

NOU ROUZ

THE ONLY SCIENTIFIC NEW YEAR

What many Iranians are not aware of

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NOU ROUZ the Persian New Year has crossed all religious and national boundaries and is celebrated by all the people that once formed the great Persian Empire. Even opposing religions that originated in Iran, like the Bahai's and the Ismaili Muslims have both incorporated Nou Rouz into their religion.

The word Nou Rouz, is made up of two Persian words, **Nou** meaning **New** and **Rouz** meaning **Day**. The question that should arise is; why is the New Year called New Day? However, nobody raises that question for it has gradually taken the form of a proper name. During the last millennium the Persians have preferred not to discuss this matter; for fear that the rulers' may ban the celebration of Nou Rouz all together. A look at history and science will reveal the truth and the reason.

NIM ROUZ & NOU ROUZ

According to Persian mythology, Nou Rouz was first celebrated by King Jamshid, on the first spring after the great ice age, which is believed to have happened some ten thousand year ago. Ever since then it has been part of the Persian culture and they have shared it with all whom they came in contact with. The bas-relief at Persepolis (Takht e Jamshid) depicts the celebration of Nou Rouz before 330 BCE and shows how the different people of the Empire joined in on the celebration and presented their gifts to the king in groups of seven.

As for the coining of the word Nou Rouz, meaning New Day it goes back some 3732 years ago, 1725 BCE to be precise, and was coined by Zarathushtra the great sage of ancient Iran who also calculated another phenomenon in nature, which he named Nim Rouz meaning Mid-Day.

Zarathushtra or Zoroasterⁱⁱ as called by the Greeks, lived in the ancient kingdom of Balkh, which comprised of all the land between the Caspian and the Aral Sea and going east towards the Pamir Mountains and south towards northern Afghanistan and northeastern Iran. Zarathushtra had established an observatory in Sistan; ancient Sistan is today divided between Iran and Afghanistan. The part that is in Afghanistan is to this day called, the Nim Rouz province.

Zarathushtra had calculated that when it is mid day and the sun is in the noon position over Sistan (62 degrees longitude) the whole of the eastern hemisphere from Japan to Africa has daylight and so named Sistan the land of Nim Rouz (Mid Day). We know Japan as the land of the rising sun. The sun that rises in Japan gives daylight to the entire hemisphere when it reaches the noon position over Sistan. Therefore, when it is zero hours (midnight) at Sistan the next day would start. **In fact, Zarathushtra had given the world its first scientific Meridian at NIM ROUZ.** Today's meridian is a political one.

Next, Zarathushtra's calculations showed that in the year 1725 BCE the vernal equinox and sunrise would coincide at Sistan whereby **the New Year and the new day would start together.** To record this phenomenon he called that particular New Year, Nou Rouz - the New Day. Thus, NOU ROUZ is where and when the sunrise coincides with the vernal equinox.

In other words, every year Nou Rouz takes place at a different location on earth and it takes centuries for this phenomenon to repeat itself in the same proximity. The ancient Persians who were followers of Zarathushtra have celebrated this phenomenon whenever it occurred in their Empire.

As recorded in history, in 487 BCE Nou Rouz was celebrated at Persepolis when the first rays of the rising sun lighted the square stone set in the central hall of the Apadana palace at exactly the same moment as the vernal equinox.

The science of the Persians was destroyed twice, once by Alexander (330 BCE) and finally made to disappear by the Arabs (635 CE). The Arabs burnt scholars in the pyre of their books and cut the hands and finger of those that attempted to write.ⁱⁱⁱ They even collect books in lieu of tax and burnt them for they believed that all the knowledge that mankind needs is given by Allah in the Koran.^{iv} The very little that is left of the ancient books of the Persians has been preserved as the holy Avesta, by the Zoroastrians. In the Avesta we read that the earth is made of seven continents, while we learnt in school that there are five continents, today scientist are of the same opinion as the Avesta.

The ancient Persian calendar was a solar calendar; the Zoroastrians of Iran still follow that calendar. The solar year is divided into 12 months of 30 days and each of the 30 days has a unique name, this takes care of the 360 days. The tropical year being approximately 365.24190 days, the last 5 or 6 days before the equinox are named after the Gathas of Zarathushtra and the first day of the year starts after the equinox; this automatically takes care of the leap year.

The uniqueness of Nou Rouz as a New Year is that it is ushered in at the same time throughout the world, because it is based on an event in nature and not on the local time.

CELIBRATION OF NOU ROUZ

Nou Rouz is celebrated by arranging a table consisting of seven items that start with the letter SE (pronounced "Seen" in Persian language) the Zoroastrians of Iran arrange the table with items starting with the letter SH ("Sheen") the difference had arisen over wine (SHarab). For the Muslims, wine is forbidden by God, so to preserve the tradition they found a way out and instead of wine, they put vinegar ("SErke") on the table, then rearranged the rest of the items to start with SE, and saved the tradition.

The fact is that both "Seen" and "Sheen" are a camouflage. After the Arab invasion of Iran in 635 CE, Islam was forced upon the Persians; coercion, heavy infidel taxes (Jaziyeh), slavery, confiscation of land and property, abduction of girls, were some of the methods used. To save themselves and their families the Iranian accepted Islam not knowing the important law of Allah, which said, "once a Muslim always a Muslim". For God has ordained that a person who turns away from Islam is a "Mortad" and can be killed by any other Muslim and all his property taken, with no legal consequence for the killer, over and above the killer is guaranteed a place in heaven for his holy deed. The Iranians lost their religion but fought back to save their culture and their language. Both of which they succeeded to save.

