



# *Spiritual Transformation during Nowruz*

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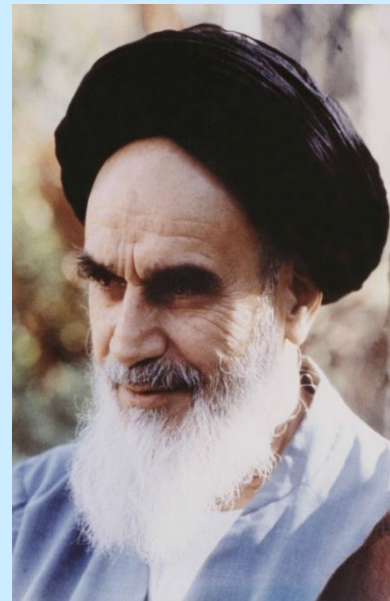
## *Imam Khomeini Emphasized Spiritual Perspectives of Nowruz*

Imam Khomeini the spiritual and religious leader of the Muslim world used to reiterate the revival of spiritual aspects of the Nowruz which mark beginning of the Persian year.

The great figure of contemporary history used to regularly release messages on the auspicious occasion of Nowruz every year. The great Imam also used to congratulate the New Year to everyone and gave useful advices for masses to carry out throughout the year.

Imam Khomeini's role in honoring Nowruz and changing the way Iranians viewed this day has been influential .

After the victory of the Islamic revolution messages of the great Imam tuned Nowruz a greater event and encouraged people to change their selves and perceptions not only materialistically but spiritually too.

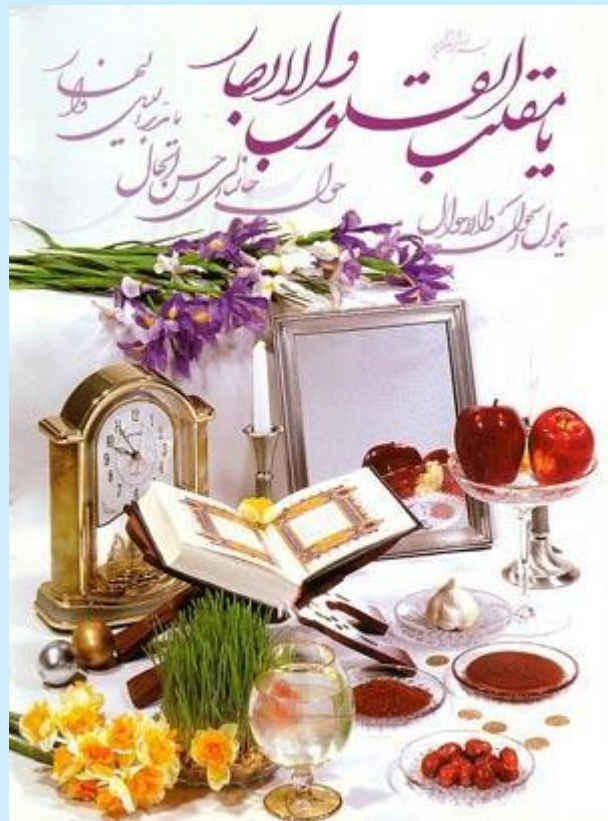


## *Brief History of Nowruz and its Islamic perspectives*

Nowruz, meaning “a new day,” is an ancient Iranian tradition that has been celebrated around the globe for nearly three millennia. It honors the first day of spring as a new year and a brand new beginning with peaceful notes. It is celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox, which normally lands on March 21. Millions of Persian-speaking people around the world are preparing to celebrate the Persian New Year by holding traditional Nowruz festivities.

Nowruz (new day) which coincides with the astronomical Vernal Equinox Day or the first day of spring is as one of the oldest and most cherished festivities celebrated for at least 3,000 years.

Scholars and historians believe that with the emergence of Islam and its peaceful dealing with social beliefs and rituals Nowruz adopted the Islamic colors and perspective by the passage of time over the past few centuries .



Iranians and Persian nation tried to rediscover their ancient characters and symbols through Islamic characters and mixed their cultural traditions with their Islamic belief.

Some Islamic traditions indicate that Nowruz is associated with the day when angel Gabriel appeared to Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), the day of Ghadeer and some other special religious events .

Nowruz has found its way to expand to wider range of people even amongst non-Iranian tribes, in Indian subcontinent and North Africa .

The Nowruz has been celebrated in central Asia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa and parts of Indian subcontinent .

