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Viewpoint\ Editorial

Nowruz; The Ritual of Honoring Resurrection of Human and Nature

By the time you are reading these writings, Nowruz will have been over for you and me; it is up to you to name this year, *Nowruz-e- Khorsidi* (Solar) 1404, or *Nowruz-e-Tarsayee* (Solar-Gregorian) 2024 as Tajiks and other celebrants beyond the political borders of today's Iran, or you may want to name it *Nowruz-e Avestayee* (Avestyan) 3763 as our Zoroastrian compatriots, or *Nowruz-e -Hijri* (AH) 1446 as Iranians before the fall of the Qajar dynasty, but all these erstwhile calendars of Nowruz verify that Nowruz is not just for the beginning of the New Year!

Nowruz is one of the most ancient celebrations that have been honored by people so far, and it is not associated with anyone's birth or death. Nowruz is a cosmic ceremony that starts when the sun's rays fall on Aries, initiating the vernal equinox; it is the moment that has been celebrated for years by playing drums and trumpets and firing cannons, and it has been celebrated by Iranians for generations¹. In Nowruz, the renewal of the great world goes with the renewal of the small world; nature turns new, and you and I also become new; in the Nowruz ceremony, we put on our new clothes, prettify ourselves, and... these actions and renewal of behavior coincide with the renewal of the natural world; thus, Nowruz is truly the symmetry of man with nature. The ancient inhabitants of the great Iranian plateau were farmers who celebrated a magnificent ritual ceremony every year in honor of the plant gods. These ceremonies were usually known as the celebration of the death and resurrection of the plant god. First mourning ceremonies were held and then, as if the plant god had come to life, people rejoiced and danced. They believed that the plant god would show his favor to them if they did so and that year they would have more fruitful crops. The death and resurrection of the plant god were always accompanied by the beginning of the new year, and the purpose of holding these rituals was to attract the mercy of the fertility god and, as a result, to arouse the productivity of nature².

Nowruz is closely associated with Iran; Nowruz and Iran are inseparable body and soul. To protect the land of Iran, whether against the destruction of its substance or against the invasion of a foreign enemy, concepts such as Nowruz [which contributes to the meaning of Iran] must be glorified. Since celebrating rituals such as Nowruz serves as a way to reflect deeply on the general belief of land, in a world where knowledge goes hand in hand with belief, rituals such as Nowruz serve as a tool contributing to raising the awareness of the general interests of society. A look at the worldview of inhabitants of the land of Iran concealed in Nowruz indicates a systematic and organized view of nature showcasing its association with human joy in the universe; celebrating human growth and life while emphasizing the vernal equinox implies tying the earth (human happiness) with the sky (the beginning of spring); such a worldview can be reflected in the inscription of Darius the Great in Persepolis [the place where Nowruz was held during the Achaemenid era], where the great king is portrayed praying and asking God to protect his land [Iran] from enemy armies, lies, and drought.

Endnotes

1. Nowadays, that moment is the turn of the year.
2. The mourning for Siavash in ancient Iran is the same mourning for the plant god.

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