

A Collection of Readings on Nawruz



“In the alternation of night and day, and what God has created in the heavens and the earth — surely there are signs for a godfearing people” — Holy Qur’an, 10:6

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LIGHT OF IMAM AND THE FESTIVAL OF NAWRUZ

By Prince Amir Tamim al-Fatimi

Prince Amir Tamim al-Fatimi was the eldest son of Imam al-Mu'izz. He was born in 948 CE in Mahdiyya, the first Fatimid capital in North Africa. The Prince dedicated himself to literary and cultural pursuits until his premature death at the age of thirty six. In this poem, Prince Tamim shows his immense affection for the Imam and says that the New Year Festival of *Nawruz* is a blessing from the Imam.

When I compose a poem in praise of you,
I feel inspired and my speech becomes refined.

But if I wish to praise someone other than you,
I'm tongue-tied and my speech disproves the lie.

Because you are born for grace and eminence,
and such gifts are indeed innate in your nature

Your honour is the dawn, your face a bright star,
and your right hand pours rain upon the creation.

You are the light from which we seek illumination,
the gracious beloved for whom ransom is given.

Through you, our days of tyranny turn to order,
and the indomitable, treacherous time is humbled.

If Nawruz is a festival of joy and delight,
it is through your light that it has come to be so.

So live long! Bring glory and prosperity to the times,
If they do not prosper by you, may they be ruined!

O son of the Prophet, God's blessings be on you!
you are a time-tested sword to fight life's sorrows.

RESURGENCE



By Nuram

It is ordained by Allah
I come once a year on this day
And for six months
I stay in the Northern Hemisphere
I shine in all my splendour
I bring warmth
I bring life to the dead earth
I bring colour and all the hues
I bring movement to all living things
I bring hope for good things to come
There is resurgence, a renewal all around

Under the full moon on a special night
Come, gather and feast under the big tent
And dance and sing in his Name
Celebrate the New Day
With *Zikr* in the morn
With supplications
to ease all difficulties around the world
in the evening
And finally to bed
Knowing, no matter
that the Star is always with us

A SPRING POEM FOR SHAH KARIM



By Laila Lokhandwalla

I am weaving together the flowers Shah Karim,
I am making a carpet of flowers,
So give them bloom and give them scent,
By treading my carpet of flowers!

These are the choicest flowers I have gathered for you –
But they bloom only in Spring!
But when is Spring, O our King?
They say — *“We bloom at your coming!”*

And this is the tune of nature and heaven,
And to this tune, they bloom!
So everything works in synchrony –
Your coming and the advent of Spring!

And as they bloom and as birds sing,
And as the earth turns green –
The wintry grey sky now turns to blue,
As nature dons every colour and hue,
And sings *“Welcome”* to you!

Just as Spring welcomes life,
Just as life welcomes hope,
Just as night welcomes day,
Welcome to our hearts — will you stay?

And the carpet of flowers,
Which are deep feelings of ours,
Will you tread and satisfy?
Will you touch and sanctify?
And let them bloom and beautify?
If I err, then rectify,
With your Grace, promise to dignify –
This soul to reach where you are nigh,
Where there's no pain and no sigh,
Where nothing more can mystify,
Where I see you clearly, with my inner eye –
So my prayer now, is only this –
That in the Spring,
When nature sings,
And with your advent,
When my ear rings –
That my eyes, visualize that Face –
Whose trace I'll see within –
Day by day — demystified!

What is this joy?
What my desire?
Do you know O friends,
For what I aspire?
Just a vision of His Radiant Face –
That by it, is eliminated –
The darkness of this "*Night*" (Laila) –
Yes every trace!

And what remains is only that Night –
Like the Night of Power, *Lailatul-Qadr* –
A night, which when spent in prayer,
Brings Light — all by Your Grace!

So welcome King, welcome my Beloved,
Welcome to my heart and reign –
For if you don't, I fear the rain –
Of my emotions, will pour forth in vain!

So now my heart,
See all these signs –
Of flowers and colours –
Of birds and songs –
Of tunes and hues –
Of Night and Light –
Of when it's bright –
And when it rains –
Are beautiful signs,
That all proclaim –
The changing of the season — a new beginning –
A new becoming — at my Imam's coming!