Nowruz has been highly regarded by Muslim scholars and there has been narrated one of the sayings of Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) as follows: ` With the beginning of Farvardin, human was

created, and this day is an auspicious day for praying to seek dreams, to visit the nobles, acquiring knowledge, marriage, travelling and good business. In this blessed day the sick will be cured, the babies are born hassle free and sustenance will increase` .

The holiness of the New Year moments in the eyes of the people is so colorful and real that they make pilgrimage to holy shrines of Imams and their families .

The concept of Eid (festivity) in Islam and the Holy Qur'an has been mentioned only once in the verse 114, chapter 5 (Maa'idah). Said Jesus son of Mary, O Allah! Our Lord! Send down to us a table from the sky, to be a festival for us, for the first ones and the last ones among us and as a sign from You, and provide for us; for You are the best of providers` (114:5 ) .

Eid on its own is a verb; it means to return. Return of happy anniversaries and commemorations are also called Eid. According to Islamic Law, Eid is a day in which a benefit or interest is gained and a day when a special prayers are performed and people congregate .

Also repetition and return of such days could return same blessings which give us another chance to make connection with God and remembering Him in our hearts and by our tongues .

Imam Jafar Al Sadiq(PBUH): `When Nowruz comes, make Ghosl (ceremonial wash) , put on your clean clothes, and fragrant yourself with best perfumes, so when you are free of all other prayers, perform a four-rakaat prayer, each rakaat one Salam and in the first rakaat after Sura al- Fateha ten times Sura al-Qadr, and in the second rakaat after al-Fateha ten times al-Kaferun. In the thrid rakaat after al-Feteheh ten times al-Nass and al-Falaq. After prayer prostrate in gratification. `



## *Significance of Eids on Islamic Calendar*

As we can see the rituals of Nowruz is the same as rituals for any other Islamic Eid which its supplication starts with offering salutations to the messenger of Allah and his progeny and all the messengers of God. Nowruz has always been celebrated by Iranians .

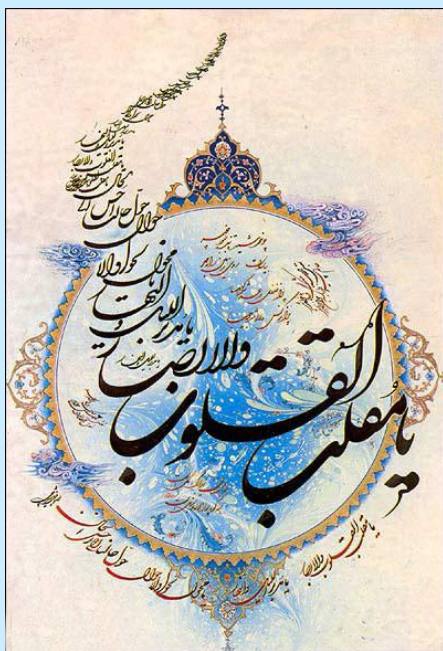
For Iranians, Nowruz is a celebration of renewal and change, a time to visit relatives and friends, and pay respect to senior family members. They prepare to welcome the New Year days before coming the spring by cleaning their homes and buying new clothes.

Nowruz has been a festivity celebrated by all the tribes, ethnic groups or religions that existed and lived in the Iranian Plateau for centuries and today many other countries, influenced by the culture of Iran such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and even some central Asian countries such as Kurds of Turkey, Iraq and Syria celebrate it too.

These days not only Nowruz is celebrated and observed principally in Iran, but people in Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, the Middle East, the Caucasus, the Balkans, the Black Sea and many other parts of the world also hold New Year's celebration according to Persian calendar.

## *Nowruz Festival and Islamic Revolution*

Nowruz in Iran has attained an Islamic identity specifically after the victory of the Islamic Revolution under the wise leadership of Imam Khomeini. Although the majority of population who celebrate Norwruz are Muslims, nonetheless this has never stopped the followers of other religions to enjoy the celebration of Nowruz all the same .



Large crowds of masses hold ceremonies where supplications are recited and appeal for help of poor and oppressed strata of the society are launched .

One of which is the following invocation and supplication that is highly recommended to be recited repeatedly:

"In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

O Conqueror of hearts and sight,

O Planner of night and day,

O Transformer of power and circumstances,

Change our condition to the best of conditions.

