

ЛІТЕРАТУРОЗНАВСТВО

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YALDĀ CELEBRATION IN THE HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND POPULAR CULTURE OF IRAN

This article deals with Yaldā, one of the most prominent national festivities of Iranian culture. It first reviews Yaldā's background in history and mythology, then examines the approach of various Persian-speaking poets to the concept of Yaldā, and finally studies some of the folklore related to Yaldā that is common in different regions of Iran. The main question presented is whether it is possible to determine a specific historical origin for Yaldā. In Persian literature, what have different poets said about Yaldā, and have they mentioned its roots? Is Yaldā important because it has roots in ancient rituals? Yaldā is celebrated at a time of year when in pre-Islamic times, religious festivals such as Khorramrooz and Azarjshan were held. Various sources that have spoken about Mithraism have also mentioned the celebration of the birth of God Mehr at the beginning of winter in ancient Iran. However, it is not possible to say with certainty exactly which of these celebrations Yaldā is stemmed from and it may have been influenced by any of them. It appears that the celebration of the first night of winter in ancient times had more religious aspects, but due to the roots of those celebrations in past religions, elements such as fire have faded in the Islamic period, and Yaldā rituals emphasize family gatherings. Without the support of official institutions, this tradition has been kept alive by the general public and classes such as farmers. The public does not mention the festivals of ancient Iran or Mithraism during the Yaldā ceremony, and these notions are only encountered in articles and books. Today, the concepts associated with Yaldā are the emphasis on the importance of family and intimate relationships, friendship and reconciliation, and the importance of nature.

Keywords: Yaldā, Chelleh, Mithraism, Yaldā in Persian poetry, popular culture.

Yaldā (یِلدا) is the most famous national festivity of Iranians after Nowruz (نوروز), which is held on Yaldā night (شب یِلدا) in Iran and Persian-speaking countries. It is the longest night of the year just before the shortest day. Yaldā ends with the sunrise on the first day of winter, and after that, the nights become shorter and the length of the days gradually increases, which is why today Yaldā is called "the night of the sun's birth".

In recent years, many articles have been published in Persian about the origin of Yaldā, some of which consider it to be a direct continuation of the birth ceremony of the god Mehr or Mitra. In this article, we first point out some of the possible historical origins of this celebration, then examine the books of Iranian poets to see what they have said about Yaldā over a thousand years and whether they have mentioned its origin. Then we turn to today's folk customs related to Yaldā to find out the aspects of its importance in popular culture.

Historical and mythological origins. The historical contexts mentioned in various sources for Yaldā customs are mixed with some mythological elements. Hence, it is not possible to trace the origins of Yaldā traditions throughout history without addressing some mythical concepts.

Khorramrooz celebration (جشن خرمروز) is one of the rituals that some sources consider to be the origin of today's Yaldā. According to ancient Iranians, "Dey" was one of the holy and valuable months. The word "Dey" (in Avesta: "Dathush" meaning creator) was one of the names of Ahuramazda (اهورامزدا). Therefore, the first day of "Dey" was celebrated and it was called Khorramrooz and it was accompanied by religious and non-religious customs and ceremonies [Razi, 2001, p. 676]. Abu Reihan-e Biruni has written that the name of the first day of Dey was originally Khorrooz (خورروز) or Khorraoos (خُرو روز), which refers to the celebration of the day of the sun [Biruni, 2001, p. 295]. Some consider Yaldā celebration to be a continuation of Khorramrooz celebration and believe that for Iranians, Yaldā celebration is a celebration of light over darkness and the birthday of the invincible sun, because from this day on, the sun stays in the sky more every day than the day before, and the nights get shorter and the days get longer [Razi, 2001, p. 676].

Apart from "Khorramrooz", one of the other celebrations that was held in late autumn was called "Azarjshan" (آذرچشن).

In Azarjshan, people lit fires in houses and on rooftops and celebrated the day by reciting prayers and preparing special meals. They decorated the fire temples and put fragrant sticks, incense sticks and Sandalwoods on the fire. At the beginning of the cold season, everyone took home a piece of the burning fire in the fire temple and lit the winter fire of his house with that sacred fire which burned until the end of winter and was not allowed to go out. For this, they considered omens, goodness and blessings [Razi, 2001, p. 641]. Some believe that Azarjshan later continued its life in many parts of Iran in the name of Yaldā night celebration [Jam, 2016, p. 46]. Of course, the customs of the Iranian people for Yaldā night have similarities with some descriptions of Azarjshan, and in a few parts of Iran they still sometimes light fires on Yaldā night, but today this is not very common and lighting a fire is not part of Yaldā customs. In addition, Azarjshan ceremony was not held on the first day of winter.