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## KHUSH AMADEED



By Navyn Naran

how happy our hearts,  
how light is our mind,  
Khush Amadeed  
spring has arrived  
the world turns around,  
we have our Mawla,  
nature is bowing to His Word  
Khush Amadeed

Welcome to our homes!  
Welcome with our hearts  
Our Hazar Imam,  
our loyalty is to You.  
as loyal as oxygen in air  
and sun rise each day,  
magnetics in motion  
in implicit devotion,  
each moment is fact



Barakah of Your Grace  
never a miss  
in the life that we face,  
we dance in our joy,  
for spring has arrived!  
a new day and a gift,  
Khush Amadeed  
Our Beloved Imam,  
Khush Amadeed

You send fauna and flora  
everyday is anew,  
Navroz is here  
strengthen our love for You  
O, our Hazar Imam  
Khush Amadeed!  
Ale Nabi, Aulad e Ali,  
our thoughts are of You  
never amiss,  
Khush Amadeed!

Navroz reminds us  
of youth and of growth  
of smiles and of laughter  
to maintain Trust in our oath.  
O flowers and birds,  
and molecules and atoms,  
Khush Amadeed  
as universes, galaxies  
we twirl daily for You  
bowing to Your Will;  
souls in reflection,  
as a Blessing from You  
as time keeps on moving  
our love

is for You  
in all nature's Be-ing  
Bless our work for You  
dancing, we spin,  
smiles flourish with You  
O our Mawla  
Khush Amadeed  
Shahanshah -i- shahanshah  
we bow gratefully to You  
in our every thought  
Khush Amadeed

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REMEMBERING THE HEROISM AND ETHIC OF HAZRAT ALI (A.S.) IN THE PERSIAN NEW YEAR

By Hussein Rashid

Some months ago when I first wrote this piece, I was thinking about the beginning of *Ramadan*. Today, a few months on I am thinking about the beginning of *Navroz*, the Persian New Year. There are beginnings everywhere. The Qur'an begins with the *fatihah*. There is a tradition that the entirety of the knowledge of the Qur'an can be found in the *fatihah*; the entire *fatihah* is contained in the first line, *bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim*, everything in that phrase is found in *bismillah*; all of that knowledge is found in the first letter, *beh* – a boat-shaped letter with a dot underneath; all of the knowledge of the *beh* is found in the dot, and that dot is Hazrat Ali. The *fatihah* begins our prayers; it begins our interaction with revelation. All of that is encompassed in a dot. That dot is Hazrat Ali. The first dot of the Qur'an, the meaning of the Qur'an, the beginning of the line of Imams, Hazrat Ali (a.s.). Who is the king of men? Who is the Lion of God? Who is the hero without peer? Who is Hazrat Ali?



The letter "ba" and the diacritical point

I am not here to give the biography of a great man. I am not here to give a history lesson. I am here to talk of the importance of Hazrat Ali to us as Shia Muslims.

Who is the Ali, the universal hero of Islam? The last of those who are known as the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the greatness of Imam Ali is best represented by story of Khaybar. The story begins that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s) laid seige to the fort of Khaybar, but the walls were so well-fortified that the army could not break through. The Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet Muhammad and told him to recite the *nad-e ali*.

“Call Ali call Ali call Ali
Call Ali, the manifestation of marvels
He will be your helper in difficulty
Every anxiety and sorrow will end
Through your friendship. O Ali, O Ali, O Ali.”

And Hazrat Ali came to the Prophet’s aid, in an act of heroism commemorated in the lines of a *qawwali*:

“The walls shake; the doors quake. Now all of Khaybar trembles hearing the name of Ali.”

Ali came and tore down the gate of the fort, and the army of the Prophet crossed over and successfully ended the siege. Ali, of course, was a valiant fighter within in the fort and when victory was achieved, the Angel Gabriel appeared to Prophet Muhammad again and said to him:

“There is no hero but Ali; there is no sword but *Dhu’lfiqar*.”