The above invocation has been a regular prayer for the New Year. The fact that recitation of supplications or Qur'an and performing of prayer for the coming of a new year actually did happen, itself, is a sign of the Islamic perspectives of this festivity.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah sayyed Ali Khamenei once said the global recognition of Nowruz can in fact serve as a sort of "cultural gift and conveyance from nations that mark Nowruz to other nations, particularly the West".

He has reiterated that at a time "when, unfortunately, the cultural values are preached by the west" the international recognition of Nowruz provides the opportunity to "transfer and export the high values of eastern culture to Western nations".



The UN General Assembly recognized March 21st as the International Day of Nowruz earlier in February, calling on world countries to draw on the holiday's rich history to promote peace and goodwill.

The International Day of Nowruz was registered on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity on February 23, 2010, and the festivities are now celebrated in many countries as far as the US and Canada.

The United Nations also promotes Nowruz by holding celebrations and introducing the tradition as a representation of peace and solidarity between generations and within families as well as reconciliation and neighborliness among people and different communities.

Nowruz is a leading spiritual, national and international occasion and a symbol of innovation, freshness and consolidation of friendship and kindness between friends and relatives.

## *Messages by Imam Khomeini on occasion of Nowruz*

Some parts of the Imam's released statements on Nowruz have been provided and quoted below :

### ***In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful***

I implore the Almighty God to make this New Year an auspicious year for all Muslims of the world and the Muslims of Iran. Especially for the strata that is engaged in holy struggle, the families of the martyrs, the families of the disabled and their relatives, the Basij volunteers and for all the armed forces of the military and non-military, the Guards Corps and all of them. God willing may this year be an auspicious year for the nation of Iran and bring victory in its wake. God willing, victory be destined for the oppressed nations of the world and the Muslims of the world and we and the beloved nation of Iran be grateful and show gratitude for these blessings that the Blessed and Almighty God

has granted them. God has given abundant bounties to the entire universe, which cannot be calculated. We do not have the power to recount all the blessings that the Blessed and Almighty God has given to us but to the extent that we can. The things that the Blessed and Almighty God has granted to our nation are many. Among them is that we were rescued from the cultural and moral deviations and connected us to a higher degree of morality and culture; victory on the warfronts and loftier than that is the victory over the carnal soul that our youth and a broad strata have attained. I am optimistic that this spiritual victory and this control over the carnal self and this control over the demon of the soul shall be achieved. Today, we are flooded with blessings for which we cannot be thankful except to thank the Blessed and Almighty God in a general manner for having granted us such a nation that is present on all the fronts and in all the arenas. God granted us a favor and saved us, our youth and our women from the cesspool that was prepared for them. God returned our youth that were on the verge of being lost to Islam and getting out of the hands of the Muslims. He caused them to become so pious that now they volunteer for martyrdom; while fighting on the frontlines, they chant slogans in praise of God; they recite their daily prayers and at nights, they supplicate to God. We must give thanks for these blessings. Our women however, they had guided a limited number of them on the incorrect path and their numbers were increasing, God granted us a favor and saved us from those things that were crafted by global arrogance and from the hands of their servants. The Blessed and Almighty God saved us from them; he saved our women so that today our women are immersed in the blessings of God in such a way that perhaps even they themselves are unaware of those great divine blessings that are unlimited. I hope that the Blessed and Almighty God for the sake of Islam grants strength to this nation that is living in innocence with whom all the countries of the world with few exceptions are inimical and may he destroy our enemies and make this day a happy one for all .

The point that I wanted to mention is that on the feasts, that Islam has favored us with, in all of the feasts, one notices in all of them there are prayers and supplications, there is fasting, there is mention of God. In this feast, too, which is a national feast and is not Islamic but Islam is also not opposed to it, again we notice that in the narratives it mentions that one of the rituals is fasting, one of the rituals of today is to supplicate, to recite prayers. This teaches us that if a nation wants to follow the right path and wants to safeguard its independence, its freedom, it must on its feasts and other times mention God, remember God and live for God. Even on the day of the feasts, there is the command albeit a non-obligatory command to fasting. Fasting is prescribed in order that a person cuts himself off from his lusts and devotes himself to the Blessed and Almighty God. This is because for every step forward that we take towards victory; for every step forward that we take for building our country, we must take a few steps for building ourselves; for victory over our carnal self; for victory over the demon within ourselves .

I pray to the Blessed and Almighty God grants His abundant bounties to this nation, to our beloved youth, to our martyrs and to all our war disabled. May He guide us with His own guidance on the right path .