In addition to these historical celebrations, many scholars have also spoken about the mythological origins of Yaldā and have linked this ritual to Iranian mythology, especially the myth of Mehr [Mosahab, 2002, p. 3362; Rajabi, 2012, pp. 270–274; Yahaghi, 2007, p. 913]. Yaldā is about the battle of light and darkness, and this is the theme that forms the foundation of Iranian mythology. Both the myths related to the confrontation between Ahuramazda and the devil (اهریمن) and the older myths, namely the Mithraic myths, are related to the subject of the confrontation of light and darkness and the conflict between good and evil [Vermaseren, 2008, p. 16]. The ancient Iranians believed that the life of the world would be twelve thousand years. The first three thousand years are the period of the original creation. The second three thousand years will pass according to the will of Ahuramazda. The third three thousand years will be the period of fusion of good and evil, and in the fourth period the devil will be defeated. This attitude was not only related to Zoroastrian mythology. Also, in Zurvanian mythology, the last three thousand years were the time of the defeat of evil [Hinnells, 1989, p. 88]. The Iranians considered the twelve months of the year as a symbol of the twelve thousand years of life of the world, and thus the beginning of winter or December 21 was a symbol of the beginning of the last three millennia and the period of the defeat of darkness.

Yaldā's connection with Mithraism (میترائیسم) or the ritual of Mehr (مهر) is more related to the time of holding these rituals. Some consider the first night of winter to be the night of Mitra (Mehr)'s birth and his victory over darkness. Mehr is one of the ancient Indo-Persian gods before the time of Zoroaster. His name appears in the Avesta and in the writings of the Achaemenid kings as "Mithra" (میتْرَه) and in Sanskrit as "Mitra" (मित्र). In Pahlavi language it has become "Mitr" (میتْر) and in Persian it has become Mehr (مهر) [Purdavood, 1928, p. 392]. To the Iranians, the sun was a manifestation of the great god Mithras, and some even believed that the sun was the god Mehr [Mosahab, 2002, p. 2936]. But these two are not the same. In the belief of the Iranians, the sun was the concentrated and powerful light of Mehr, and in fact was born of him. In Mehryasht (مهریشت), it is stated that "Mehr is the light that rises from the top of the mountain before the sun and looks at the Aryan houses" [Purdavood, 1928, p. 394].

Scholars such as Z. Behrooz and M. Moghaddam have considered Mehr as a historical figure and even considered the year of his birth to be around 273 BC [Moghaddam, 2001, p. 94], but the presence of God Mehr in Iranian mythology is much older than this. Hinnells believes that although in Iran the hymn dedicated to Mehr (Mehryasht) is usually considered to belong to a date around 450 BC, but the content of these hymns is much older than that time [Hinnells, 1989, p. 124]. M. Bahar considers Mitra as one of the greatest ancient Hindu-Iranian gods who is involved in the movement of the sun in the sky and the arrival of the morning and the establishment of world order [Bahar, 1995, pp. 463–465]. Purdavood writes that Mehr is mentioned in cuneiforms from 1400 BC [Purdavood, 1928, p. 395]. The history of the presence of this god in mythology goes back to the time of Indo-Iranian union, and it even seems that the worship of Mehr has been common among Indo-European tribes since very ancient [Bahar, 1995, p. 467]. Later, in Zoroastrianism, Ahuramazda replaced Mehr and Mehr became one of the angels or secondary gods. In the religion of Mehr, the two main forces are in constant conflict. Ahuramazda is the ruler of light and the devil rules the dark world. In the religion of Mehr, the two main forces of light and darkness are in constant conflict. Mitra fights with the forces of good and helps them to defeat the forces of evil [Vermaseren, 2008, p. 128]. Mithraism has adapted and merged the gods of other religions. The followers of this religion have deliberately welcomed the conquest of the gods of other religions in order to create a universal religion [Vermaseren, 2008, p. 140].

