



Introduction to GileBoom Cultural-Occasional Programs and Prices

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1. TIRMAH SINZA

Program Description

Tirmah Sinza is a traditional custom of eastern Gilan which, according to the ancient Tabari history, coincides with 12th of Aban in solar calendar. As part of the ceremony, a girl fills a copper dish or waterskin from a nearby river or well and enters the ceremony where the guests are seated while singers chant couplets known as Amiri one after another. Each guest makes a wish and drops a bead, ring, stone, key or a similar item into the dish. The girl picks up one of the items from the dish while each poem is being chanted. The interpretation of the owner's wish is the related couplet which might be favorable or unfavorable. The singers try to sing only the good poems.

Concurrent with Tirmah Sinza, another ceremony known as "Felicity Divination" is conducted. In the past, felicitous occasions were synonymous with weddings. Thread is twisted around two needles, one for each person. The needles are dropped in a bowl of water on a Wednesday night when the moon is full. If the two needles reach each other within half an hour, the couple are meant for each other, otherwise not.



2. YALDA NIGHT

Program Description

This ceremony is performed in several parts:

Part 1: A professional storyteller recites three mythological stories of eastern Gilan.

Part 2: An archaeology professor talks about the philosophy of Yalda Night and describes Gil and Deylam beliefs.

Part 3: Folk Ghasem-Abadi music (including instruments such as Santoor, Kamanche and Tonbak) is played by local artists and the guests are encouraged to sing along.

Part 4: The guests are asked one by one to tell stories about their respective region.

Part 5: The guests are served local cookies and herbal tea.

At the end, a team including one of the attending archeology professors, one local storyteller and one musician select the best story. The criteria for selecting the best story is based on its philosophy, simplicity and the narrator's fluency. The best storyteller will receive a special Yalda Night award.



3. CHAHARSHANBE SURI

Program Description

Chaharshanbe Suri is a fire jumping festival which takes place on the eve of the last Wednesday before Nowruz. In this ceremony, seven bonfires are lit. Seven is considered as a lucky number among Iranians, Gilak and Galesh people. Ancient Iranians believed in seven planets, gaining attention of which would bring happiness and prosperity to their lives.

The ceremony is performed in several parts:

Part 1: The guests jump over the bonfires one by one, while old wooden stuff are thrown into the fire.

Part 2: The guests burn Esfand (*Peganum harmala*) using charcoal from the fire and waft its smoke into each other's faces, as part of an ancient Iranian tradition to avert the evil eye.

Part 3: The guests then wash their bodies, hands or faces with the water which has been drawn from a well in the morning to ward off any ailments.

Part 4: Everybody drinks water from the seven jugs which have been placed around the seven bonfires.

Part 5: Dinner is served. Chaharshanbe Suri's dinner traditionally includes Torshi-Tare cooked with a special herb known as Gazaneh (stinging nettle).

Part 6: Everybody should wash their own dishes after dinner. This part is very important according to Gilani people's beliefs which stress on cleanliness and purification.

Part 7: Gilaki songs and folk Ghasem-Abadi music are performed. The guests are encouraged to sing along.





4. SADEH CELEBRATION

Program Description

In ancient times, the Iranian calendar was divided into two equal parts or seasons: the great summer and the great winter. The great summer started from the beginning of Farvardin (March 21) till end of Mehr (October 22). The great winter started from the beginning of Aban (October 23) till end of Esfand (March 19).

Sadeh celebration was held on 10th of Bahman (January 30) which is the 100th day of the great winter. Iranians believed that the severe winter cold began to vanish by this time and the temperature started becoming moderate. So they collected firewood, and thorns on that day and built a big fire to destroy the demon of cold with the light of Ahura Mazda (The Avestan name for the creator and sole God of Zoroastrianism).

Sadeh and Discovery of Fire

Some researches relate Sadeh celebration to Hushang (a legendary figure in the ancient Zoroastrian scripture) and the discovery of fire. This happened when Hushang hurled a flint rock to kill a venomous black serpent. In this story, the serpent was the symbol of inexistence and death or demon. In this encounter, Hushang with assistance of Ahura Mazda who has created the fire, could scare the demon. Missing the serpent, the rock struck another flint to produce fiery sparks. Hushang learned how to make fire this way, and taught his people; in honor of the discovery, they established the Sadeh festival. This story has been depicted beautifully in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh.

