

# Koozeh-Shekani; a cultural heritage of cleansing and hope



● borna.news

The *koozeh-shekani* (pot-breaking) ceremony of South Khorasan Province represents a nearly forgotten tradition that once thrived during *Charshanbe Suri*, the last Wednesday of the Iranian year. Celebrated alongside customs like bonfire jumping and the *Dehqan* (peasant) Festival, *koozeh-shekani* stands as an ancient and cherished ritual in this region of Iran. Symbolically, the *koozeh-shekani* ceremony echoes the spirit of Nowruz (Persian New Year). It embodies the replacement of the old with the new, the past with the present, and the hopeful transition from hardship to prosperity. This ritual signifies a fresh start and the shedding of negativity. In earlier times, it was common practice in many cities throughout South Khorasan Province for people to break old pots and jars on the last Wednesday of the year. These were typically vessels that no longer kept water cold or had become contaminated with algae. To imbue the ritual with deeper meaning, families would often place specific items inside the pots: a piece of charcoal to symbolize bad luck, coins to attract wealth and abundance, and salt to ensure keen vision. Before the breaking, the pot would be passed around, circling the heads of each family member. Finally, the woman of the house would take the pot to the rooftop and cast it down, shattering it on the ground below. Sometimes, grains such as barley, wheat, or beans, staple crops of the region, were added to the pot, providing a treat for birds after the vessel broke. On the eve of the last Wednesday before Nowruz, families would gather firewood on their rooftops and fill the designated pot with water. A portion of

this water would then be poured into each of the rooftop's four corners. With the stage set, the pot was hurled from the rooftop, breaking upon impact. As the pot shattered, participants would recite verses such as: "Go sorrow, come joy; Go hardship, come sustenance." This practice stemmed from the belief that by breaking the pot and releasing the misfortunes and calamities it contained, happiness and blessings would follow. Additionally, the daily use of unglazed pots for drinking water and food storage led to the understanding that using such a pot for more than a year could become unhygienic, potentially causing illness due to the absorption of impurities into the pot's walls. Some historians suggest that *koozeh-shekani* contributed to the flourishing of pottery in South Khorasan Province. The widespread use of pottery in daily life meant that the ritualistic breaking of old pots created a continuous demand for new ones for food and water storage. Following the *koozeh-shekani* ceremony, people would fill their clean, new pots with fresh spring water from the *qanat* (underground water channel), joyfully bringing it home to adorn their *haftsini* table, a traditional centerpiece of the Persian New Year celebration. Tradition holds that *koozeh-shekani* originated in the Qajar era. During this time, a romantic dimension was added to the ritual. Families with daughters of marriageable age would tie a handkerchief to the pot's handle and have the girl throw it from the rooftop into the alley. If a young man was in love with the girl of that house, he would pick up the handkerchief from the alley and come to propose to her with it. While the practical purpose of the ritual was to encourage the use of uncontaminated pots, this romantic element enhanced its appeal. Within days, the suitor, accompanied by his family, would arrive with the handkerchief, sweets, and a new pot, formally proposing to the girl whose pot he had broken. The *koozeh-shekani* ceremony is a vibrant and enthusiastic ritual, rich in symbolism and history. Recognizing its cultural significance, the ceremony has been registered on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Iran.



● kojara.com



● visitiran.ir

## Restoration underway in shrine of Pirmorad in Bafq

### Iranica Desk

The head of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Bafq, a city in Yazd Province, announced the commencement of restoration and organization operations for the shrine of Pirmorad in Bafq. Leili Ranjbar stated, "The restoration and organization of the shrine of Pirmorad, one of the historical and religious sites of the city, has restarted after numerous follow-ups."

The building's architecture indicates that it was constructed during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras. Historically used for religious purposes, it continues to serve that function. The shrine has been listed in Iran's National Heritage List, is located on Pirmorad Boulevard, chtn.ir wrote. Notably, Pirmorad serves as one of the Zoroastrian pilgrimage sites, where community members gather for worship and meetings. In recent years, the Cultural Heritage,

Tourism, and Handicrafts Department of Bafq, in collaboration with the Endowments and Charity Affairs Department, has undertaken restoration efforts for this significant structure. However, due to budget constraints and other challenges, these efforts were not completed. Moving forward, the restoration of this shrine will proceed with assistance and support from the Bafq governor's office. The current phase aims to enhance the tomb structure and its surrounding area. Ranjbar emphasized that the shrine of Pirmorad is built with adobe and mud featuring strong and sturdy columns, hallmark traits of the local architectural style. It has been recognized as a site of cultural importance, having been registered on Iran's National Heritage List. Bafq has a semi-arid climate characterized by hot summers and mild winters. The region experiences limited rainfall, making it an ideal place for those who enjoy warm, dry weather. The summer temperatures can reach up to 40°C, while winter temperatures typically hover around 5°C to 15°C. These climatic conditions contribute to the distinct landscape, dotted with desert features and historical

treasures that reflect the region's rich cultural heritage. In addition to the shrine of Pirmorad, Bafq offers several attractions that highlight its historical and cultural significance. Visitors can explore traditional mud-brick architecture and the narrow winding streets of the old town, which provide a glimpse into the past. The nearby Bafq Mountains offer opportunities for outdoor activities and hiking,

enhancing the natural beauty of the area. Moreover, the region is known for its unique handicrafts, including intricate textiles and pottery, which serve as a testament to the local artisans' skills and creativity. Overall, Bafq not only serves as a site of religious importance but also stands out as a destination rich in history, culture, and natural beauty, making it an intriguing place for both pilgrims and tourists alike.



● yjc