neighborhood, a city, a country, and beyond. They must also understand and discover their emotional, cognitive,

and practical connections with these various levels of identity. In this regard, the stronger and more extensive these connections are, the healthier the adolescent's identity will be formed. On this path, proactive and voluntary activism aimed at understanding and addressing the problems of the world around them plays a crucial and decisive role in shaping this identity system.

On the other hand, adolescence is marked by unique characteristics such as innovativeness, creativity, boldness, independence, a tendency to form close-knit peer groups, and an abundance of energy. Channeling these traits toward voluntary and proactive activism not only





helps positively manage and guide these emotions but also enables girls to experience multidimensional growth across various aspects of attitude, identity, skills, and performance. Scientific research shows that through voluntary social activities, the vision and mindset of adolescent girls are enhanced and elevated. These activities strengthen key components such as positive attitudes, motivation, identity, constructive performance and effectiveness, responsibility, and more.

Additionally, voluntary activism strengthens various life skills in adolescents, such as teamwork, communication, leadership, problem-solving, empathy, and more. On the other hand, the preventive effects of these activities against social harms further highlight the necessity of active and voluntary engagement in activism during adolescence more than ever before.

Where Is the Iranian Girls' Society?

Considering the importance of activism and its connection to the critical period of adolescence, the Iranian Girls' Society serves as a platform designed to enable these activities for teenage girls. The Iranian Girls' Society is a non-governmental organization that has been actively promoting voluntary activism for girls across various cities in the country since 2019. The primary goal of this society is to establish a platform and structure for voluntary, proactive, and charitable activities tailored to teenage girls. This is achieved by empowering and mobilizing the human resource potential of teenage girls and young individuals, who are among the most important drivers of social change and reform in the future. Through this platform, they are encouraged to identify and contribute to solving social and cultural problems.

In the Iranian Girls' Society, groups of teenage girls, alongside trained facilitators, work collaboratively to address various cultural and social issues. Their efforts are guided by structured processes and content specifically developed for voluntary work and community service.

Through organizing dozens of training programs, designing collective service projects, and conducting operational boot camps for girls, as well as supporting volunteer groups in this field, the Iranian Girls' Society has enabled the activism of several thousand teenage girls. This has resulted in the creation of a vast network of influential and proactive girls, who stand as valuable assets for the country's future. If you would like to learn more about the activities of this NGO, introduce it to teenage girls interested in voluntary activism, or support the expansion of its international efforts, you can visit our website at <https://iranian-girls-society.com/> or contact us via email at info@iranian-girls-society.com.





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**An Examination of Activist
Women at Arba'een with a
Focus on the Identity**

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