In this one story, how much do we learn about the value of Hazrat Ali in the Muslim tradition? We learn that the Angel Gabriel taught the Prophet a prayer for help and support, and that help and support comes through Imam Ali. One of the most popular stories of the Prophet Muhammad’s battles has as its hero Imam Ali. A fort shakes at the mention of the Imam’s name, because even at this point in the early Islamic period, the power and chivalry of Ali ibn Abi Talib was legendary. And that exceptional position was affirmed by the Angel Gabriel once more when he said “there is no hero but Ali; there is no sword but *Dhu’lfiqar*.”

What does it mean for one of God’s angels to say there is no hero but Ali? Is heroism simply limited to valor on the battlefield? Is heroism being a soldier? Clearly Hazrat Ali’s military exploits are an important part of his heroic reputation. However, there is a story told by Jalal ud-Din Rumi that shows there is more to being a hero than killing.

The story begins on the battlefield. Imam Ali was battling a non-Muslim in one-to-one combat. The Imam disarmed his enemy and was getting ready to kill him, when his enemy spat on him. Hazrat Ali sheathed his sword. When his enemy asked him why, the Imam replied that in war he was fighting for God, but once he was spat upon, he became angry and was fighting for himself, and that was not the way of Islam. His enemy converted immediately.

What do we learn from this story? Part of what makes Imam Ali hero is his control; control of his anger; control of his faith; control of his *nafs*– his lower self. There is, emerging from these narratives, a sense of ethical living, a key point I believe as to what makes Hazrat Ali a hero and a figure of such central importance to us.

He is the first of the Imams. The beginning of the line of divinely appointed leaders of the Muslim community. Prophet Muhammad, the undisputed head of the Muslim community during his life, said at Ghadir-e Khumm:

“He whose mawla I am, Ali is his mawla.”

Now, this declaration is universally recognized. The following Qur’anic verse is a clear reference for the hadith mentioned above:

“Oh Apostle, deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord
And if you do not do so, then you have not delivered His message
Allah will protect you from the people.” (5:67)

The word mawla is a word rich with meaning: master and friend. This relationship that the *mu’min* (believer) has with the Imam is to be the same as the Muslim community at the time had with the Prophet Muhammad: the head of the community; friend; confidante; support; guide; etc..

For a *mu’min*, the center of existence is Hazrat Ali, as the first bearer of the *Noor* of Allah, and his descendants as the continuous carriers of that light. Prophet Muhammad said that he would leave behind two weighty things: the Qur’an and his descendants, and that by following both we would never go astray. What is it should we follow? Let me turn to another story.

Prophet Muhammad clearly gave guidance to the community that Ali should lead them, yet Abu Bakr became the first caliph. After Prophet Muhammad’s death, Hazrat Ali initially refused to recognize the temporal leadership Abu Bakr, but he eventually did. Why did he do so? He never relinquished his claim to secular leadership, but he recognized that challenging Abu Bakr would tear the community apart. Think about how the Qur’an talks about the Imams:

“O believers! Obey God and the Prophet and the holders of authority” (4:59)
“And We have vested everything in the manifest Imam” (36:12)

We are to obey the holders of authority from amongst us, but knowledge of everything is with the Imam. I would argue that the truest authority is the one granted by God, and the Imams are those authorities, although they have often guided us to obey temporal authority when there is no conflict with our faith. In that way, Imam Ali was hero who put the needs of the nascent Muslim community ahead of his absolute right to lead the community. Patience as virtue. The ethical message continues to develop.

Think also of the tradition of the Prophet.

“I am the City of Knowledge and Ali is the gate.”

The intellect – *aql* – and knowledge – *ilm* – are complementary parts of a larger ethic – the ethic of education. Hazrat Ali once said that all containers are filled when things are placed in them except the container of knowledge which expands. He standardized Arabic grammar so that the Qur’an could be understood by everyone. His sayings and writings, preserved in *Nahj ul-Balagha*, are full of teachings that are applicable today as when he wrote them. In one of his letters he advises one of his governors that his role is to treat everyone equally and justly; to make sure no one is in unnecessary need.

