



## The Navruz holiday or the day of the vernal equinox in the history and culture of the peoples of the East

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### ABSTRACT

This article provides information about the history of Navruz (the day of the vernal equinox) and its role in the culture of different peoples. The article also includes information about the beginning of the new year in the history of the peoples of the East, the culture of agriculture and a number of rituals related to them.

### Keywords:

Navruz, navsard, novsorgi, saman, agriculture, Shumbun no hi, Higan, Anno, Komoeditsa, Yarilin day

The peoples of the East have a rich cultural history. Various customs, traditions and rituals associated with the calendar of the year in the way of life of peoples are a vivid example of such a rich history. The vernal equinox is a ritual day for many peoples and religions of the world, which has been known since ancient times. This is the day of the awakening of nature from winter sleep, the day of the balance of light and darkness, after which the light takes over. Warm days are coming, trees are blooming, flowers are blooming, birds are singing spring songs, each person feels a surge of strength, a desire to love and create. Turkic, Persian, Slavic, Germanic and Celtic holidays are associated with this day. The most ancient witnesses of the veneration of the day of the vernal equinox were the monuments of the megalithic culture of ancient civilizations for cult purposes. The main axis of Stonehenge, the mysterious gaze of the Great Sphinx at Giza, is directed precisely at the point of sunrise during this astronomical period.

In Japan, the day of the vernal equinox is called the Shumbun no hi and is also celebrated as a holiday. A weekly period beginning three days before the vernal equinox, called Higan. During this

time, the Japanese visit the graves of their ancestors. The people of Ghana celebrate Anno - New Year's Eve, which lasts thirteen days and ends on March 21st. [1, p. 1]

Many of these various customs and rituals begin among the peoples of the East on the first day of the agricultural calendar - the holiday of Navruz. Since ancient times, the holiday of spring Navruz, which we celebrate with great solemnity, was celebrated by our ancestors as a great day. The Navruz holiday dates back to the time when the first scientific and geographical ideas about the planet appeared, and was celebrated first by sedentary peasants, and then by semi-sedentary and nomadic Turkic peoples. While medieval historians date its formation three or three and a half thousand years ago, modern historians come to the conclusion that the historical roots of Navruz go back to the tenth and fifth millennia BC.

From sources it is known that the celebration of March 21 as a holiday took place even in the ancient Egyptian state. According to the source, the text of the ancient myth of the god Marduk, a very large holiday dedicated to Marduk was held in the month of Nisan (days when night and day were equal in spring). This

source describes the religious rituals performed during the holiday. The king himself was present at these ceremonies and had to imitate Marduk and show himself in a state of noble torment. For this, during a special ceremony, the external attributes of his dominion - the staff and the crown - were torn from the king, and the high priest whipped the king on his knees. Only after this ceremony, the king restored the right to possession of the royal power from the supreme deity. [2, p. 84]. Such beliefs were supposed to strengthen the authority and prestige of the king, who was at the head of a state built on the basis of slavery.

For some Turkic peoples, the arrival of spring was personified by the victory of light over darkness. Therefore, one of the main attributes of Navruz is a fire. The flame carries with it a purifying meaning. Fire acts as a devourer of evil and all ailments. Jumping over the fire on this day, people give up all the bad things to the fire, leaving it behind in the outgoing year. On this day, everyone is having fun and rejoicing.

In the ancient beliefs of the Slavs, it is the vernal equinox that is the central link of the fourteen-day holidays. Two weeks, one before and the other after March 22, were called Komoeditsa. One of their holidays is Yarilin's Day. Yarila is the god of spring and the hot sun, he personifies fertile powers of Spring, he brings with him the rebirth of nature from winter sleep, timely arrival of Spring and the hopes for a good harvest depend on him. On this holiday, like the peoples of Asia, the Slavs burned large bonfires and jumped over the fire to cleanse themselves of all filth. On the same day, beliefs are associated with the fact that evil spirits reappear on earth (no longer afraid to freeze), and at the same time bears and brownies wake up, "bear awakening" games were held, and treats for the brownie were exhibited. Where the bees were bred, apiaries were fumigated with herbs, and in warmer climates the first swarm was celebrated.

This holiday, which has very deep historical roots, is a celebration of the most ancient times in Central Asia and the Middle East, and there are a number of historical written sources and historical works confirming that this is an ancient tradition. In

particular, the historical, scientific and literary works of such writers as Abu Raikhan Biruni, Abu Mansur Salabi, Omar Khayyam contain interesting information about the origin of Navruz, its unique ancient customs and rituals. In the writings of famous medieval encyclopedists, the history of the origin of Navruz is interpreted in connection with the legendary kings Kayumars, Jamsheed and Suleiman. Since the beginning of the celebration of Navruz, various rulers and high-ranking historical figures in the civil service have also expressed different views on the celebration of this holiday.

Abu Raikhan Biruni in his book "Osor ul-baqia" ("Monuments of Ancient Peoples") describes the holidays of different peoples and gives the following information about the Iranian month "Farvardin Moh": "The first day of this month is Navruz. Navruz is the first day of the new year, and its Persian name claims the same meaning. ... According to pre-Islamic beliefs, on this day God created the underworld, put Kayumars over it as his king, and Navruz was his "jashnee", or sacred holiday. [3, p. 253]

There is enough evidence that the Navruz holiday has long existed among all the peoples of Central Asia. Encyclopedic scientist Biruni, who worked on the calendars of ancient peoples, spoke about the Sogdian holidays, noting that the first day of the year begins with the month of Navsard, and this first day is celebrated as the great Navruz. In Khorezm, this day fell on the first day of the month of Novsorgi. [3, p. 279-280]

Nowadays, great attention is paid to this national holiday and is celebrated in different regions. In particular, with the arrival of spring in all districts of the Bukhara region, young and old are looking forward to this holiday and getting ready for it. The ceremonies associated with Navruz can be divided into two: pre-holiday and after-holiday. Pre-holiday activities include preparing for the harvest, cleaning streets, courtyards, shrines and graves, and preparing holiday dinners.