May God's peace and mercy be upon you ”.

(source: Sahife ye-Imam, vol. 17, page 346)

***The subsequent statement was released by Imam Khomeini on March the 21st 1988, and was broadcasted on both radio and television***

***In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful***

Motive behind uprising of the Doyen of Martyrs

O the Transformer of hearts and insights! O the Interchanger of nights and days! O the Changer of states and conditions! Change our conditions to a better one .

May God make this New Year auspicious for all Muslims, our nation, and all the downtrodden people of the world. This year has a peculiar feature, which rarely happens. The New Year is at the threshold of the birth anniversary of His Holiness the Doyen of Martyrs; we should examine the motive behind his uprising, his aim, and his lifestyle and that of all the Imams(a ) especially in the month of Sha`ban .



From the first day when the Doyen of Martyrs- may God's peace be upon him- rose up for this affair, his motive was to dispense justice. He says," As you see, what is good] ma`rouf [is not observed while what is evil] munkar [is practiced." The motive is to observe what is good and to eradicate what is evil. Deviations are all among the evil things. Everything except the straight path of monotheism] tawhid [is part of the evil and should be eradicated. We, who are the followers of His Holiness the Doyen of Martyrs, should examine what his lifestyle was. In fact his uprising and his motive was to forbid what is evil as every evil is ought to be obliterated. Part of this motive was dealt with the government of justice. Oppression and oppressive government should be removed. Meanwhile, once we read his litany] munajat [, the litany, which is in the month of Sha`ban- and I am not of the opinion that all the supplications ever uttered are that of all the Imams. This supplication in Sha`ban] du`a-e sha`ban [, litany in Sha`ban] munajat-e sha`ban [is the litany of all the Imams, and in it there are a lot of issues; there is a lot of knowledge and etiquette on how the human being should supplicate to God, the Blessed and Exalted. We are negligent of these concepts and its position. Perhaps, some of the ignoramus among us, believe that these supplications are fabricated in the name of the Imams and that these are nothing but formalities and ceremonial stuffs. They like to teach us in such manner notwithstanding the fact that it is not the real issue. The point is that the Imams stood humbly before God; they knew before Whose Majesty they stood. They are cognizant of God, the Blessed and Exalted, and know what to do. The sha`baniyyah litany are among the litanies that calls for elaboration of sympathetic persons and concerned mystic, not pseudo-mystics. So doing would be very valuable. In fact, it needs explanation, just as all the supplications of the Imams do .

***Taking Prophets and Imams as model in resistance against falsehood***

In the `Arafah supplication of His Holiness the Doyen of the Martyrs, you will notice what issues are there of which we are unaware. The month of Sha`ban has this peculiarity; found our New Year is at the threshold of the birth anniversary of His Holiness the Doyen of Martyrs, to be followed by the



birth anniversary of Imam Mahdi in Sha`ban. Therefore, we should say that these two birthdays are proof for us and that this coincidence of the noble day and New Year is a good man. Both these two great men have come for implementation of justice. The Doyen of the Martyrs- may God's peace be upon him- whose whole lifetime was devoted to eradication of evil, struggle against oppressive governments and preclusion of corruptions spread by the then governments. Good should prevail; evil should perish. Imam al-Mahdi- may God's peace be upon him and may our souls be sacrificed for him- will also come for the same aim. All the prophets have risen up in the world for this purpose. We do not know their unseen meanings. Once we study their life, we will realize that it has been dedicated to resistance against the arrogant powers from the very beginning. We should take this as model for true Muslims, who really love the infallible Household and the Prophet of Islam belonging to whichever religion. If they really love their religion, they should see for themselves how religious leaders have acted. What Mousa, son of Imran did. What Prophet Abraham did in his life. All of them rose up against oppression and tyranny. Their uprising was meant for this concept. We should take lesson from them and rise up against oppression. The Muslims should rise up against tyrannies, oppressions and evils, just as the noble nation of Iran did. It can be said that this "transformation," which is stated in the noble invocation, "O Transformer of the hearts," has found expression in our youth. Now, they have undergone transformation from one condition to another; they have found a new condition. In this month, which is the month of Sha`ban, we should pay attention to this point. What should we do? What shall we do with these taghouts? Our condition is similar to that of the Doyen of the Martyrs- may God's peace be upon him. He sacrificed life, children and everything. He knew beforehand what would happen. Whoever listens to his words from the time he and his companions left Medina for Mecca and thence out will realize that he was fully aware of what he was doing. He had not come just for them; he had come to take the reins of government. It was indeed for this purpose that he had come and it is an honor. It is not as imagined by some people who argue that the Doyen of Martyrs had not come for the government. Imam Husayn and his entourage had come to take the reins of government. As a matter of fact, the government must be under the control of the likes of the Doyen of Martyrs and the adherents of the Doyen of Martyrs. This mentality constitutes the essence of the uprisings of prophets from the beginning up to the end. In the world, the uprising of prophets, whether armed or otherwise; were launched against those who aimed to crush the oppressed people .

