
GAHANBAR

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Gahanbars are seasonal festivals initiated when the Aryans lived in Airyanem Vaejah in the Arctic, long before the advent of Zarathushtra. The Arctic has two seasons: seven months of summer and five months of Winter. They had two Gahanbars to celebrate these two seasons. The names of the Gahanbars indicate the exact day of celebration. Unlike the Mazdayasni festivals, which celebrate the start of each season, Gahanbars celebrate the best time in each season.

ARCTIC Gahanbars:

The first Gahanbar of the Arctic year was **Maidhyo-Shahem**, which means **Mid-Summer**. Summer in the Arctic is for seven months (Farvardin to Mehr) or 216 days, so Mid-Summer falls on the 108th day, which is 15 of Tir, corresponding to 5 July.

The second Gahanbar of the Arctic year was **Ayeh-Threm (Saarem)** which means "Coming of Winter". Arctic Winter is of 5 months (Aban to Espand). Coming of Winter was celebrated just before the Arctic winter started on 30 Mehr, 21 Oct.

TEMPERATE Gahanbars:

When the Aryans came down to the temperate region where there were four seasons, they added four more Gahanbars. They continued the trend of naming the Gahanbars with mathematical names. While calculating the exact day, it is important to note that the four temperate seasons are of unequal length. Spring is 92.8 days, Summer is 93.6 days, Autumn is 89.9 days, and Winter is the shortest with 88.9 days.

The names of the four Gahanbars indicate the exact day of celebration.

Maidhyo-Zarem (Mid-Spring): Spring has 92.8 days, so Mid-Spring falls on the 46th day (15 Ardibesht /4 May)

Paiti-Shahem (End of Summer): Summer ends on the 186th day (31 Shahrivar/21 Sept).

Maidh-Yarem (Mid-Winter): Winter has 88.9 days. So Mid-Winter is on the 44th day. In other words, 44 days before the end of the year (16 Bahman/5 Feb.).

Hamas-Path-Maedem (Everything is Equal/Middle) day and night, heat and cold, the day before the Vernal Equinox. The last day of the year. (28/ 29 Espand / March 19/20).

The Gahanbars do not divide the year but rather celebrate each season at the best time, like the middle of Spring when plants have blossomed, and fruits have formed. It is the time to thank nature for cooperating. Next is the end of Summer; having harvested the fruits of labour, it is time for sharing and thanksgiving. Then comes the middle of Winter, when the severity of Winter is gone, and farmers tend to prepare for Spring. Finally, it is the day before the onset of Spring and the manifestation of equality in nature. Similarly, in the arctic, the middle of Summer is the best time to enjoy yourself. As for the Arctic Winter, just before it sets in.

Gahanbar were a joyous communal feast where people came together, each contributing and sharing the fruits of their labour and expressing their thanks for the collaboration of nature and neighbours. Due to the bungled-

up 360-day calendar in the Islamic era, the one-day event became a five-day event. Later in the Islamic period, the celebrations went underground and became solemn events in memory of those massacred during the genocide and have converted to indoor prayer ceremonies ever since.

In Yazd and Kerman, Gahanbars have become prayer rituals for the departed. The attendees get served a mix of seven dry fruits called "Lork". In addition, some families may serve "Aash", a type of soup, and "Naan" bread. Others may serve a full-course lunch. Several families may have Gahanbar ceremonies on the same day, and the priest and attendees move from one house to another. Because it is in memory of the departed individual, it is rarely on a communal scale.

In Yazd and Kerman, performing the Gahanbar in the deceased's home is a practice. Most of the time, the unoccupied houses are in a depleted state; the children have either built new houses for themselves or immigrated, but it is considered virtuous for the kitchen of those houses to become active a few times a year.

The Zarathustis in India had freedom; they were rarely aware of the genocide committed in Iran, so their Gahanbars have remained a communal affair. Usually, a wealthy family will pay for a luncheon in which everyone is free to partake.

In general, Gahanbars have become prayer rituals in memory of the departed. In North America, Australia and London, the local associations organise Gahanbars on varying scales. The minimum would be prayers and serving fresh fruits and Lork (seven types of dry fruits). Sometimes a family will pay for a luncheon, or a group of people will contribute towards it. Other times it is a potluck dinner or lunch.

MISCONCEPTIONS

1. The division of the year into six seasons is a misconception by priests and scholars who present the Zoroastrian religion as antiquated and ritualistic. A little effort to translate the names correctly reveals the truth.
Maidh - Maidhyo - Maedem are forms of the word meaning Middle; Paiti is End; Ayeh is to come/coming.
Zarem is Spring; Shahem is Summer; Threm and Yarem are Winter;
Remember that the four seasons are not equal, and now analyse the names of the Gahanbars; they pinpoint the day of celebration. Also, Summer and Winter get celebrated twice, but if you study closely, the mid-summer falls at the beginning of the temperate summer, confirming it is the middle of the seven-month Arctic summer. Similarly, the Coming of Winter gets celebrated at the end of the first month of the Temperate Autumn. The Arctic Winter starts 30 days after the Autumnal Equinox. That clearly shows the relation of the Gahanbars to different regions and periods in history.
2. The names of the Gahanbars point to the exact day of the celebration. The Yasnas and the Yashts remind us that the year is a Solar year. "*I learn about and work with the solar year, the righteous period.*"¹ "*The coming of the season at the proper time of the solar year.*"² During the Islamic era, the calendar got bungled due to the imposition of the Islamic lunar calendar. There was a 360-day compromised calendar for a long time; to compensate for the loss of five days, the Gahanbars became a five-day event. The five-day shortage accumulated and dislodged the once-accurate system as time passed. The original MazdaYasni calendar was a blueprint of nature and needed no correction for 110,000 years. As such, intercalation was not a practice. To claim that the ancestors forgot to intercalate the calendar is a wrong assumption.

3. Relating the creation theory to Gahanbars, in the order given in Genesis - water - earth - plants – (beneficial) animals and humans is another of those efforts to show resemblance to the Abrahamic beliefs and avoid the wrath of the Islamic rulers. Otherwise, Zarathushtra openly denies the creation theory, although translators have chosen to mistranslate KAS-NA, fearing blasphemy. Zarathushtra is very clear in his Gathas Ha 44.3, where he says, "That what is in existence - *Kas Na Zantha*- No One gave birth to it. *Pata Ashahya Pouruyo Kas Na* - Father of Ashaya, from the beginning, was none. In other words, no one created Asha.

4. Amasha Spantas are not deities and have no relation to Gahanbars. Since the numbers do not match, the theory proponents have added Nou Ruz to the list of Gahanbars to make it seven. Amasha Spantas are righteous steps of progress towards wholeness, perfection and the self-realisation of God within - a Creation of individual Wisdom.

Maidhyo-Zarem - Mid-Spring	15 Ardibesht	4 May	
<i>Maidhyo-Shahem</i> , - Mid-Summer	15 TIR	5 July	*Arctic Gahanbar
Paiti-Shahem - End of Summer	31 Shahrivar	21 Sept	
Ayeh-Threm (Saarem) - Coming of Winter	30 Mehr	21 Oct	*Arctic Gahanbar
Maidh-Yarem - Mid-Winter	16 Bahman	5 Feb	
Hamas-Path-Maedem - Everything is Equal/Middle	28/29 Espand	19/20 March	

May Wisdom Prevail.



¹ Yasna Ha 1.9, Ha 3.11, Ha 4.14

² Haptan Yasht' Ha-3