For Hazrat Ali, this was not just guidance that he dispensed. He lived the life he instructed others to follow. One day he met a woman carrying water from the river to her house and he asked her why she was carrying such a heavy load. She answered, not knowing who he was, that her husband had died fighting in the army of Imam Ali and her children were too young to help around the house. He carried the water for her from that day onwards. He chopped her wood and took care of her children. He never told her that he was Ali ibn Abi Talib, and she never knew for many years until someone asked her why Ali was doing her chores.

As millions mark the birth of the New Year, *Navroz*, I reflect again about the first promise we made to God. We bear witness that God is our Lord (7:172). From God’s desire to lead us, He left us *nubuwwah* and then *Imamah*. To be the *mu’min*, the one with faith, means following the guidance of the Qur’an, the Prophet, and the Imams.

To me, the ethical message, particularly of service as shown by Hazarat Ali’s own examples, rings the loudest. This is a chance for me to dedicate myself to that vision as articulated by Imam Ali, and carried forward by his descendants.

“AMEN KHUDAVIND”



By Navyn Naran

a window opens.

a green meadow, lush
new tufts of grass under her feet,
running across these verdant, undulating hills.
weathering the storms past,
she tills the moist, brown soil.
emerald shoots peer fresh as a new-born baby's cheeks
what news will spring bring?
what did i sow?
and how will i reap?

“i'm late to catch the train!
stop at the lights.
did i grab my lunch? my ticket?
presentation is 7am , room 337”
huffing up the stairs,
“did i remember my gym bag?
will he remember to call the dentist?
what will we eat tonight?
ok, gather self and be ready
here comes the first of the audience”

everyone is looking ahead
while living in the present.

i prayed for *siratal mustaqu'een*,
and *iman ji salamat*
for *jan, mal, aal, izat and abru...*
thumb on my chin and finger resting on my lip i ponder...

“but did i keep balanced?
did i make an ethical choice?”
was there time for my spiritual space
or did i let it go another day?

“this is such a mirage in Time!”
i sit back resting in my chair...
like a continual accordion of days
as if in pieces we organise it.
each ritual is a reminder,
as practice of submission and perfection
towards a stillness of thought and mind.

if you stop and give your Time
there will be naught but LIFE
a philanthropic donation if you will,
to venture out of the chatter or vision
familiar to oneself

“it’s Navroz”
and am i too rushed to notice?
Time does not rush...it provides, as promised,
sunshine, blossom and rains
if only we disrupted not its natural flow.
“have i done my work?”
do i stop long enough to reflect and answer?
the undulating specks or motion of time as we see,
are pregnant with change and gift
what was my gift to Mawla?

was it something i thought would “just happen”
by virtue of my breath?
or did i consciously plan and rise?
there is always the next second
“yet tomorrow never comes”.
so we live in the present with regard to future
and miss the essence because we are expectant.

Mawlana Hazar Imam said
“I say to you all on Navroz,
Navroz Mubarak.

I pray that in this New Year your worldly
and your spiritual happiness should progress
tenfold and that this be the case every year.”

“Amen, Khudavind”

a window opens.
into a prayer hall of contemplative men and women
only their souls are alight
will mine enter here today?

SAYYID SHAMSI SEEKS OUT HIS MASTER IN DEVOTIONAL GINAN “EJI NAVROZ NA DIN SOHAMNA”

By Sadrudin K. Hassam

1. INTRODUCTION

An attempt is made in this article to give an interpretation of the devotional Ginan *Navroz na din Sohamna*, which is recited by Ismaili Jamats in many parts of the world on the occasion of the celebration of the Persian New Year which falls on March 21st. In this ginan the composer, Sayyid Fatehali Shah, relates the combined experience of the *zahiri deedar* (exoteric or physical glimpse or meeting) that he was granted by the 45th Ismaili Imam, Shah Khalilullah (peace be on him), and the inner joy of contentment and ecstasy that he experienced with the bestowal of *Noorani* (spiritual or esoteric) grace. At the same time, he gently persuades the *mu'min* (a believer) to always strive for esoteric understanding as well as to develop a lasting spiritual relationship with the Imam of the Time. It may be noted that in Shia Imami Ismaili theology each Imam is the *bearer* of the same Divine Light (*Noor*). The Divine Institution of Imamatus has its origins in the first Shia Imam, Hazrat Ali (peace be on him), who was declared as the successor to Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) at the famous historical event at *Ghadir-e-Khumm*.