The word "Yaldā" was borrowed from the Syriac Christians after a long cultural exchange between Iran and Rome. Before the birth of Christ, the Mehr religion had spread from Iran to other lands, including Babylon and European countries, and Mithra was worshiped on a wide scale from India to Western Europe [Purdavood, 1928, p. 407]. In Greece, the Mehr religion had spread greatly over 300 years. At the beginning of the fourth century AD, there were hundreds of Mehr temples in Rome and Mehr's birthday was celebrated. The religion spread from Rome to other parts of Europe. When the emperor Constantine I (who was a Christian) conquered Rome in 312, he ordered that instead of celebrating the birth of Mehr, they celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who is the manifestation of the light of God. He also moved the holiday from Saturday to Sunday. And they built church on the temples of Mehr. But the Mehr religion also left some influences on Christianity [Mosahab, 2002, p. 2937; Purdavood, 1928, pp. 408–418]. The birth of Mehr became the birth of Christ the Savior and returned to Iran with the Syrian Christians and was called Yaldā night.

Yaldā is a Syriac word equivalent to the Arabic word "Milād" (ميلاد) and literally equivalent to the word Christmas and the Roman word "natalis" (meaning birth) [Purdavood, 1928, pp. 399–401; Razi, 2001, p. 557]. In the Syriac-English dictionary written by "Pine Smith", Yaldā is considered to have the same meaning as "Noel" [Jam, 2019, p. 59].

In general, it seems that despite the coincidence of Yaldā with the night of Mehr's birth (according to some sources), it cannot be said with certainty that Iranians in all periods considered Yaldā to be the time of Mehr's birth. In addition, it is written in a number of sources that in some periods, due to calendar changes, the birthday of Mehr was held at a time other than the beginning of winter and was not a seasonal celebration [Jam, 2019, p. 65]. Therefore, Yaldā is probably not related to a particular religion, but has been influenced in different periods of the beliefs and customs related to that time, and because of its connection with natural phenomena such as day and night and the rotation of seasons, it has remained in all periods.

Yaldā in Persian literature. What has been said so far was about the possible origins of Yaldā before Islam. But what information do we have about Yaldā in the past fourteen centuries in Iran? One of the areas we have to study is the works of different poets. In Persian literature, Yaldā has been the subject of many poetic themes. Classical Iranian poets from Onsori (عنصری) (10th century) to Parvin Etesami (پروین اعتصامی) (20th century) have dealt with Yaldā in various forms in their poems. Most of Yaldā's poetic themes are usually Yaldā's intense darkness, the length of the night, and its annoyance and boredom.

In Persian literature, we see the name of Yaldā for the first time in the poem of Onsori (350–431 AH), which tells the praised king that you are so good at spear throwing that you can remove a black dot from a black face with your spear in the darkness of Yaldā night (چون حلقه ربایند به نيزه تو به / نيزه / خال از رخ زنگی يزدایی شب يلدای).

Also, at this period, Iranian poets and writers have repeatedly referred to the connection between Yaldā and Christianity. Abu Reihan-e Biruni (ابوریحان بیرونی) in "Asar al-Baqiyah" (آثار الباقیه) considers Yaldā as one of the feasts of the Syrian Christians and "the night of the birth of Christ" and introduces its time as the night after the December 25 (كانون اول) [Biruni, 2001, p. 363].

December 25, at the time of the founding of the Julian calendar in 46 BC, coincided with the winter solstice, but because the length of the year in the Julian calendar differed from the tropical year, it was far behind the winter solstice in later centuries. However, the belief that December 25 is the longest night of the year has traditionally remained stable among Christians. They placed the birth of Christ on the night of December 25, and considered it as the beginning of the increase of daylight [Jam, 2019, p. 62].

In a poem by Naser Khosrow (ناصر خسرو) (394–481 AH), the night of Yaldā and the night of Ghadr (شب قدر) are opposite and Yaldā is explicitly attributed to Christians:

If the words and beliefs of Christians are vague to you, your beliefs are not known to them either. They care about Monday and you care about Friday. You value the night of Ghadr and they value the night of Yaldā.

