

# HIROMBA

## HOW FESTIVAL DATES WERE SET

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***The contemporary history of the "Hiromba" festival is critical in understanding how they may have set the traditional dates of other festivals in the past.*** Instead of the Autumnal Equinox, why do we celebrate Mehr Mah and Mehr Ruz and instead of the Summer Solstice, we celebrate Tir Mah and Tir Ruz? Why, instead of Farvardingan we celebrate Muktdad or Panji? Why was science replaced with rhyme and rhythm?

The ancient Iranians had an in-depth knowledge of the Universe and commemorated the truth in nature with festivity. Their ancient science was lost twice, first when Alexander stole most of it. 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 more significant after the Arab invasion, for they killed the learned, burned their books, forbade the use of the Persian language, and replaced the perfect solar calendar<sup>i</sup> with a lunar calendar. For the last 1400 years, an Iranian dynasty seldom ruled Iran, but most tried to revive the ancient festivals whenever they ruled. Of course, the imposed lunar calendar did not help celebrate them on their proper day.

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

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

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 five days and called it the 'Kadmi' (ancient) calendar.

This Kadmi calendar, having lost five 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 Rooz<sup>iii</sup>. They celebrated Hiromba on Ashtad Rooz, the 26th day of Azar<sup>iv</sup>, which added up to 100 days before the Kadmi Nou Rooz<sup>v</sup>. The Kadmi Nou Rooz was in Fall; every four years, it would move by a day towards summer because it doesn't have a leap year.

During the reign of Reza Shah, the ancient Mazdayasni Calendar, also known as the Jalali Calendar, was adopted as the national calendar with Zarathusti names of the month. It was approved in 1925 by the

Parliament of Iran. The Iranian Zarathustis reluctantly and gradually replaced their Kadmi calendar with the national calendar in the 1960s. They superimposed it with the 30 names of the days and balanced it at the end of the year with the five Gatha days. They call this calendar Fasli / Seasonal calendar, but ironically, the seasons do not start as they should, on the first day of every 4<sup>th</sup> month like in the national calendar<sup>vi</sup>. In other words, only spring starts on Ourmazd Ruz. Summer begins on Shahrivar Ruz, and Autumn and Winter start on Amordad Ruz.

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

They agreed to hereafter celebrate Hiromba on Ashtad Rooz of the Fasli Calendar on the 26<sup>th</sup> of Farvardin (April 15). But since the Fasli calendar in Iran has a leap year and the Kadmi does not have one, the Kadmi calendar loses a day every four years, and thus Hiromba no longer adds up to the hundred days before the Kadmi Nou Rooz. Now there is opposition from Mobedyar Belivani of Sharifabad, calling the change a wrong move<sup>ix</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Hiromba, the Kadmi Sadeh festival, was based on a wrong premise; but the number of days added to 100, so they at least had a convincing argument. Switching the festival to Ashtad Rooz of the Fasli calendar lost that invalid validity. Now Hiromba does not have a legitimate explanation for its celebration. Scholars have to conceive an answer since the days no longer add up to 100 'Saad'. This number of days will decrease every four years as the Kadmi Nou Rooz moves closer to summer.

Just like the Shahenshahi calendar, the Kadmi calendar did not synchronize with the seasons. So the theory of coinciding the month's name with the day was born. However, that did not seem to be reason enough because they did not follow it in the case of Now Ruz and Yalda. So Tirgan and Mehregan were said also to commemorate events in mythology. Later, when opting for the compromised Fasli calendar because of the 30-day months, it also did not fully synchronize with the seasons, the same problem continued, and they continued with the made-up explanation for celebration. In the process, they sacrificed science and robbed the ancestors of their right to be Amordad (Immortal). **Instead, Galileo took the credit and is immortal for realizing that the Earth is not the centre of the Universe.**

The Iranians, who, under duress, converted to Islam, preserved the festivals of Now Ruz and Yalda and celebrated them continuously at their proper time on the Vernal Equinox and the Winter Solstice. The Zarathustis inevitably copied them, **but they sacrificed the science of all other festivals at the altar of superstition.**

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<sup>i</sup> Bundahishn 25:25. Note this: the 'vehizaki' month Frawardin, the month Ardwahisht, 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.

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

<sup>iii</sup> 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 Rooz in the Fasli Calendar, by saying that from 10 Bahman (30 January) to Nou Rooz we have 50 days and 50 nights and that makes up the 100. Not realising that every four years it is 51 days to Now Rooz because of a leap year.

<sup>iv</sup> بعد از نایب رییس انجمن زرتشتیان شریف آباد، شاپهرام 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/>

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

<sup>vi</sup> 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.

<sup>vii</sup> Except for the combined Fasli / Kadmi calendar printed only in Bombay by the "Sazeman e Javanan e Zartoshty".

<sup>viii</sup> 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 Rooz on the Vernal Equinox with the rest of the nation.

<sup>ix</sup> 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/>