As the composer has to narrate the exoteric experience as well as the ineffable esoteric relationship, the ginanic diction that he uses has to resort to the traditional and familiar imagery and symbolic expressions in order to convey his message. The words, the imagery and the symbolic expressions, however, blend beautifully in this ginan. This beauty, unfortunately, cannot be recreated in this prosaic interpretation. Nor can we go into the prosody of the ginan.

In this reading we shall first address a common held misunderstanding about the identity of the composer. We shall then make an attempt to describe the exoteric experience of the composer's meeting with the Imam, as so wonderfully narrated in the ginan, and finally we shall examine and interpret some of the key words and expressions to convey the ineffable spiritual experience as well as the composer's gentle persuasion to the mu'mins. One hopes that this brief reading will heighten the reader's appreciation and understanding of this ginan.

2. A CLARIFICATION ABOUT THE COMPOSER AND THE PERIOD OF COMPOSITION

The composition of this ginan is sometimes wrongly attributed to Pir Shams al-Din who lived more than four centuries before the actual composer of this ginan, Sayyid Fatehali Shah. This mistake may have arisen because of the pen-name he has used in the second line of the last verse which reads: *Bhane Shamsi tamme sambhro rookhi*.

It was a normal practice for the composer to mention his own name in the concluding verses of the ginan. But *Shamsi* here does not refer to Pir Shams al-Din – rather it was the pen-name of Sayyid Fatehali Shah.

He, like a number of other Sayyids, who did the work of *da'wa* (propagation and teaching) in India, may have been a descendant of Pir Hassan Kabirdin. Sayyid Fatehali Shah himself preached among the communities in Sind. He eventually died there and was buried near Jerruk which is south of Hyderabad in Pakistan.

The first two lines in verse seven give us the clues as to the period when this ginan was composed as well as validate the real name of the composer. These lines read:

*Eji gaddh Chakwa ne kille Shah Khalilullah ramme
Tiyaan Fatehali ne mayya karine bolaawiyya*

Shah Khalilullah here refers to the forty-fifth Ismaili Imam, whose Imamate was from 1780 to 1817 A.C. He lived in Iran in the town of Mahallat, which is located approximately 362 kilometers from Tehran. The town is situated on the slope of a mountain. Mahallat is also amongst the most ancient residential areas in Iran and was an important base of the Ismailis; hence the many references to the 46th and 47th Imams (Aga Khan I and II) as Aga Khan Mahallati. Sayyids and murids of the Imam from various parts used to come to Mahallat to pay their respects. This ginan is therefore fairly recent, having been composed either towards the end of eighteenth century or early in the nineteenth century.

It appears that like many other murids, Sayyid Fatehali Shah travelled from Sind to Iran to meet Hazrat Imam Shah Khalilullah.

On arriving in Mahallat on the day of Navroz, he learns that the Imam has gone to the woods on a hunting expedition. The Sayyid naturally feels disappointed that having come all the way,

he did not have the opportunity for the deedar. This feeling of sadness is lamented in the first stanza of the ginan. Despite this, there is an undercurrent of inner hope at the prospect of having the deedar by the mercy of the Imam.

The pangs of separation from the beloved and the yearning for reunion are a recurrent theme in Ismaili ginans and also in Sufi mystical poetry. In this ginan, there is the lament of this separation, but in keeping with the traditional ginanic function, there is also gentle persuasion and hope of spiritual union.

We shall now examine how Sayyid Fatehali Shah relates his zaheri deedar of the Imam and how this blends with his esoteric experience.

3. THE MEETING WITH THE IMAM IN THE WOODS AND AT THE FORT

In the following four verses (1, 2, 3 and 7), Sayyid Shamsi relates his quest for the Master which leads to his meeting with Imam Shah Khalilullah. The meetings (*deedar*) fulfilled his intense yearning.