(گر زی تو قول ترسا مجهول است / معروف نیست قول تو زی ترسا / او بر دوشنبه و تو بر آدینه / تو لیل قدر داری و او یلدا)

Amir Moezzi (امیر معزی) (439–518 AH), just like Nasser Khosrow, contrasts the night of Yaldā with the night of Ghadr and considers Yaldā a source of pride for Christians:

Maybe God created love for you from the night of Ghadr and created enmity for you from the night of Yalda, because Muslims strive for friendship with you and Christians are proud of enmity with you.

(ایزد دادار مهر و کین تو گویی/ از شب قدر آفرید و از شب یلدا / زان که به مهرت بود تقرب مومن / زان که به کینت بود تفرار ترسا)

Sanā'ī (سنایی) (473–545 AH) in his poem also considers the reason for the fame of Yaldā night to coincide with the birth of Christ:

If you want to achieve fame and prestige, approach great and valuable people. Like the night of Yaldā, which is famous for the birth of Christ.

(به صاحب دولتی پیوند اگر نامی همی جویی / که از یک چاکری عیسی چنان معروف شد یلدا)

Some sources, such as Borhān-e Qāte (برهان قاطع), have considered Yaldā as the name of one of Jesus' companions due to a mistake in interpreting this Sanai poem [Borhān, 1997, p. 2448], but as Muhammad Moīn wrote in the footnote of the Borhān-e Qāte, such a matter has not been seen in any other source [Borhān, 1997, pp. 2447–2448].

Rashid Watwāt (رشید وطواط) (481–573 AH) also mentions the lighting of the monastery of Christian monks on the night of Yaldā:

Colorful flowers illuminate the garden, like the monastery of Christian monks lit up on the night of Yaldā.

(ز انوار ریاحین باغ و بستان گشته سرتاسر / منور چون عبادتگاه رهبانان شب یلدا)

Seif Esfarangi (سیف اسفرانگی) (581–661 AH) also attributes Yaldā's fame to its attribution to Christ:

My poem is valuable because I am talking about you, just as Yaldā night is famous for the name of Christ.

(سخنم بلند نام از سخن تو گشت و شاید / که دراز نامی از نام مسیح یافت یلدا)

As we can see, Persian poets have associated Yaldā night with the name of Christ and Christianity for three centuries, but after that, in the poems of Iranian poets, there is no mention of the connection between Yaldā night and Christianity. Since then, Yaldā has often been used for poetic themes and more for similes. Poets sometimes liken the bitter fate and suffering life of themselves and others to Yaldā night:

Khāqānī (خاقانی) (6th century AH):

It is as clear as day that the rest of my life is supposed to be black like Yaldā night.

(هست چون صبح آشکارا کاین صباخی چند را / بیم صبح رستخیز است از شب یلدا من)

Attar (عطار) (6th–7th centuries AH):

It is not clear when my pain will end. My Yaldā night does not end and tomorrow will never arrive.

(چو درد من سری پیدا ندارد / شب یلدا من فردا ندارد)

Poets sometimes liken the blackness and length of their beloved's hair to Yaldā:

Saadi (سعدی) (7th century AH):

Her face is as bright as day and her hair is as dark as night. When her hair pulled aside from her face, it was as if the night of Yaldā was over and the brightest day had begun.

(روز رویش چو برانداخت نقاب شب زلف / گفتی از روز قیامت شب یلدا برخاست)

Poets such as Mahasti-e Ganjavi, Saadi, Ouhadi-e Marāgheii, Nazāri-e Ghohestāni, Amir Khosrow Dehlavi and Ibn-e Hesām Khosafi have likened the night of being away from the beloved to the night of Yaldā. Khāoo-ye Kermāni, Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, Obeid-e Zākāni, Salman-e Sāvaji, Feyz-e Kāshāni, Sāeb-e Tabrizi and Qāāni have considered the beloved's hair as the night of Yaldā, in terms of blackness and length, and in terms of covering the beloved's face, which is like the sun.

Hafez (حافظ) (8th century AH) finds companionship with rulers and kings as unpleasant as the night of Yaldā:

Companionship with governors is the darkness of Yalda night. If you ask the sun for light, it may rise and give you light.

(صحبت حکام ظلمت شب یلداست / نور ز خورشید جوی یو که برآید)

Saadi has linked the most beautiful poetic concepts with Yaldā night:

Whoever is hurt in his heart, the breeze of peace does not blow on him. So that the morning does not rise until the night of Yaldā is over.