### ***Necessity for world Muslims to confront oppressors***

We are suffering in this area. Muslims are suffering in this area. Muslims see what these powerful governments and superpowers and their followers bring about to Muslims, to people, to downtrodden and even to their own subjects. Almost all these governments and powers ostensibly proclaim, "We want to implement justice." But which justice?" American justice!" What is meant by American justice?



It means whoever is subservient to me is the one who is acceptable to us; whoever would sacrifice the interests of his country for us is the one who is acceptable to us! These rules also apply to the Soviet Union. All these superpowers are like this. We have to stand up against all of them just as our youth are now doing in the warfronts. Thank God, they have attained great victories. They should keep up their resistance to the end; they should avoid any form of sluggishness so that they would hand over the banner of justice to its rightful owner. This New Year begins while there is evidence sanctioning this conviction. The essence of the life of the Doyen of the Martyrs, the Imam of the Time) may God's peace be upon him (and all prophets in the world the Adam up to now were associated with this mentality. They struggled to establish the rule of justice vis-a-vis oppression. It is unfortunate how much they dinned the ideal into the people," What is the benefit of government for you? Go and perform your prayer! Go to your mosque! That's it!" Of course, if we only go to the mosque and supplicate, but I should say, have nothing to do with the big shots, then they all would be in good terms to us! Which one is our duty: to go to the mosque and say prayers, or to rise up? The duty is that all of us should sacrifice everything we have for the sake of Islam as did our Imams. Now you can see that Saddam, who has received a blow that is about to obliterate him, does not understand what he is presently doing. You can see that he is unable to realize how all these victories have been attained; he cannot imagine these to have taken place here. He does not understand that tomorrow these reporters and these foreigners would inspect there and see what has happened. He is such a beast that has bombarded his own country and his own people and relations. He applied chemical bombardment against them whom our guards should render assistance .

### *Appreciation of the nation's sacrifices*

I would like to thank our noble nation, especially those engaged in the warfront or those assisting them. We should thank and foe the sake the people, especially the youth who sacrificed everything they had in the cause of Islam. You notice people come here; they have sacrificed whatever they had. In spite of this, they are still saying, "We wish we had other to go to the war!" They are proof for us; they are proof for those who are sitting inside their homes and nagging; they are sitting in their homes and suggesting people" to the warfronts!" I hope God awaken the opposition, whether doing intentionally or out of ignorance. I wish God will reform them in this New



Year. I hope God will free the prisoners of war and those disabled in action, whom the nation endears. I hope God would acquaint us with our duty. If only somebody would come and translate these supplications of the Imams( a ) these supplications need to be explained. If we can find a true and compassionate mystic to explain these supplications to people, everything is there, though they are just supplications. As you see, the supplications of Imam Sajjad are of profound nature. What are there in these supplications? Both spirituality and politics. Everything is there, including struggle against oppressive government. These supplications were all reflected in the conduct of all the Imams ( 'a). However, deceitful regimes drummed into us to" mind our own business and not to involve in the government!" they had gone so far that even those who were aware had been deceived. Some of those who were active in the past and who shared our concerns began to question" what we were doing.

They argued that we should mind our own business and not be concerned with other things." This is just an example of the then situation provided to deceive us. Now, the people contemplate every subject raised by these foreigners knowing that whatever all these foreigners put forward mean to deceive us. Those following the foreigners attempt to talk us into falling into their trap. We should be awake and alert and never commit a blunder. God will awaken our nation and help our people attain prosperity, dignity as well as their aim, which is the aim of Islam and cutting off the hands of all those who are oppressors. God willing, He would make this festivity auspicious for all of us, all the Muslims and all the downtrodden people .

May God's peace, mercy and blessings be upon you”.

(source: Sahife ye-Imam, vol. 21, pp. 2-5)