VERSE 1

Transliteration:

*Eji Navroz na din sohamna,
Shah Ali Qayam shikaar ramwa vann gaya,
Sevak na mann thayaa oodassi,
Praan Ali charne rahiya.... I*

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

*On a beautiful day of Navroz,
Imam-e-Zaman had gone to the woods to hunt.
(I) His murid (disciple) became sad at heart (for missing my Master),
as my soul was yearning to be at the feet of the Imam. (An expression of respect and –
obedience to the Imam)... I*

Navruz (*Navroz* – Gujrati variation) is a Persian word meaning ‘New Year’s Day’ (twenty-first March). This is the first day of spring, hence the day is beautiful (*sohamna*). *Shah Ali Qayam* refers to *Imam-e-Zaman* (Imam of the Time) because *Noor-e-Imama* is everpresent (*qayam*). *Shikaar ramwa gaya* means ‘went hunting’ and *vann* means ‘woods.’ *Sevak* is ‘one who is ready to serve or obey,’ in this case a ‘disciple’ or a ‘murid.’ *Praan* means ‘inner life’ or ‘soul.’

VERSE 2

Transliteration

Eji Shah Qayam preete jo chint baandhi
Nar ne preete amme vann gaya
Eva vann sohamna Nar Qayam ditha,
Dela dai devanta rahiya2

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

Impatient because of my ardent and deep loving desire to meet the Imam,
I also went into the woods,
which in the presence of the Imam
unfolded like heavenly gates looking angelically beautiful....2

The expression *preete jo chint baandhi* literally means ‘with love when (one) focuses on the remembrance (*dhikr*).’

Dela dai devanta rahiya is an idiomatic expression implying ‘the unveiling of angelic (*devanta*) beauty with the opening of gates (*dela*).’ When the *murid* (devotee) searches inwards for the *murshid* (master), spiritual insight keeps on unveiling the gates with ever-increasing beauty.

VERSE 3

Transliteration

Eji bhalu thayu Saahebe soomat aali,
Shah Ali Qayam saathe ramwa amme vann gaya.
Anant aasha poori amaari
Shah dil bhaave gamya....3

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

*It was a blessing that the Master inspired in me the wisdom
so that I went into the woods.
My intense yearning was fulfilled
because true bliss had blossomed in my heart.....3*

Saahebe soomat aali means ‘the Master inspired in me the wisdom.’
Anant asha poori amaari means ‘my intense yearning (for deedar, both zahiri and batini) was fulfilled.’

VERSE 7

Transliteration

*Eji gaddh Chakwa ne kille Shah Khalilullah ramme,
Tiyaan Fatehaline mayya kari ne bolaawiya,
Anant aasha poori amaari
Neet Ali Noore oothiya....7*

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

*Shah Khalilullah, pleasantly relaxing at the fortress in Chakwa,
graciously summoned me (Fatehali) in his presence;
then with the constant overflowing of His Noor,
fulfilled my many ardent wishes (for spiritual growth)....7*

The expression *Neet Ali Noore oothiya* implies ‘the mystical experience of the overflowing of the *Noorani Deedar of Ali* (The Imam Eternal) which was granted (to him).’

Each Imam presents to the world of his time that facet of the multi-faceted splendour the Ismailis call Imamatus. All Ismaili philosophers have emphasized the principle of the Unity of Imamatus under the superficial diversity exhibited by each Imam of the Time. It is in this sense that the Ismailis believe that Imam is the same irrespective of his own age or the time he lives in

4. THE INNER SEARCH AND EXPERIENCE

In the remaining four verses (4, 5, 6 and 8) of the ginan, Sayyid Shamsi, touches upon his own inner yearnings and gently persuades the listener to seek out the spiritual vision through the love and grace of the spiritual lord.

VERSE 4

Transliteration

*Eji hette Alisu hirakh baandho,
Avichal ranga Sahebse girahiya,
Evi chint baandhi Nar Qayam saathe,
Sat bhandaar motiye bhariya....4*

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

*Be joyfully bound in the love of Ali
And attain the unfading spiritual color (the state of bliss) from the Master;
When my mind was bound to the Ever-Living Lord in contemplation
Reality adorned (the Soul) with priceless treasure of (Noorani) pearls....4*

Avichal ranga Sahebse girahiya means ‘the permanent state of bliss from the Lord’ and refers to the *nafs-i-mutmainna* or ‘the contented self’ (Holy Qur’an, 89:27). It is a state of mind which is serene because the self has understood the Reality. The verse of the Holy Qur’an reads: *But ah! thou soul at peace!* (translated M. Pickthall).

