

Yalda Night Celebration: A Beautiful Table

Persian transcript:

شب یلدا یعنی بزرگترین شب ایرانی ها... دور هم جمع می شوند و اونو جشن می گیرند. و امشب در منزل آقای امیر میخچی و ناهید میخچی هستیم. و در حدود 25 نفر ایرانی دور هم جمع هستند امشب. ایرانی ها معمولاً وقتی دور هم جمع می شن، معمولاً شروع می کنن به شعر خواندن که این شعر ها از حافظ است، سعدی است، خیام است، مولانا و امثالهم. توام با این معتقد هستند که امشب باید میوه های فصل شب یلدا را بخورند که یکیش است انار، پاماکر اننت، یکی است و اتر میلان یا هندوانه. که حتماً باید این دوتا میوه امشب خورده بشه. باضافه آجیل های مختلف از قبیل آجیل مشکل گشا یا آجیل های مخلوط که شامل پسته، کشمش، فندق، تخمه و امثالهم هستش. معمولاً امشب اینها تا پاسی از شب می شینند و شب یلدا را جشن می گیرند که عنوان بزرگترین شب استش. و باصطلاح خوشحال می شنند که کم کم شب یلدا ازین بعد کوتاه میشه و تا انشالله بهار برسه.

English translation:

Night of Yalda¹ is the greatest night for Iranians...they get together and celebrate it. We are in Mr. Amir Mikhchee and Mrs. Nahid Mikhchee's house tonight and also almost twenty-five Iranians are together tonight. When Iranians get together, they usually start with reading poetry. They read poems of Hafiz², Sa'di³, Khayyam⁴, Mawlana⁵ and others. Besides, Iranians believe that they should have seasonal fruits on this night. One of them is *annar* or pomegranate, then watermelon or *hendowana*⁶. These two fruits must be served and eaten tonight. They should also eat dried fruits like *moshkel gosha*⁷ dried fruits or mixed dried fruits. These contain pistachio, raisins, hazel-nut, nuts and things like that. People usually stay up after midnight and celebrate Yalda which is the longest night [of the year]. People are happy because after Yalda, nights get shorter and spring arrives, God willing.

¹ Winter solstice

² Khwāja Šamsu d-Dīn Muḥammad Hāfez-e Šhīrāzī known by his pen name Hāfez was a Persian lyric or *ghazal* poet. Themes of his *ghazals* are the beloved, faith, and exposing hypocrisy.

³ Abū-Muḥammad Mušliḥ al-Dīn bin Abdallāh Shīrāzī known by his pen-name Sa'dī was one of the major Persian poets of the medieval period. He is not only famous in Persian-speaking countries, but he has also been quoted in Western sources. He is recognized for the quality of his writing and for the depth of his social and moral thought.

⁴ Omar Khayyam was a Persian mathematician, astronomer, philosopher and poet. He also wrote treatises on mechanics, geography, and music.

⁵ Jalāl ad-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī and popularly known as Mowlānā but known to the English-speaking world simply as Rumi was a 13th-century Persian Muslim poet, jurist, theologian and Sufi mystic.

⁶ Watermelon

⁷ Moshkel Gosha literally means the one that solves problems. It is a ritual to distribute dried fruit to neighbors and the poor and ask God to solve one's problems. Moshkel Gosha usually contains raisins and chickpeas.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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