The real philosophy behind the traditional Nou Rouz table is that the ancient Persians who were all followers of Zarathushtra placed Seven Trays (HAFT SEENE in Persian language) on the table, filled with whatever items was available to the family. The Seven Trays represented the SEVEN ETERNAL LAWS OF ZARATHUSHTRA as derived from the "Gatha", the songs of Zarathushtra. It was a way of renewing their bond and reminding themselves of the path they need to follow in life. Thus of real significance was SEVEN and today the seven items by whatever name fulfills the tradition.

THE SEVEN ITEMS ON THE NOU ROUZ TABLE SEVEN ETERNAL LAWS OF ZARATHUSHTRA

Every Iranian is familiar with the names of the seven eternal laws because their ancestors have preserved it by also naming the months after them. As for the meaning, not all are made aware of it. Today Iranians give different symbolic meanings to the seven items placed on the Nou Rouz Table, all of which are positive and good but the real meaning is even more enlightening.

The aim of life, according to Zarathushtra the sage of ancient Iran, is that one should strive to progress towards Perfection without going against nature. In his teachings, he does not give any do's and don'ts for they are bound to change with progress, but he shows the path towards perfection. The seven eternal laws, in summary form are as under.^v

1- **The Good Mind** - BAHMAN - "Bah" means Good and "Man" means Mind.

The mind should be used in a good way and each one to their maximum capacity. The opposite of which is Ahriman the evil mind. We should avoid using our mind in an evil way. Zarathushtra says that everything that is created is first a thought so let your thoughts be good, and good thoughts are those that are in tune with nature. Good Thought converted into Good Words will bring about Good Deeds.

2- **The Ultimate Truth** – ARDIBEHEST – the law of the Universe. By using our mind in a good way, results in understanding the laws of nature, the laws of the universe, and we end up with good knowledge, good discoveries and good inventions.

3- **Good Guidance** – SHAHRIVAR –The good knowledge, the truth, the discoveries what do we do with them? We have to use them to make life on earth better, by giving good guidance, making good rules and good laws, leading to good products and good services.

4- **Lawful Desire** – ESPAND –The result of good guidance and good laws is a righteous society, a righteous nation, a paradise on earth, where people live in harmony with each other and with nature. Where all desires are lawful and there is no war, no pollution, no sickness, no lies, no theft and no fear.

5- **Perfection** – KHORDAD – In such a righteous society people have a chance to advance mentally, physically and spiritually. As a result, there is a general movement towards perfection in whatever we do. Be it a physician, a farmer, an engineer, a musician, a poet, an athlete, a politician or a businessperson, every profession will be moving towards perfection. The aim in life should be perfection not wealth.

6- **Immortality** – AMORDAD – Free from the fear of Death. Moving towards perfection creates a mental stage in human life where one is free from the fear of the unknown, and therefore free from the fear of death. The other form of immortality is after death. The person who has perfected a product, or has discovered or invented something good, or has spread wisdom or done good deeds will be remembered even after his death, and so be immortal.

7- **The Creator of Wisdom** – AHURA MAZDA – God. Having attained a stage of perfection and lost the fear of the unknown one attains a spiritual stage where there is self realization one sees the God within. In Persian and many of its sister languages, "KHOD AH" is the word for God. KHOD means SELF and AH means TO COME. In other words TO COME TO ONESELF, or self-realization.

These seven eternal laws are mentioned in the Bible too, in Luke and Mathew. The three gifts given to baby Jesus by the wise men, who were Magi's (Persians priests), were the first three

laws. The meaning of which needs no interpretation as given in Mathew:4, where the devil wants Jesus to make use of his mind just to feed himself, Jesus rejects it by saying man does not live by bread alone. Next the devil wants Jesus to defy the truth, the law of gravity, by jumping from the pinnacle of the temple and third the devil wants Jesus to give bad guidance (laws of the devil) to the people, which also is rejected by Jesus.^{vi}

If the world would understand this universal law, see the truth behind it, and not give it a religious spin, the world will be a better place. Today governments do not have the fortitude to stand up against Global Warming because they fear those that are making BREAD OUT OF STONE and polluting the atmosphere in the process. It is time to reject them for man does not live by bread alone.

Wishing everyone an enlightened happy NOU ROUZ

PS:

Please note that Nou Rouz is also spelled by some as, Now Rooz, No Rooz, Norooz, Novruz, Noruz etc. it is based on the different dialects but they do not represent the sound of all the alphabets used in Persian to write the word as is done by spelling it as Nou Rouz.

ⁱ Since the Arab invasion of 635 CE Iran has been ruled by non-Iranian rulers except for a short period of time in between.

ⁱⁱ One of the stained windowpanes at the British Columbia Parliament house in Victoria bears the name of Zoroaster on it.

ⁱⁱⁱ History of Al-Tabari.is full of such incidences.

^{iv} The Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun. An Introduction to History. Translated from Arabic by Franz Rosenthal (Vol 3 pg.114 Chapter VI sec.18 original III,90)

^v For details discussion of the Seven Eternal laws visit <http://www.ancientiran.com>

^{vi} For details discussion on the influence of Zarathushtra's teaching on other religions visit <http://www.ancientiran.com>