(باد آسایش گیتی نرزد بر دل ریش / صبح صادق ندمد تا شب یلدا نرود)

Although I am very sad, I hope that happiness will come, because the night will end, even if it is as long as Yaldā night.

(هنوز با همه دردم امید درمان است / که آخری بود آخر شب یلدا را)

Every day I look at you is like Nowruz and every night I am away from you is like Yaldā.

(نظر به روی تو هر بامداد نوروز است / شب فراق تو هر شب که هست یلدایی است)

The word Yaldā has been repeated about a hundred times in Persian poetry over a thousand years, indicating that it has been a well-known and traditional phenomenon throughout all these centuries. Of these, except in the case of the Yaldā-Christ connection seen before the seventh century, Yaldā is often used only as a concept (longest night of the year) and a theme for poetic similitude and illustration, with no reference to historical roots. Either no reference is made to its historical or mythological origins, ritual aspects or related customs. Perhaps this is because in the post-Islamic era, the Yaldā ritual (probably because of its roots in pre-Islamic beliefs) was not officially propagated and was a tradition that only the general public, especially classes such as Farmers and peasants maintained it.

Yaldā in popular culture. As we have said, some believe that the Yaldā night ceremony was probably a modified form of the ancient "Azarjshan" or the "Khorramrooz" celebration. This festival, whatever its name was, changed its name in the early centuries AH with the disappearance of fire as an element of the previous religions, and continued its life with a new title by adapting the name of Yaldā from the Syriac language. But Yaldā is not the only name of this ceremony. From the past to the recent years, the general public called Yaldā "Chelleh" (چله) and today in many regions of Iran, the main name of this ritual is "Shab-e Chelleh" (شب چله). The word chelleh is derived from the number forty (in Persian: chehel: چهل). This celebration was originally related to the peasants and ordinary people, and perhaps that is why the name "Chelleh" did not appear in the official history books.

The peasants, whose lives were directly connected with the rotation of the seasons, believed in three Chellehs during the year. One is "Chelleh of summer" (چله تابستان) or "Chelleh-ye Tamuz" (چله تموز) which included the first forty days of summer (from July 21 to August 31) and was the hottest time of the year. In winter, there were two Chellehs: the big Chelleh and the little Chelleh. The big Chelleh (چله بزرگ یا چله) included from the December 21 to January 31, that is forty full days. The little Chelleh (چله کوچک یا چله کوچیکه) from the February 1st to 20th, includes twenty days, which, in addition to the twenty nights, was a total of forty days and nights. Winter Chelleh (چله زمستان) has always been more important than summer Chelleh. And some have suggested that the summer Chelleh was probably invented in imitation of the winter Chelleh [Enjavi, 2000, pp. 13–17].

The last four days of the "big Chelleh" and the first four days of the "Little Chelleh" (from January 26th to February 2nd), which is the coldest time of winter, are called Char Char (چار چار) [Dehkhoda, 1998].

It is a well-known story that the two Chellehs are actually two brothers named "Ahman" and "Bahman" (اهمن و بهمن) and they talk to each other in the days of Char Char. Little Chelleh, or Bahman, mocks his older brother for failing to freeze all the people and their herds. Bahman says: if I had the opportunity as much as you, I would cool the air so that the baby mare would freeze in his mother's womb. "I'm still trying," he says. Bigger brother, Ahman, answers: You

cannot do anything because spring is coming after you [Enjavi, 2000, p. 16].

Party and meet relatives and friends. The Iranians considered the night of Yaldā to be the time of the longest demonic attack, and to ward off the evil of this night, they stayed up late by the fire, preparing a table and offering Mayazd (مَیَزَد) [Yahaghi, 2007, p. 913]. Mayazd was a table containing a number of snacks such as bread and meat and the last remnants of autumn fruits. The person in charge of distributing the food was called "Mayazdpan" (مَیَزَدپان), which has been changed to "Mizban" (میزبان), meaning host in Persian language. In fact, this table was presented to Ahuramazda and it was believed that this table is auspicious and blesses winter. Even today, on the night of Yaldā or Chelleh, family members gather in the house of the elders, such as grandparents, to see each other in a cordial atmosphere and talk about anything. They eat dried fruits and fresh fruits such as pomegranates and watermelons that are red, a symbol of the redness of fire and sun and joy [Mirnia, 1990, p. 169]. In most regions of Iran, these foods are called "Shabchareh" (شبچره) and usually include seven types of fruits and seven nuts. Of course, sometimes their number exceeds seven and includes a variety of sweets [Parsi, Sepanta, 2008, p. 12].

