

## **Celebrating Persian New Year in Canada! - *a personal story***

I want to share a personal story from the learner's viewpoint. I, like many other Iranians, Afghans, and inhabitants of Central Asia, celebrate Nowruz. Many of us have heard that *the sky is blue everywhere*, which is true to my experience! However, I am telling you, and believe me: Nowruz, which marks the first day of Spring, doesn't feel the same when you live in Canada and the temperature is -10 on March 20 and in Iran with the temperature of +20 at the same time of year. It is also not the same when you are far away from your family, and not everyone around you is celebrating this new year.

However, as Sohrab Sepehri, a contemporary Iranian poet, says: *It doesn't matter where I am. The sky is always mine. Windows, ideas, air, love, earth, all mine.* And I would add Nowruz is mine, too. What I mean is that I have to celebrate Nowruz in my heart, even when I am in the middle of training. Wait, I have to explain why I might be in the middle of a course. Basically, there is an exact moment when the Sun crosses the celestial equator, and it is slightly different each year. That moment which equalizes night and day is calculated precisely every year and time for celebration and rituals.

The last time this happened, I had the chance to take a short break from the course, leave the session temporarily and call my family to gather together virtually at the exact moment of Nowruz. Surprisingly, the instructor received my request to leave the session for a few minutes. This good feeling of understanding and respect is what I needed to start a new year and continue learning!

This is also a lesson for me as a facilitator. As I consider course adjustments, I need to remember: Life happens and not the same for everyone. Let me be appreciative of diversity in my learning circles and remain flexible.

by Nasim Mogharab