

# **Dini-Saal Jamshedi Navroze Mubarak Roz Hormuzd, Mah Fravardin A.Y. 1332**

*The Sun returned to the first degree of Aries in the month of Fravardin. Shah Jamshed performed Jashan ceremony on that day and called it Navroze. Whosoever performs Jashan on this day and joyfully takes part in the celebration thereof, will pass his life in happiness till the next day of Navroze. Wise men have confirmed this experience.*

- *Omar Khayyam (1025 AD – 1123 AD)  
in his “Navroze Nameh”.*

**Sun in Aries :  
21<sup>st</sup> March, A.D. 1963**

## FOREWORD

As the faithful followers of the only Prophet in all history who magnanimously granted us complete freedom of thought in religious matters (*Narem narem khvakhyai tanuye*), it behoves, one and all, to carefully consider all the pros and cons of the burning questions of the day. One such question relates to our correct year.

The Iranians of yore believed that the religious ceremonies must be performed according to the fixed *Dini Saal* and, therefore, they took great pains to see that the Holy Gathas and the Mukhtad ceremonies for the departed fell near the Vernal Equinox, at the beginning of Spring. And to keep the year thus fixed with reference to seasons, they corrected the year by the scheme of *Kabiseh* (Intercalation). If it were not so, what was the sense or merit in their simultaneously following two different calendars? Dastur Zatsparm of Iran actually records that in his time, the date of passing away of Lord Zarathushtra fell on Roz Khurshid, Mah Dae (Civil) and Mah Ardibehesht (Vahizaki or Dini).

This booklet is an humble attempt to place before you succinctly the thinking of the Pehlavi writers on this vital question.

I take this opportunity of offering my heartfelt thanks to Major S.R. Bamji for his unstinted support and encouragement to me.

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9<sup>th</sup> March, 1963

**“Ez Ahunavar Minuy Sal Fraz But”**

**The Spiritual Year Arose From The Ahunavar (At The Time Of Creation)  
– Zand – Akasih [1]**

## **TRUE ZOROASTRIAN YEAR – AN INVITATION TO THINK**

**By : Behram D. Pithavala**

Since some decades past a controversy has been raging in our community on the question of our proper New Year Day. It is not a matter of mere annual celebrations and festivities. The present wrong calendars have upset all our important religious feasts and it is our bounden duty to set things right once for all in the light of the extant books on our religious customs and usages.

We humbly give below some cogent reasons to prove that, as in ancient times, our year should be made to start from the day of the solar ingress into Aries, which happens on 21<sup>st</sup> March every year. We do not want to impose upon you. We only want you to consider this matter in a spirit of dispassionate inquiry, leaving aside all prejudices and pre-conceptions, and come to your own conclusion.

The quotation give at the top of this discussion is pregnant with meaning. It shows that in Iran a Religious Year (*Minoi Saal*), as distinct from a Civil Year, was in vogue; and further, that it had its inception at the very Dawn of Creation itself. Its importance can be gauged from the fact that a whole chapter (Chapter XXV) is devoted to this subject under the heading : Religious Year (*Saal-I-Dini*) in *Zand - Akasih*. The expression *Dini Saal* is not coined by us.

In fixing any calendar, the following three factors have to be considered :

- (a) Length of the year,
- (b) Starting of the year, and
- (c) Ending of the year.

Fortunately, *Zand – Akasih* (also known as *Irani Bundahishn* or *Greater Bundahishn*) records in un-mistakable terms the fact that Religious Year discussed in Chapter XXV thereof was a solar tropical year of three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours and a fraction (*Se sad u sast u panj ruz, u panj daman u khurda*) which is the period taken by the Sun to return to the first degree of Aries from which it had started in the beginning [2], i.e. at the time of Creation as stated hereafter.

We shall now consider when the *Dini Saal* should end. *Fravardin Yasht* declares that “the good, strong, beneficent Fravashis of the faithful come and go through the borough at the time of the *Hamaspathamaedha*, they go along there for ten nights, etc” [3]. Dinkard is more precise on this point. It says that “ The coming of pious fravahars into this world is in those ten days which occur at the end of end of Winter at the end of the year, as in them are those five Gatha Days” [4]. As to the duration of Winter, we are further informed by the learned author of Dinkard that “the fourth and last (season) *Jamestan* (Winter) starts when the Sun transits the first degree of Capricorn” (24<sup>th</sup> December) and ends when the Sun leaves the sign of Pisces (20<sup>th</sup> March) [5].