People try to celebrate the New Year with cleansing. At the same time, all irrigation networks will be cleared of mud by volunteers,

and watercourses will be smoothed. Our ancestors have long performed rituals of sacrifice, intending to drink abundantly in the new year in early spring. These traditions have not lost their significance to this day. According to the ancient tradition of our people, the Navruz holiday began on the last night of the month of Hut (February 21 - March 21) with the "Kazan tuldi" ("filling the pot") ritual in the family circle. This is a purely family tradition, in which each household prepares delicacies to the best of its ability and treats neighbour children with buns. In the evening "filling the pot", all vessels are filled with water. According to popular belief, the vessels filled with water were filled with blessings by the grace of God. It is believed that this evening, if each household fills their cauldrons and prepares delicious food, there will be a lot of harvest next year. The historical basis of this custom is associated with the holiday of Hamaspatmaedaya, which is recorded in the Avesta. In ancient times, this ritual was performed as a ritual associated with the visit of good spirits to the house where they lived on New Year's Eve. [4, p. 333]. Decorating holiday tables has also been associated with household chores. For example, while the peasant's table was filled with agricultural goods, the shepherd's table was filled with meat and dairy products.

On the eve of Navruz, the peasants spread the seeds of wheat, barley, rice, oats, millet, rye, beans on seven boards and watered them with water every day. On the day of "filling the pot", they watched the growth of these seeds and wondered what kind of harvest would bring a good harvest next season. This custom was first practiced in the royal palace during the Sassanid period, when people predicted the coming of the new year. In addition to these, various guesses and prophecies were made about the coming year, depending on what day of the week is March 21 and from which animal Navruz begins. At the same time, the early days of the New Year also signaled how the new year was coming. For example, in Azerbaijan, the first day of Navruz means spring, the second day means summer, the third day means autumn, and the fourth day means

winter. Farmers of the Bukhara oasis had similar views. Sumalak, halim and other spring dishes are prepared on the stoves every year on the eve of Navruz.

The most common of these dishes is sumalak, and the very preparation of this dish is a special ritual. The word "sumalak" comes from the ancient Turkic word "suma", meaning "barley harvested for juice" or wheat. Muhammad Hussein Burkhan explains in his book "Burkhani Kote": "Samanu is something like holvaitar made from the juice of sprouted wheat" [5, p. 37]

Since people are prohibited from doing any work on the day of Navruz, young and old tried to celebrate this day festively. According to the "magic of the first day" that exists among the peoples of the world, the same mood accompanies people throughout the year, when the first day of the new year is celebrated. [6, p. 134] Early in the morning on the day of the holiday, people remembered their deceased ancestors, visited holy graves, their parents and relatives. Then they go to the recreation park. The performances were different: children's, wrestling, acrobatic, and lasted until the evening. The guys beat eggs painted in different colors and held leaf-throwing competitions.

Since ancient times, the Navruz holiday ended with sowing seeds in the fields in the countryside. These rituals also consist of several stages and cover such as "shokhmoilar", "urug sepish", "kosh oshi". The historical roots of these ceremonies go back to the end of the third millennium and the beginning of the second millennium BC and is associated with ancient beliefs held on certain days of the week.

On the day when the first pilaf was brought to the field, a ram was sacrificed in honor of Babadekhkan and "kosh oshi", "kosh guzha" and "navruz guzha" were prepared as a ceremonial meal [7, p. 63] Only after the blessing of the oldest peasant, they began to work, asking God for a bountiful harvest and with good intentions. One of the dishes, for example pilaf or soup, was prepared from the meat of a sacrificial animal. The horns and

necks of the bulls were anointed with the fat and oil of the day "kazan tuldi". [8, p. 174]

In general, the ceremonies called "kosh chikarish", "shokhmoilar", "kosh oshi" and "urug sepish" were the first working days of the new year for peasants, and according to the "magic of the first day" people tried to meet this day as joyfully as possible ... [6, p. 135]. Analyzing the celebration of Navruz, which has a thousand-year history, we can see the following common features of the ceremonies associated with it among the peoples of the world: lighting a fire, sprinkling water on each other, predictions and prophecy, drinking apricot juice or water, the ceremony "Kazan tuldi", habits associated with the preparation and coloring of eggs in different colors, climb, visit heights, hills, tombs, holy places, visit each other and parents, swing for girls; country walks, wrestling ... etc.

And although this holiday is inherited from more ancient cultures and is not associated with Islam, it is indeed widely celebrated in the Muslim world. In 2009, Navruz was included by UNESCO in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, since that time March 21 has been declared as the International Day of Navruz and is an official holiday in many countries.

So, at the heart of all the above traditions associated with Navruz is the only noble intention of the people - the hope that the new year will be a year of productivity, abundance, peace and prosperity in the country. As a vivid example of the worldview of our ancient ancestors, the spiritual level, Navruz begins the spring ceremonies and covers the entire season. Along with the revival of nature and life, Navruz has for centuries been a symbol of purity and joy, spirituality, national pride, self-awareness and solidarity. This is an excellent example of the kinship of all the peoples of the world.

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