In this ceremony, a prominent Gilani professor of archeology speaks about the philosophy of Sadeh celebration and its roots in ancient Iranian and Gilani culture. This is followed by reading Shahnameh and playing folk Ghasem-Abadi music around the fire. The guests are asked to take part in singing.



5. THE ARTIST CEREMONY

 **Date Time:** January 4

On the fifteenth day of the Iranian month of Dey (4th of January), known in the ancient Iranian calendar as Dey to Mehr or Botikan day, people make clay or mud statues in the shape of human and leave them in front of their homes' entrance gates.

Botikan literally means: a day to make idols, statues or bodies. In the Persian/Dari language, which is commonly spoken in Afghanistan, any type of statue is called idol. For example the Buddha statues in Bamyán valley of Afghanistan were called Bamyán idols.

Some altered forms of this ceremony have continued till today. For example, the Iranian author, Sadegh Hedayat has mentioned in his book titled 'Neyrangestan' a group of people who made a statue with flour dough and put it on top of a votive pottage and left it in the river.

It could be assumed then that some of the many mud statues found all over the ancient hills of Iran plateau (particularly in Tillya tepe archeological site near Sheberghan in the northern Afghanistan) are remains of this age-old tradition.

Program Description

The participants are divided into four groups of three members each. Then, cooperating in a team work, they make statues of human or animal shape using cob. The participants are provided with 12 cob balls, symbolizing the 12 months of the year. The participants have half an hour to make their cob statues and place them on a special tray.

The judge will then choose and award the best statute. The judge may be any of Gileboom's guests, Gileboom's owners or a local artist. The criteria for selecting the best statue include: similarity to the original figure, simplicity, finesse, strength, creativity and group work.





6. AAB-PASHAN (WATER POURING) CEREMONY

 **Date: June 21-27**

Aab-Pashan Ceremony is held in summers and whenever there is a drought. It is a sort of a prayer for rain. This ceremony is one of the oldest national festivals of Iran, dating back to the Sassanid era (224- 651 CE) and the reign of king Firooz of the Sassanid Empire. The king would offer this prayer to God and call for his mercy, in a hope to overcome severe starvations and droughts.

“When Firooz came out of the temple (fire house) after his prayer, there appeared a cloud in the sky and it rained in such way that no eyes had ever seen before. On that day, people rejoiced by pouring water on each other, and it became a tradition ever since.”

Aab-Pashan Ceremony was being held all across Iran during the Safavid era (1589 -1735 AD). The Great Shah Abbas of Safavid dynasty was particularly interested in holding this ceremony:

“When the joyful season of spring was passed, we tended to enjoy the celebrations of Guilani people. It is their tradition to come together, young and old, great and peasant, on Aab-Pashan day -after the three month of spring is over- at the sea shore to pour water on each other and to celebrate. In addition, the Guilani people have long regarded the 26th of June as the Lily Festival.”

Program Description

The program is done in this way: the guests go to Milash waterfall in Zyz region, each holding a small bowl and wearing a night-cap. They are divided into 3 groups, the Khans (landlords), the whites and the blacks. The Khan group and their servants watch the players and judge. The men all wear their old cloths on this day and wear night-caps.

The person who plays the role of Khan in the Khan group, divides the participants into the white team and the black team. Then he blows in his bugle to start the water pouring ceremony. The mission is that the white team should remove the stones from the water way within a given time. The black team must try to slow them down by pouring water on their heads and faces. The white team must confront the black team by pouring water on them while trying to complete their mission on time. The teams then swap places and the Aab-Pashan ceremony continues.



7. ATTENDING GHASEM-ABADI WEDDING CEREMONY

Program Description

Gileboom usually informs the travel agencies about the upcoming Ghasem-Abadi wedding ceremonies one week in advance. After attending the ceremony, a wedding present is offered to the bride and groom. The wedding ceremonies are often held in the afternoon and include Ghasem-Abadi dance performed by women in the family or the friends of bride and groom along with folk music.



8. FOLK GHASEM-ABADI MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Famous Ghasem-Abadi songs are played by Santour and sang by Mr. Hakim, a famous local singer.