Further, the very name of this last *Gahambar Hamaspathamaedem (Samas-Patha-Madhyam)* indicates that it must fall at a time when the Sun arrives at “the meeting of the two paths”,

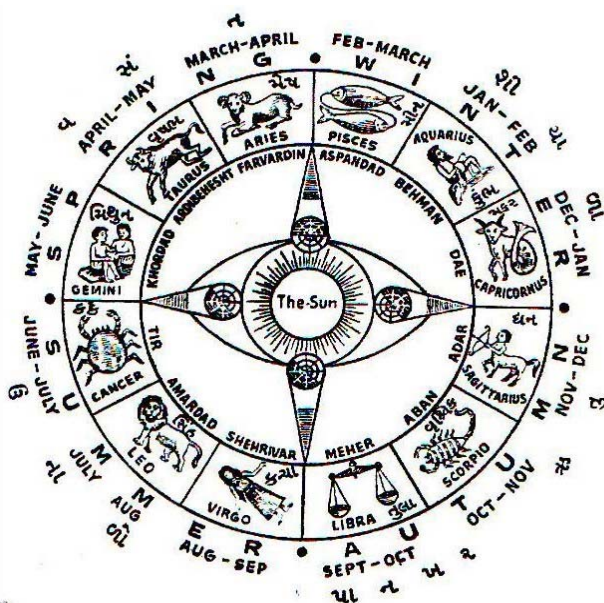
viz. the Ecliptic Equator and the Celestial Equator. In short, *Gahambar Hamapathamaedem* must fall at the end of Winter and just before the Spring Equinox which occurs on 21<sup>st</sup> March. This conclusively proves that “the last *Gahambar Hamapathamaedem* must be observed in March. But the matter is clinched by the statement in *Zand – Akasih* that during the season of *Hamaspathamaedya*, i.e. in the pentad at the end of *Mah Spendarmad*, day and night again become equal .....”[6]. This happens throughout the world on or about 18<sup>th</sup> March every year, as can be seen by a reference to Raphael’s Ephemerides for any year. For the facility of reference, please see the following table culled from the above publication :

| North Latitude    | Sunrise          | Sunset           | Length of day           |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 60 degrees        | 6 : 11 AM        | 6 : 07 PM        | 11 hrs – 56 mins        |
| 55 degrees        | 6 : 11 AM        | 6 : 08 PM        | 11 hrs – 57 mins        |
| 50 degrees        | 6 : 10 AM        | 6 : 08 PM        | 11 hrs – 58 mins        |
| <b>40 degrees</b> | <b>6 : 09 AM</b> | <b>6 : 09 PM</b> | <b>12 hrs – 00 mins</b> |
| 30 degrees        | 6 : 08 AM        | 6 : 10 PM        | 12 hrs – 02 mins        |
| 20 degrees        | 6 : 07 AM        | 6 : 10 PM        | 12 hrs – 03 mins        |
| 10 degrees        | 6 : 06 AM        | 6 : 11 PM        | 12 hrs – 05 mins        |
| 0 degrees         | 6 : 05 AM        | 6 : 12 PM        | 12 hrs – 07 mins        |

It will be interesting to note that at Latitude 40 degrees North, which passes through modern Iran, the day and night are each 12 hours long, and hence equal, at the time of the Gathas only as per the scheme of the Religious Year.

Now that we know definitely the fixed, unchanging length of the *Dini Saal*, viz. 365 days and about 6 hours), and the point of time when the last *Gahambar Hamapathamaedem* in such a year should come off, viz. near the Spring Equinox when the day and night are of equal length about 18<sup>th</sup> March, there is no doubt as to when it should have its beginning. On the contrary, there are some other factors which clearly confirm this finding and we shall now consider the same briefly.

According to the Pehlavi writers, the most important characteristic of the Religious Year is that the months thereof are fixed with reference to the solar passage through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Thus, the year commences on the day of solar entry into the first sign Aries and the fourth month Teer coincides with the solar transit through the fourth Zodiac sign Cancer [7].



A glance at the adjoining figure will show the months of the Religious Year in relation to the signs of the Zodiac and the four seasons of the year, as visualized by the authors of Bundahishn and Dinkard.

Thus, according to Bundahishn, Winter commenced in Iran on Roz Adar, Mah Dae (24<sup>th</sup> December) [8] and on that day people “kindled the fire everywhere and made a sign that Winter had come” [9].

Again, the longest day of the year was Roz Khurshid, Mah Teer (29<sup>th</sup> June) and the shortest day was Roz Behram, Mah Dae (4<sup>th</sup> January).

Not only that, but it is stated that the longest day, which should coincide with the beginning of *Gahambar Maidyoshem*, measured 16 hours in length, while the shortest day which fell during *Gahambar Maidyarem*, measured 8 hours in length. [10]. All this can happen only if we start the year on the day of the Spring Equinox (21<sup>st</sup> March); but not otherwise. By the way, the last mentioned phenomenon could occur only in countries lying at or about Latitude 58 degrees North, i.e. North Asia or Europe where our forefathers must have lived in bygone days.

