

BLAH

Folk
Art

Al Nayrouz

Translation by: Rajaa Al-Lawatia

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Al Nayrouz is considered one of the folk-arts practiced in Muscat Governorate, especially in Wilayat Quriyat; where this art is practiced once a year. It depends on the astronomical rotation (Lunar Calculation) and the beginning of the spring season when the coastal people leave their houses and spent their time in farms to harvest their crops and return to their homes to celebrate this occasion.

In the past, Nayrouz was held in the morning because lack of electricity, but now it is held in the evening. Farmers walk from their farms to the coast and beating their drums. This attracts the neighborhood's children, men, and women to join, and they all walk towards the big yard.

This art is unique in using nine drums, in which a group of seven men approximately participate in dancing with sticks in a waving motion from right to left, and sometimes down called "Al- Hawamah". A group of women also participate in this celebration as they hold "Al Sharisha" (Neem) branches to wave right and left during their walk to the beach. Later, the "Dambosha" enters, which is resembling of wild animals that look like a bull. Two men wear certain clothing with masks that hide their features. Then the "Dambosha" enters, mostly up to seven men start dancing in the middle of the yard creating fun and joy in the hearts of those present people.

They continue dancing in an organized manner until they reach the sea. Men go down into the water, while women throw the Neem branches in the sea. Together they chant a poetic sign indicating the end of the Nayrouz and the beginning of the fishing season, the chant is (Sih...Sih..Sih..Niruzna) and mentioning various types of fishes that are popular within the region.



**The Yellowing
craft (polishing)**

**Traditional
Craft**

AL SA

Text and pictures by: Zamzam Al Hashemi

Today, we will get to know a new craft that some governorates of sultanate became famous for. Omani people have been practicing it perfectly to this day. Where the craftsman(Safaar) polishes utensils such as large cooking pots, trays, spoons and many of the tools and items that copper is used as an essential element in their manufacture.

With time, the green rust layer forms on the pots, which need polishing and cleaning, and this is called (Tasfir- yellowing), and the (safaar) is the person who does these processes of the yellowing of these pots through using some tools: hammer, anvil, tweezers, mortar *, hammer, ammonia, and lead plates.

The yellowing process takes place in a special room called (Kor or Keer) and then the Safaar ignites the charcoal, blows the fire with a manual blower and puts the bowl to be polished on the fire with adding ammonia and lead, then he rubs the bowl using cotton until it turns yellow.

Mortar: a deep copper concave instrument used to crush garlic and spices using the hammer.



After Omran has finished helping Marzouq, he returned to the family's farm to complete the rest of the work in harvesting lemon with his father. After that, they put all the pots filled with the lemon crop in the car to sell it in the local "Souq" (market) in their village. During their return from the local Souq, it was time for the noon prayer and Omran's mom was praying for her son as she used to, before each prayer saying: (May Allah grants you success my son with no blocks on your way and your life). While Omran and his father were heading for the noon prayer, they saw fire breaking out at uncle Suleiman's farm. They rushed to put out the fire, but the fire was blazing more and more, then Marzooq came and accused Omran of being the cause of the fire. Omran was taken to prison, but whenever they put cuffs in the hands, they could not close the cuffs. They all tried and replaced the hand cuffs, but no change and they couldn't close the cuffs at all. The prison guards were surprised of that and informed the judge of the matter. The judge was a wise man and said to them: Bring this prisoner, so they brought Omran with his handcuff open, and he said to the judge: I am innocent from the charge, Honorable judge. I did not burn anything. The judge said: There is no evidence to prove your innocence, Omran. The judge was puzzled from the situation, then he asked Omran: Is your mother alive? Omran replied: Yes, May Allah prolongs her life. The judge gave the order for the guards to bring Omran's mother, so she came and the judge asked her about what she was praying for her son, so his mother replied: I prayed that May Allah grants Omran success with no blocks on his way and life, and ways are eased in every step he makes. Honorable judge, my son Omran is a dutiful son for me and his father, please I ask you to release him. After seeing Omran's mother sincerity and the effect of her kind prayers on her son, the judge ordered that Omran to be released from prison.

Source: Acting from oral memory.





The Dutiful Son

Illustrations by: Rawya Al Khalili

Translation by: Rajaa Al Lawati

Once upon a time, there was a boy called Omran who lived with his parents and sister in a small house near their farm which was known for its plenty of palm and lemon trees.

Omran was an active boy who got up with his father every day from early morning to perform the Fajr (morning) prayer in their village mosque, but before he left the house he always goes to greet his mother as usual and tell her:

Please pray for me, mom.

And his mother replies to him:

May Allah grants you success my son Omran with no blocks on your way and your life, and ways are eased in every step you make.

Omran was standing near his mother, listening to her prayers, and feeling pleased with her lasting prayers and kissed her head and hands. While he was with his mother, he heard his father calling him loudly:

Why are you late, son?

Omran replied:

I am coming, Dad.

Omran and his father went to the mosque for prayers, and after they have finished, the father asked Omran to go to their farm in order to check their crops and pick up the lemon from trees in "Al-Sa`fiyat" pots (made from palm fronds) known as (Qafra). Abu Omran bought these pots from their neighbor the old man uncle Suleiman who used to make different types of Al-Sa`fiyat and sells them for living to meet his family needs. Uncle Suleiman had a son called "Marzouq" who ran his father's farm.

One day while Omran was helping his father at the farm, Marzouq came to ask Omran for help, saying:

Can you help me in collecting some dead trees to burn them?

Omran said:

Of course, I am at your service.

Omran took permission from his dad and went to help Marzouq. At the farm, they pulled the dead trees to an empty place on the farm. Marzouq removed the dead trees, and he wanted to replace them with palm trees, but the weather was hot on that day and the winds were blowing strongly.