Chellezari Ceremony. In some parts of Iran, such as Malayer, the night of Chelleh is called Chellezari (چَلّیزری). This celebration starts two days before Yaldā night. They choose one of the young girls and name her Chellezari, dress her in a wedding dress and put her on a chair, then the musicians start playing the fiddle and percussion instruments and people circle around the chair and sing. A variety of foods such as sweets, fruits and nuts, as well as candles and water glasses, various gifts and fireworks are parts of the celebration. On the night of Chelleh, people choose a person named Uncle Chelleh (عمو چله), dress him in new clothes and put him on a horse or donkey, gather food for him from different houses, and drive him out of town or village. In this ceremony, Chellezari is a symbol of autumn and Uncle Chelleh is a symbol of winter, but in order to pass the cold winter sooner, people symbolically drive Uncle Chelleh out of the town before winter arrives [Enjavi, 2000, pp. 231–237].

Sending Trays of Fruits and gifts. One of the common customs on Shab-e Chelleh is that young boys who have just got engaged send large trays full of seven kinds of fruit (pomegranate, grapes, oranges, melons, apples, pears and watermelons) and various gifts for their fiancée. These trays are called "Khanche-ye Shab-e Chelleh" (خوانچه شب چله). In some areas, the girl and her family, in turn, send gifts to the young man. This has an effective role in strengthening the sincere and friendly relations between two families [Shakurzadeh, 1984, pp. 226–228]. Sometimes, the boy's family sends five or six trays containing a pair of shoes, a piece of cloth, sweets, walnuts, almonds, raisins and nuts to their bride's house. These trays should be taken by sisters or daughters of the boy's relatives to his fiancé. The groom goes to the bride's house at Chelleh night and returns to his house after dinner. The bride's family puts gifts made by the bride in those trays the next night and sends them to the groom's house [Enjavi, 2000, pp. 41–43].

Beads omen (مهره انداختن / فال مهره). Beads omen is an old tradition that is still performed in some parts of Iran in Yaldā. Each family member is given a small object, such as a bead or button, that is identifiable to them. The beads are poured into a jar and hung on the edge of the roof facing the sun the day before Yaldā. On the night of Yaldā, a little girl is dressed in a beautiful dress and she hugs the jar in the company of family, and one of the elders recites a poem, and the little girl

removes one of the beads from the jar. The bead belongs to everyone, the poem that has been recited is his omen.

Yaldā and Hafez divination. One of the traditions of Yaldā night is Hafez divination (فال حافظ). Yaldā ceremony is much older than Hafez era, but this celebration was later combined with Hafez's divination, and today in this ceremony, Hafez Divan is used to read poems. Attendees and family members each make a wish in their heart, and usually the oldest person in the family or someone who is more familiar with Hafez's poetry, accidentally opens Hafez's divan (دیوان حافظ) and reads the poem on that page. Hafez's poetry, due to its multidimensionality, multiplicity of meanings, and variety of concepts, usually has the ability to have various interpretations, and for this reason, usually when making divination, people can find a connection between their desires and the lyric that is recited. Hafez has been called the Lisan-al Qeib (The language of the unseen: لسان الغیب), which is because he composed his poems as if he knew the hidden intentions of the people.

The traditions and rituals associated with Yaldā in Iranian popular culture are more diverse than those mentioned. But what they all have in common is getting together in a cordial atmosphere, meeting family elders, entertaining guests with symbolic snacks, reciting poetry and divination, and staying up and waiting for the morning.

Whatever the origin of Yaldā, today it is a cultural element that has many positive aspects. The value of Yaldā is not that it reflects the worship of Mitra or that it can necessarily be considered a remnant of the birth of God Mehr or a special mythical or historical celebration.