Again, in *Datestan-i-Dinik*, a question is asked as to what the “Spiritual food” of the departed souls is like in terms of earth-life, and the answer given is that it is like butter, *particularly the butter extracted in the second month of Ardibehesht when the Sun passes through the second Zodiac sign Taurus*. As this period coincided with Mid-Spring, this butter was called *Metyok-zarem Mashga*, i.e. Mid-Spring butter [11]. This undoubtedly proves that the year started in Iran with the Sun’s entry into the first Zodiac sign Aries. Incidentally, this answer suggests that food of the departed is the extraction of lessons from experiences during earth-life, in short, our conscience (con + science).

Finally, we are informed by *Zand – Akasih* that the world came into being, i.e. the birth of the first human being took place, on the day of the Spring Equinox. It is stated in the scripture: “The Adversary entered the earth in the month of Fravardin, day of Ormazd at noon, when day and night were equal .... Aries was Mid-Heaven, the Sun was disposed in it, etc.” [12]. Thus Jamshedi Navroze is, in fact, the birthday of the human race itself, and hence, apart from any other considerations, it is the most auspicious day of the year. According to *Al-Biruni*, the Persians believed that “the beginning of their year was fixed by the creation of the first man on Roz Hormuzd, Mah Fravardin, while the Sun stood in the point of Vernal Equinox [13].

It is also worth remembering that in the region of the North Pole, where the Indo-Aryans first lived (See: *Vendidad*), the 6-month long day starts on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

Again, the whole scheme of *Rapithvin Geh* can be observed faithfully *only* if the year is made to start on 21<sup>st</sup> March. If the Religious Year is only 365 days, it can never run concurrently with the four seasons of the year, as it should, as already described above. This important principle was scrupulously observed by our forefathers. It was for this very reason that the lunar year was forbidden to be used for purposes of religion since, thereby, “Summer became mingled with Winter, and vice versa” [14].

In passing, it will be interesting to note that Firdausi, the immortal poet of Iran, also followed our *Dini-Saal* in giving dates of events in his *Shahnameh*. Thus he says: “Proceed with your cavalry towards the left like *the Sun in Aries on Navroze day*” [15]. Again, he identifies an event happening on “the famous day of Meher in the month of Meher (Meherangan) when *the Sun is passing through Libra*” [16]. Here, the seventh month of the year is clearly identified with the seventh sign on the Zodiac. And Firdausi admits that he based his work on ancient Pehlavi books in his possession.

It is thus clear that the true Zoroastrian Religious Year was a fixed one, the months thereof keeping pace with the passage of the Sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Since, however, the Sun takes 126 hours more than 360 days to pass through 360 degrees of the Zodiacal Circle, 120 hours or 5 days were added as Gathas at the end of the twelfth month and since part of a day could not be tacked on to the year, every fourth year one additional day was counted after the five days of Gathas. Dinkard refers to this day as *Ruz-I-Vahizak* [17].

## Two Types Of Solar Years :

As a matter of fact, Dinkard talks of two distinct types of solar years, an ordinary Civil Year of 365 days called *Hushmordi*, and a year in which the additional (about) six hours per year are taken into account to keep it fixed with reference to the seasons of the year. It is, however, stated that the day should not be added before the close of a month, nor should this be delayed beyond the five months of Winter [17]. In short, there were three ordinary years of 365 days each and the fourth year was of 366 days. It is directed in the clearest language possible that *the Hushmordi years (of 365 days each) should not be allowed to shift from their place* [18], and this can only be done by adding a day at the end of the fourth year. It is nowhere stated that it is wrong to follow this practice of adding one day every fourth year.

## An Alternative Method :

From the writings of some old Muslim historians, it appears that during the Sassanian Age, two kinds of years were simultaneously used, a Civil Year and a Religious Year; but care was taken to see that the five days of Gathas always fell near the Spring Equinox in both types of years. In both these calendars, the days (Roz) were identical and only the months varied from time to time. Thus Navroze, the first day of the *Dini-Saal*, always coincided with the entry of the Sun into Aries, whereas the first day of the Civil Year shifted from its place by one whole month at a time every 120 years. Thus *Al-Biruni* has stated in his book *Athar-Al-Bakia* that the first *Gahambar Maidyozarem* (Mid-Spring) was once being observed in Iran on Roz Khurshid, Mah Dae (obviously of the Civil Year) [19]. This would be clear if we remember that the first month of the *Dini-Saal*, Fravardin, then coincided with the month of Adar of the Civil Year. In the same way, when our last King Yazdegard III came to the throne of Iran, it was Roz Hormuzd, Mah Fravardin of the Civil Year. The corresponding *Dini-Saal* month was the fourth month of Teer, counting from the Spring Equinox, the Roz was Hormuzd and the date was 19<sup>th</sup> June (New Style). However, looking to the conditions prevailing at present, we believe that the method of correcting the year by adding a day every fourth year **only** is feasible and must be adopted.

