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Subject: The Festival Of Fire (Jashn-e-Sadeh) in Kerman , Iran

Jashn-e Sadeh was observed in Kerman, Iran Saturday afternoon. *Sadeh* is a mid-winter festival celebrated with grandeur and magnificence by Zoroastrians since ancient times.

Jashn-e (Festival of) Sadeh (hundred), considered as one of the biggest Persian festivities since ancient times, actually refers to one hundred days and nights to the coming New Year. The festival celebrated 50 days before Nowruz (New Year), which falls on 20th or 21st of March depending on the vernal equinox, is to honor the discovery of fire that defeated the evil forces of darkness, frost and cold.

The Zoroastrian community in Iran and in many parts of the world celebrates Jashn-e Sadeh on the tenth of the Persian month of Bahman, coinciding with January 30.

The Day was also known as 'the day of kindness' since the ancient days when the festivities would normally go on for three days. Food that was prepared from slaughtered lambs was given in donations and distributed among the poor.

The discovery of fire dates back to the time of King Hushang. It happened when Hushang hurled a rock to kill a venomous black snake. Missing the serpent, the rock struck another rock and created fire. Since both the rocks were flint rocks, Hushang learned the secret of lightening a fire and taught his people. In honor of the discovery, the day was nominated as the festival of fire.

Zoroastrians believe that Jashn-e-Sadeh recalls the importance of fire, energy and light -- the light that comes from God and is found in the hearts of all creatures.

Some people consider the day to be sacred because they believe hell was born from winter on this day and that its fire could compensate for the extreme cold of the winter days.

On this blessed day, Zoroastrians light a huge bonfire in every town and city, gather around it and perform religious rituals and thank God for his blessings. The Mubads (religious authorities) recite the Gathas (religious hymns) and pray for the sovereignty of the country.

The flames of fire, which always tend upwards, symbolize the human yearning for the higher life. Thus, according to the Eternal Law, by which all progress is guided upwards, fire is the very natural step toward such higher life.

Zoroastrians keep fire burning in their fire temples as a symbol of purity. They pray in front of the fire and believe it cannot be defiled as long as it is burning.

It should be noted that Zoroastrians do not worship fire. It is only a symbol of purity and a remembrance of one of God's best blessings for humanity.

Prophet Zarathustra chose fire as his symbol, for it is believed to be the purest among God's creations. When Zarathustra talks about fire in the Gathas, he speaks about the fire of life in the human body, which gets extinguished only when one dies. It is this fire that we are expected to keep pure. Avesta, the Holy Book of Zoroastrians, discusses different types of fire such as the fire of Nobility, the fire of Happiness, and the fire of Good Life.

Human beings should keep the fire of conscience and the fire of pure mind and feed them with '**Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.**'

Jashn-e Sadeh is usually celebrated every year in the Kushk-e Varjavand gardens in Karaj (a township of Tehran province) where the Zoroastrian community, as well as others interested in traditional Persian ceremonies, gather for the festivities.









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