

Sample Excerpt for Interfaith Weddings

SOFREH

In recognition of the groom's Persian heritage and in keeping with ancient custom, the bride and groom will now participate in the SOFREH, a ritual feeding of one another.

The Persian Aghd, which is the legal ceremony of the Iranian wedding, is a beautiful and joyful event celebrated with lots of music, laughter, food and love. For Moslem weddings, the Aghd is a legal contract between the man and the woman and extends many rights to the woman that are not common in other legal marriage contracts. Because of the diverse background of the people of Iran, not all Persian weddings are Moslem, and therefore depend on the chosen faith of the couple. Regardless of the faith, the Sofreh Aghd is usually present during a Persian wedding ceremony. During this ceremony, a spread or sofreh is prepared for the bride and groom. Like other ancient Persian traditions such as the Haft Sin sofreh during Noruz, this event has roots in the Zoroastrian faith and does not relate to the Moslem religion. The Zoroastrian faith is based on the four elements of nature: earth, fire, water, and wind, and still has a strong influence on Persian celebrations. Traditionally the sofreh preparation is taken very seriously because what it contains is believed and hoped to be in the couple's life and marriage. The word sofreh means "spread" like a table or food spread and appears in many Persian celebrations. The spread is typically set on the floor facing the east so that the couple facing the sofreh will face the light.

I will now ask the bride and groom to each feed one another each of these ritual foods as a symbol of the joining together of their lives, their pasts and their families.