

The Story of HIROMBA

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The contemporary history of “Hiromba” festival is very important as it will help us understand how the so-called traditional dates of other festivals may have been determined in the recent past. Why Science was replaced with Rhyme and Rhythm? Why instead of the Autumnal Equinox we celebrate *Mehr Mah* and *Mehr Rooz* and instead of the Summer Solstice we celebrate *Tir Mah* and *Tir Rooz*? Why instead of Farvardingan we celebrate Muktaḍ or Panji.

The ancient Iranians had an in-depth knowledge of the Universe and commemorated every milestone in nature with festivity. Their ancient science was lost twice, once when Alexander stole most of it, that was recorded on hide, clay and stone, and for the next 400 years, they manipulated and Romanized the ancient culture that had laid the foundation of a progressive civilization. But the loss was greater after the Arab invasion, for they killed the learned, burnt their books, forbade the use of the Persian language, and replaced the perfect solar calendarⁱ with a lunar calendar. For the next 1300 years, seldom was Iran ruled by an Iranian dynasty, but whenever they did, most of them tried to revive the ancient festivals. Of course, the imposed lunar calendar was not of much help in their proper celebration.

‘Hiromba’ is the name given to the Festival of Sadeh by the followers of the Kadmi (Qhadimi) calendar. Today this festival is celebrated only in the village of ‘Sharifabad’ in Yazd, in the month of Farvardin (April) with the participation of Zarathushtis from all over.

Sadeh comes from the Persian word ‘Saad’ which, means a hundred. Sadeh as a festival was celebrated by the Iranians when they lived in the Arctic region (Aryana Veja), where they had seven months of summer and five months of winter. This weather pattern still exists in the Arctic region. They welcomed the Arctic winter with the celebration of a Gahanbar named ‘*Ayeh Threm (Saarem)*’ (coming of winter), and Sadeh marked the 100th day from the start of this winter. Winter in the Arctic starts on 23 October (1Aban) and so the hundredth day falls on January 30 (10 Bahman).ⁱⁱ

While on the run for their lives as infidels, with no central organization and no proper coordination, the last 7,711 Zarathushtis of Iran were left with a bungled-up 360-day calendar, to which, upon realization, they added the missed 5 days and called it the ‘Kadmi’ (ancient) calendar. It is important to note here that the Gathas were discovered by Professor Martin Haug in 1858 from among the Avesta. So, the naming of the five days after the Gathas could not be before that.

This Kadmi calendar having lost 5 days every year, no longer coincided with the seasons, thus they could not see the relation of the festivals to the seasons. But they knew that ‘Saad’ meant 100, so they wrongly imagined that it stood for 100 days to Nou Roozⁱⁱⁱ. Thus, they celebrated Hiromba on Ashtad

Roos, the 26th day of Azar^{iv} which added up to 100 before the Kadmi Nou Roos^v. The Kadmi Nou Roos was in Fall and every four years it would move by a day towards summer.

After the ancient Mazdayasni Calendar was adopted as the Jalali Calendar, during the reign of Reza Shah, as the national calendar, and approved in the 1940's by the Parliament of Iran, the Iranian Zarathushtis gradually replaced their Kadmi calendar with the national calendar but superimposed it with the 30 names of the days and balanced it at the end of the year by the five Gatha days. They call this calendar Fasli / Seasonal calendar, but ironically, the seasons do not start as it is supposed to, on the first day of every 4th month like in the government's calendar^{vi}. In other words, only spring starts on Ourmazd Roos, the rest start latter. Summer starts on Shahrivar Roos, Autumn and Winter start on Amordad Roos.

By the year 2000 CE, only a few elders still followed the Kadmi calendar and the printed Kadmi calendar was no longer easily available^{vii}. Keeping track of the Kadmi days and festivals without the printed calendar became a mathematical feat, then there came a chance for conciliation. Since the Kadmi calendar is a 365-day calendar with no leap year, every four years they lose a day and so it came to a point that the Fasli and Kadmi names of days (not the month) coincided with each other for 4 years in about the year 2006. Mobed Niknam who represented the Zarathushtis as a Member of Iranian Parliament proposed to the Anjuman of Sharifabad^{viii} that since the Ashtad Roos had coincided in both the Kadmi and Fasli calendars henceforth they should follow the day 'Ashtad' according to the Fasli calendar and forget the Kadmi calendar.

It was thus agreed to celebrate Hiromba on Ashtad Roos of the Fasli Calendar, which was on the 26th of Farvardin (April 15). Since the Fasli calendar in Iran has a leap year and the Kadmi does not have one, every four years the Kadmi calendar loses a day and thus Hiromba no longer adds up to the hundred days before the Kadmi Nou Roos. Although, the 100 days to Now Roos theory, was in the first place a wrong assumption. Now there is opposition from Mobedyar Belivani of Sharifabad, calling the change a wrong move^{ix}.