VERSE 5

Transliteration

*Eji amme Saheb saathe sahel kidha,
Riddh siddhaj paamiya,
Ek mann ginan je saambhre
Aa jeev tena odhariya....5*

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

*I (Fatehali) relished the spiritual journey with the Master (the Imam),
and (as a result) I was blessed with spiritual elevation and gnosis (spiritual insight).
He who listens to the Ginans attentively (and strives for the contemplative knowledge),
his soul finds the path to salvation....5*

Here the Sayyid implies that a mu'min should strive for the *batini deedar* (spiritual reality of the Imam). One may achieve this with the blessing of the Imam.

VERSE 6

Transliteration

*Eji jeev jiyaare joogat paame,
Praan popey ramm rahiya,
Agar chandan prem rasiya,
Hette hans sarowar zeeliya....6*

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

*When the self understands reality,
the soul blends beautifully like a flower
and experiences musk and sandalwood-like fragrance.
The self floats in ecstasy of love as a swan swims in a lake....6*

This verse contains symbolic expressions and imagery to convey the ineffable serenity and the inner joy of the fortunate one who has been graced with the the *batini* (esoteric) experience. The life of such a person becomes beautiful like a flower.

The fragrance of musk (*agar*) and sandalwood (*chandan*) symbolizes good behavior of the gifted one through speech and good deeds.

The swan (*hans*) represents the soul that is pure. Through esoteric and ecstatic experiences it remains liberated and is in abiding love for the beloved.

VERSE 8

Transliteration

*Eji bhai re moman tamey bhaave araadho,
Bhane Shamsi tamey saambhro rookhi,
Saaheb na goon nahi wisaare,
Tena praan nahi thashe dookhi....8*

Interpretive Translation and Explanation

*O momin brothers! With deep affection remember the Lord.
Take heed and listen to what Shamsi says:
“They who do not forget the batin of the Imam (realizable through Imam’s grace),
their souls will never ever be miserable or unhappy”.....8*

Sayyid Shamsi gently reminds his momin brothers (*rookhi*) always to remember the Lord with affection. H

ere, *rookhi* is probably the intimate form of the word *rikhisar* which is used in the ginans to refer to *mu'min* brothers. The word has been used thus to rhyme with the last word of the stanza *dookhi* (miserable).

The last two lines are to remind us not to forget the *batin* of the Imam but to strive towards it through regular prayers. Those who carry out these responsibilities with dedication and devotion can never be unhappy whatever the worldly life might impose upon them. Thus the souls of the true *mu'mins* will always be at peace within themselves, knowing that they are under the protection and guidance of a living manifest Imam.

“Remember the Day when we will summon all human beings with their Imam. ...” – The Holy Qur’an: 17 – 71

From the above discourse, we can see why the ginan is appropriate for the occasion of Navroz, which marks the commencement of a new year. The glorious transformation of nature in spring reminds us of the creative power of Allah, who continually showers His bounties for us. Thus, the festival of Navroz should effect a spiritual renewal in each one of us. It should inspire greater love for Imam-e-Zaman as is enjoined upon us by Allah and our beloved Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him).

This Navroz ginan by Sayyid Fatehali Shah reminds us of our spiritual obligations for continuous search for enlightenment through the Ta'alim (teachings and guidance) of the Imam of the time.

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## HERE I COME

By Shirin Hirji

I welcome you with all my heart  
When all the flowers are out.  
Birds singing, bees buzzing  
In the glorious spring sunshine.

