

# Nowruz; New Year, New Life, New Clothes

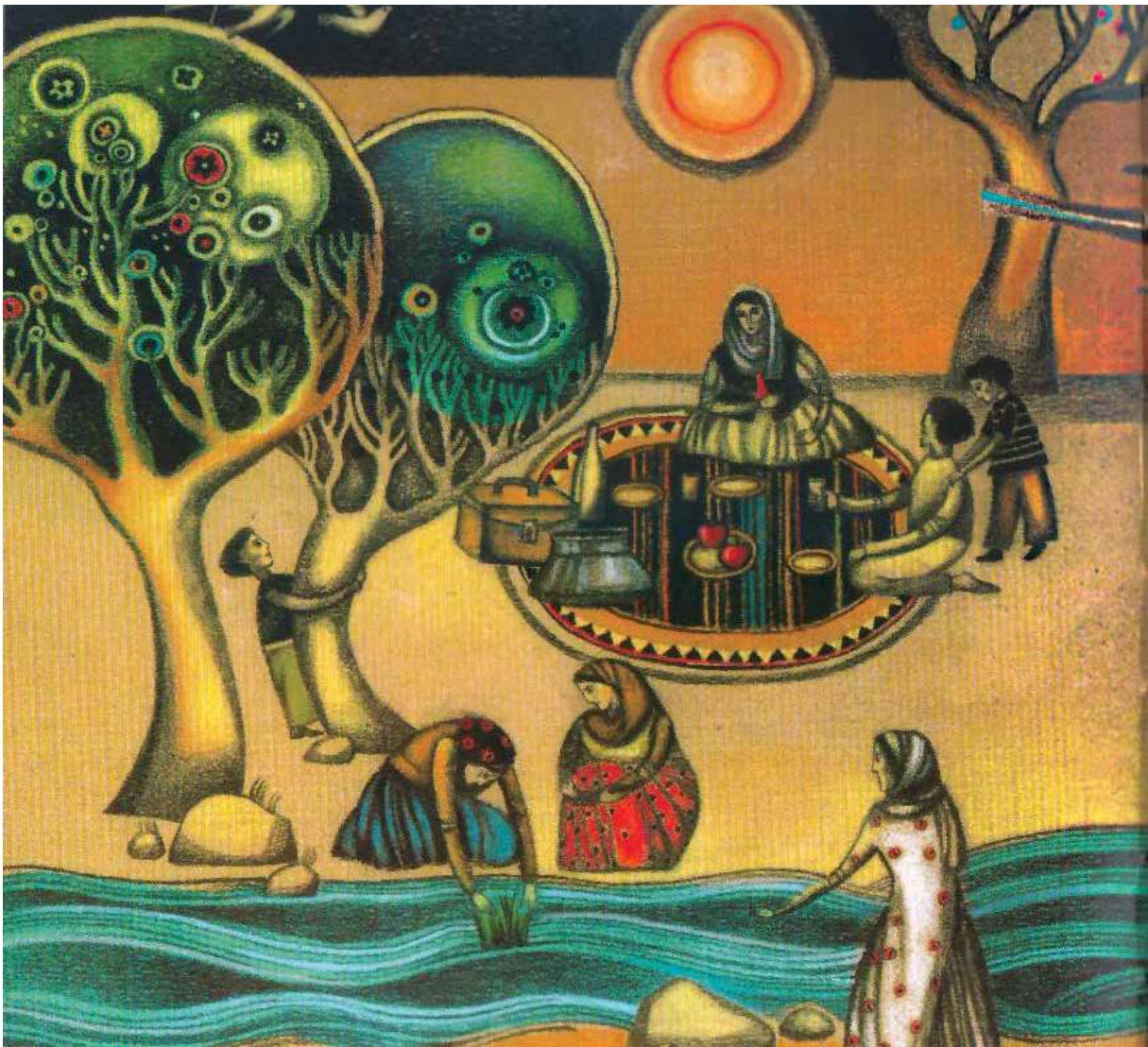
By: Roozbeh Tazhibi & Nastaran Rabani

The cold winter gives its place to the pleasant, nice spring, the season full of freshness and beauty, the season of reviving rain, refreshing breeze, flowers, fruits, and the season of enjoying more power and energy for starting a new year and hoping for better works. The golden rays of the sun in springs add to the beauty of nature and revive every living being. The first day of spring is called Nowruz (the new day) in the Persian language and is celebrated with joy and eagerness by not only Iranians but also by several other na-

tions. In fact, Nowruz celebrations in Iran last till the 13th day of the first month of spring each year. This has been a very significant custom observed by Iranians since ancient times and is now observed with even greater ceremonies, including special prayers, visiting family members, neighbors, and friends, exchanging gifts, and wishing a happy year for the others.

Several days before Nowruz, people start cleaning their houses and buying new clothes, and preparing special foods and sweets for Nowruz.

Illustrated by: Manli Manouchehri





Preparation of the Haft-Seen table is also of significance and interest to people. Haft-Seen (seven S) includes seven items the names of which start with the letter Seen (S) in Persian, including Sib (apple), Serkeh (vinegar), Sir (garlic), Sabzeh (usually wheat or lentil sprouts), Samanu (a type of pudding), Somaq (ground sumac berries), Senjed (the sweet, dry fruit of the lotus tree). Before the start of the new year they say prayers to God for having a year of best spiritual happiness. They wear new clothes on this occasion and try to feel happy and hopeful. Upon the start of the New Year, they congratulate each other, eat sweets and exchange gifts.

Nowruz visits start with visiting the elders who then return the visits. Children receive gifts during the Nowruz visits and guests are offered various kinds of sweets, dried and fresh fruits, tea, sherbet, and the like. Also, traditionally, people prepare Sabzipolo-mahi (rice cooked with mixed chopped vegetables and served with fried fish) for Nowruz. The 13th day of the Nowruz holidays is called Sizdeh-bedar. On this day, families usually go outdoors to enjoy the beauty of nature. They take food, fruits, and fresh vegetables with themselves for the Sizdeh-bedar a sort of picnic which is particularly liked by children and youngsters.