Here's what we know for sure: This ritual is very popular today and is a valuable and pervasive cultural element. Of course, it is very old and its origin goes back to some ancient Iranian celebrations, but in historical transitions and cultural exchanges between Iran and other lands, it has undergone many changes, some elements such as fire have faded in it and some elements, including one of its names. Borrowed from other cultures. One of the reasons for the permanence of this celebration is its family aspects and its emphasis on friendship, reconciliation and sincere communication between human beings, which has made it popular as one of the cultural elements in all sections of society and among all people. In popular culture, the seasonal aspects of this celebration and its connection with the climate and the circulation of seasons and natural phenomena are also emphasized. In recent centuries, this celebration has also found a deep connection with some cultural elements such as Hafez's poetry. However, due to the deep place of this celebration in popular culture, its folkloric aspects can still be further explored.

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ТРАДИЦІЯ СВЯТКУВАННЯ "ЯЛДА" В ІСТОРІЇ, ЛІТЕРАТУРІ ТА НАРОДНІЙ КУЛЬТУРІ ІРАНУ

Стаття присвячена одному з найвизначніших національних свят в культурі Ірану – "Ялда". Спочатку розглядається походження цього свята відповідно до історичних джерел та міфології, потім – специфіка його висвітлення у творчості різних перськомовних поетів та у фольклорній традиції різних регіонів Ірану. Основні питання, що поставлені у статті: Чи можна визначити точно час походження свята Ялда? Що в перській літературі казали про Ялда різні поети і чи згадували вони його коріння? Чи визначається важливість цього свята його походженням з древніх ритуалів? Ялда святкується в ту пору року, коли в доісламські часи відзначалися такі релігійні свята, як Хоррамруз та Азарджашн. Різні джерела, що містять відомості про мітраїзм, згадують і про святкування на початку зими у стародавньому Ірані народження божества на ім'я Мегр. Однак не можна напевно стверджувати, від якого саме з цих свят походить Ялда – будь-яке з них могло вплинути на нього. Видається, що святкування першої ночі зими в давнину мало більше релігійних аспектів, але через їхню належність до попередніх вірувань, в ісламський період такі елементи, як вогонь, зникли, і тепер Ялда сприймається як сімейний ритуал зібрання родини. Без офіційної підтримки держави ця традиція збереглася серед широкого загалу і передусім у середовищі селян. Нині під час відзначання Ялда пересічні іранці вже не згадують церемонії, пов'язані із стародавнім Іраном чи мітраїзмом, про це можна прочитати лише в літературі. Сьогодні поняття, асоційовані з Ялда, – це важливість сімейних і теплих стосунків, дружби, примирення та увага до природних явищ.

Ключові слова: Ялда, Челлс, мітраїзм, Ялда в перській поезії, народна культура.

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ТРАДИЦИЯ ПРАЗДНОВАНИЯ "ЯЛДА" В ИСТОРИИ, ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ И НАРОДНОЙ КУЛЬТУРЕ ИРАНА

Статья посвящена одному из знаменательных праздников в культуре Ирана – "Ялда". Сначала рассматривается происхождение этого праздника в соответствии с историческими источниками и мифологией, затем – специфика его освещения в творчестве различных персоязычных поэтов и в фольклорной традиции различных регионов Ирана. Основные вопросы, поставленные в статье: Можно ли определить точно время происхождения праздника Ялда? Что в персидской литературе говорили о Ялда разные поэты и упоминали ли они о его корнях? Определяется ли важность этого праздника его происхождением из древних ритуалов? Ялда празднуется в то время года, когда в доисламском Иране отмечались такие религиозные праздники, как Хоррамруз и Азарджашн. Различные источники, содержащие сведения о митраизме, упоминают и о праздновании в начале зимы в древнем Иране рождения божества по имени Мегр. Однако нельзя достоверно утверждать, от какого именно из этих праздников происходит Ялда – любой из них мог повлиять на него. Представляется, что празднование первой ночи зимы в древности имело больше религиозных аспектов, но из-за их принадлежности к доисламским верованиям, в исламский период такие элементы, как огонь, исчезли, и теперь Ялда воспринимается как семейный ритуал собрания семьи. Без официальной поддержки государства эта традиция сохранилась среди широких слоев населения, прежде всего в среде селян. В настоящее время во время празднования Ялда рядовые иранцы уже не вспоминают церемонии, связанные с древним Ираном или митраизмом, об этом можно прочитать только в литературе. Сегодня понятия, ассоциируемые с Ялда, – это важность семейных и теплых отношений, дружбы, примирения и внимание к природным явлениям.

Ключевые слова: Ялда, Челле, митраизм, Ялда в персидской поэзии, народная культура.