CONCLUSION

Hiromba the Kadmi Sadeh festival although based on a wrong premise, the number of days added to 100 and so they at least had a convincing argument. By switching the festival to Ashtad Roos of the Fasli calendar, it lost that invalid validity. Every four years this number of days will keep on decreasing as the Kadmi Now Roos moves closer to summer. Now the future generations will have to find an explanation for its celebration since the days no longer adds up to 100 'Saad'.

Just like the Shahenshahi calendar followed by the Parsis, the Kadmi calendar followed by the Iranian Zarathushtis was not synchronized with the seasons, none of the festivals had a legitimate reason for celebration, to give the festival a convincing reason for celebration the theory of coinciding the name of the month with that of the day was invented. However, that by itself did not seem reason enough, so Tirgan and Mehregan were also said to commemorate events in mythology. Later when opting for the compromised Fasli calendar with 30-day months which also does not fully synchronize with the seasons, the same problem continued and they continued with the made-up reason for celebration. In the

process, the science of their ancestors is sacrificed, and the ancestors were robbed of their right to be Amordad; being remembered for their science. **Instead, Galileo took the credit and is Amordad for it.**

Since the festivals of Now Ruz and Yalda, was culturally celebrated continuously by the ex-Zarathushti Iranian population, today it is celebrated at its proper scientific time on the Vernal Equinox and the Winter Solstice. **The science of all other festivals is sacrificed at the altar of Superstition.**

May Wisdom (Mazda) Prevail

ⁱ Bundahishn 25:25. Note this: the 'vehizaki' month Frawardin, the month Ardwasht, and the month Hordad compose the season of spring. The month Tir, the month Amurdad, and the month Shahrewar are of summer. The month Mihr, the month Aban, and the month Adar are of autumn; and the month Day, [211] the month Vohuman, and the month Spandarmad are of winter.

26. And the sun returns to that point that degree of Aries from which it had started in the beginning, in three hundred and sixty-five days, and five hours, and a fraction, which are one year. As every three months, it comes to three constellations, more or less.

ⁱⁱ (Aban 30+Azar 30+ Dey 30+ Bahman10 = 100. This is as per the Mazdayasni calendar adopted by the Government of Iran) (Oct 9+ Nov 30+ Dec 31+ Jan 30=100).

ⁱⁱⁱ This belief has also been transferred to the Fasli calendar and we see that scholars and the lay people both try to legitimize the count of hundred days to Nou Ruz in the Fasli Calendar, by saying that from 10 Bahman (30 January) to Nou Ruz we have 50 days and 50 nights and that makes up the 100. This is wrong. As mentioned, it is the 100th day of the Arctic winter.

^{iv} بعد از نایب رییس انجمن زرتشتیان شریف آباد، شایهرام بلیوانی نیز در مورد هیرمیا توضیحاتی را ارایه داد و گفت بر اساس تقویم قدیم هیرمیا در روز اشتاد ایزد و آذر ماه برگزار می شده است و از این روز تا نوروز دقیقاً صد روز فاصله است و بدین واسطه می توان این جشن را سده نامید. <http://www.berasad.com/fa/content/view/1350/44/>

^v (Azar 5days + Dey 30+ Bahman 30+ Espand 30+ 5Gatha days = 100.) (April 22+ May 31+ June 30+ July 17 = 100).

^{vi} The government calendar introduced by Reza Shah is called the Jalali Calendar and attributed to Omar Khayam who had a Zarathushti **teacher Bahmanyar Marzban**, who taught him mathematics, science, and philosophy. For sure he was told about the ancient calendar by this teacher for all ancient festivals line up perfectly with this calendar which is the same as mentioned in the Bundahishn.

^{vii} Except for the combined Fasli / Kadmi calendar printed only in Bombay by the "Sazeman e Javanan e Zartoshty".

^{viii} The village of Sharifabad and Mazreh Kalantar were the bastion of the Kadmi calendar and though they no longer follow the calendar but have preserved the festivals as per the Kadmi calendar. The people of Mazreh Kalanter gather in the village every year, even from overseas, to celebrate Panji (Muktad) as per the Kadmi calendar. Although they celebrate Now Ruz on the Vernal Equinox with the rest of the nation.

^{ix} وی همچنین در توضیحات کاملی از سنتهای هیرمیا گفت و به چند سال پیش اشاره نمود که اشتاد ایزد و آذرماه همزمان با اشتاد ایزد و فروردین ماه جدید شده و این روز را ثابت کرده اند. از نگاه موبدیار بلیوانی این اتفاق جالبی نبوده است و برای تغییر آن پیشنهاداتی را ارائه داد. <http://www.berasad.com/fa/content/view/1350/44/>