Red, Blue, Green, Yellow  
A myriad of colours which follow  
Like a rainbow.  
Saying: it's Spring, It's Spring

And with it bring  
Smiles and laughter  
From fathers, mothers, sons and daughters.  
Shouting HERE I COME.

~~~~~

ALL THAT IS GOOD

By Almas Nathoo

Springtime is chance to say goodbye to winter and to welcome the Spring Season;

Springtime is the time for daylight savings, which makes the beautiful Sun set one hour late;

Springtime is also positively linked to good health and well-being;

Springtime is the time to enjoy beautiful outdoor activities;

Springtime is when the Snow and Ice begin to melt and the raining season starts;

Springtime is when the Rays of Warm Sun provides us with important source of vitamin "D" for
our bodies;

Springtime is when the food is fresh and also vegetables grow in our gardens for making Green
Juice, which is made from Wheat grass;

Springtime is when the fresh air and sunshine are available from our Mother Nature, which is
created by God;

Springtime is when children, cats and dogs want to go out and play with other kids, while
parents socialize with friends and other family members;

Springtime is a wonderful time to appreciate the beauty and bounty that the Mother Earth has
to offer;

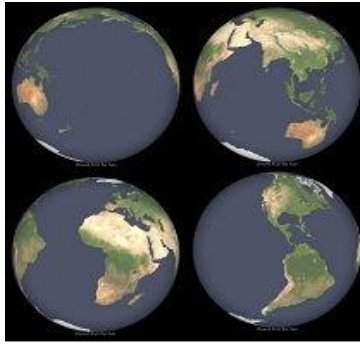
Springtime is when the Tulips, Garlic and Sunflowers start to bloom and show their beauty
from underground;

Springtime is when Mother Nature offers many opportunities to people such as exercise,
hunting, gathering, fishing and other forms of recreation;

Springtime is also time for Wedding Season, when many couples tie the knot to be together
forever;

Springtime is a rosy time for the whole year, with blessings from our Spiritual Father.

HOPE



By Navyn Naran

Syria, your hopes and your struggles
are not forgotten,
nor forgotten are other struggles in our world
Navroz Mubarak to all around the globe
we look forward with HOPE
as time promises a new morning,
so Navroz promises a New Day.

a day of peace, good health, security,
a day when stranger greets stranger like brother and sister
where as children, our compassion and tolerance burn bright
for all wish for goodness and grace
even the earth's submissive tilt
renders it perfect for season and change

the sun on this spring equinox
equates the day and the night
and symmetry magically stabilises our earth in motion
now daylight will become unbroken in the North, as *ying*,
and darkness will cover southern skies as *yang*
let us breathe
let us pray that all is fresh
and at moment's peace on Navroz

THOUGHTS FOR NAVROZ

BROTHERHOOD - "IT'S ONE WORLD"

For many of my generation, the greatest technological miracle of this century has been sending men into space, and a remark made by an astronaut on one of the first flights in space has always remained in my mind. Looking down upon the earth he had just left he has said emotionally, "It's one world." He was not a Muslim. But this remark substantiated two fundamental aspects of our faith: the limitlessness of God's power and the brotherhood of man — His Highness the Aga Khan, Acceptance of the Charter of Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan, March 16, 1983.

FRATERNITY

All men, rich and poor, must aid one another materially and personally. This fraternity is absolute, and it comprises men of all colours and all races: black, white, yellow, tawny; all are the sons of Adam in the flesh and all carry in them spark of the Divine Light — 48th Ismaili Imam, His Highness the Aga Khan III (1877-1957)

COMMON FATE

At a time of global change and uncertainty, including in many regions where Nowruz is celebrated, the message of peace that lies at the core of this observance is especially important. My thoughts are with those communities observing Nowruz under difficult circumstances. This holiday is a reminder that we share a common fate and must work for a better future for all. — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

DIVERSITY

O mankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most godfearing of you. God is All-knowing, All-aware — Holy Qur'an, 49:13

BROTHERHOOD

A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim; he neither oppresses him, nor does he lie to him, nor does he look down upon or humiliate him. Piety is here (and he pointed to his chest three times)...Allah will not look at your body nor your appearance, rather he will only look at your hearts — Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s)

EPILOGUE: “NAVROZ MUBARAK“



I say to you all on Navroz, Navroz Mubarak and I want you, at the beginning of this New Year, to try to think a bit ahead in your future. Each Navroz say to yourselves, ‘Have we done our work?’ If you have then I will be very happy indeed — Farman Mubarak, Mawlana Hazar Imam, His Highness the Aga Khan, Rangoon (now Yangon), Burma (now Myanmar), March 21, 1960.

A Collection of Readings on Nawruz



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