Iranians Observe Sadeh Festival

**Teheran, Feb 4, 2009:** Iranians held the Jashn-e-Sadeh Festival for celebrating the discovery of fire on the 10th of the Iranian month of Bahman.

**Sadeh celebration**

Considered one of the biggest Persian festivities in ancient times, Jashn-e-Sadeh - also known as the day of kindness - is celebrated by Iranians and especially Zoroastrian-Iranians throughout the world.

Sadeh is a mid-winter festival celebrated 50 days before Norouz (the Persian New Year starting on March 20 or 21) to honor fire and to defeat darkness and cold. The name Sadeh, meaning hundred in Persian, refers to the total of 100 days and nights left to the beginning of the New Year. The festival dates back to the time of King Houshang, the first Kianid king who discovered how to light a fire.

**Significance of Fire**

Zoroastrians believe that Jashn-e-Sadeh recalls the significance of fire, energy and light - the light that comes from God and warms the hearts of all creatures. On this day, Zoroastrians lit a huge bonfire in every town and city, gather around it and perform religious rituals and thank God for His blessings. The Zoroastrian priest recites the Gathas (religious hymns) and prays for the country’s prosperity.

Fire, which is considered a symbol of purity and knowledge, has two special peculiarities in Persians cosmology:

1. It has the power of immediately transmuting everything it touches into a likeness of itself;
2. The flames of fire always tend upwards, symbolizing the human yearning for the Higher Life.

Thus, according to Eternal Law, by which all progress upward is guided, fire is the natural step toward such a Higher Life.

**Symbol of Purity**

Zoroastrians keep fire burning in their fire temples as a symbol of purity. 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 by some to be the purest of God’s creations. When he talks about fire in the Gathas, he speaks of 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, happiness and good life. Human beings should keep the fire of conscience and the fire of mind pure and feed them with Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds.

**Rituals**

Zoroastrians in Tehran celebrated Jashn-e Sadeh at the city’s Markar Hall, while similar ceremonies were also held in other Iranian cities, including Isfahan, Yazd, Shiraz and Kerman. They do not face any restrictions in conducting their religious rituals in the Muslim majority Iran, but most of other Iranians also intend in Sadeh being as a national fire festival.