## Rosicrucians And Navroze :

The fact that our New Year day fell on the day of the Spring Equinox is also corroborated by the usages of the Rosicrucian community as appears from the following extract from their official organ, *The Rosicrucian Digest*, of March 1962 :

“In the Near East and the Levant generally, the birthplace of the great civilizations, the Vernal Equinox – when the Sun enters the sign Aries on its celestial journey at the coming of Spring – was heralded as a cosmic event. Men saw a symbolical relationship to their own lives in the awakening of nature in the Spring. As plant life apparently dies and passes into the darkness of Winter to be reborn in the Spring, so man’s spirit and soul may be reborn again after mortal death.

“Among the early Christian sects it was believed that the creation of the Universe began in March on the occasion of the Vernal Equinox. (Compare this with what is stated in *Zand – Akasih* [12] already referred to above). It was likewise thought by some sects that Jesus, the Christ, must have been conceived in March, a time of Creation, and that his nativity must have occurred nine months later in December.

“The period of the Vernal Equinox was a time of great festivity and celebration by many of the ancient peoples. It was a time of fertility and growth..... A deeper significance was attached to the period by certain Mystery Schools. Ritual dramas were enacted depicting the death of man and his resurrection or rebirth into a divine life of greater spiritual illumination .... The elements partaken at the feast represented the elements of man’s nature. Every

year on the occasion of the Vernal Equinox, Rosicrucian Lodges, Chapters and Pranoi throughout the world – and thousands of men in their home sanctums – celebrate the *true* beginning of the New Year. The calendar New Year has no relation to natural phenomena.

“Further, in their symbolical feasts on the same occasion, the Rosicrucians perpetuate the *mystical meaning* of life, death and resurrection and the triune elements of man’s nature.”

Further, the Rosicrucians believe that this practice of celebrating the New Year on the Vernal Equinox day was adopted by the Egyptians when they came in contact with the Persians on the conquest of Egypt by Cambysis. The Rosicrucian tradition has it that this celebration is being observed for the last over three thousand years. As a matter of fact, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1962, was declared by their Emperor as the beginning of the traditional Rosicrucian Year 3315.

Comments are superfluous. The principle here is that “seasons must be based on the cardinal days of the year”, viz. the two Equinoxes and the two Solstices. In fact, our *Saal-I-Dini* was based on this principle alone, as were those of many ancient nations of the world.

After severe Winter months, the arrival of Spring (*Bahar*) was a portent of great joy and relief to the Iranians and many poets of Iran have left songs in praise of this invigorating season. In the *Marriage Ashirwad* ceremony, the bridal couple is blessed in the following words : *Khurram bed chun Bahar*, i.e. Be happy like the season of Spring. If there was no season of Spring as such in Iran, as some Taqizada has now ‘discovered’, how the above blessing came to be given to the couple? And were all those poets idle dreamers? Are we justified in brushing aside the unanimous testimony of our Pehlavi writers and look to Taqizada for guidance?

Dastur Ardeshir Kermani, who undertook to write a Persian Dictionary at the request of King Akbar, has quoted Mahomed Bakar Sabzwari as having advised Muslims to observe “the Parsi Calendar which started on the first day of the month of Fravardin with the Sun in Aries”. He is reported to have stated that if a Muslim on this day kept fast and prayed, his sins of 60 years could be washed away.

*Tishtriya* or Sirius was the star whose heliacal rising heralded the coming of the rains. The great Greek historian Plutarch has noted that *Teshtar* was held in high veneration by the Persians in his time (first century of the Christian Era) [20]. According to Dasturji Nairyosang Dhaval, this was the star of rains *Tishtran itee vrishtee-nakshatram* [21]. Unless the year is a fixed one, the rising of Sirius with the Sun cannot coincide with the fourth month of Teer for all time. Sirius was, and still is, in Cancer and can rise with the Sun only once a year in June-July.

Dear reader, we would leave the above indubitable facts and scriptural evidence in favour of *Dini-Saal* to speak for themselves and you may come to your own decision. During the dark days of Arab terror and confusion that followed in the wake of their conquest, Iranians had perforce to abandon many of their cherished customs and usages [22], and one such must have been the practice of observing the Religious Year, since the Muslims believed that intercalation was the work of *Satan*.

A true calendar may not be a pre-requisite for our salvation. But till we reach “that far-off divine event towards which the whole Creation moves”, certain ceremonies have got to be performed and these religious duties (*Kar-I-Dini*) can be performed only according to the *Dini-Saal* calendar, as directed by Dinkard [23].

According to the testimony of *Al-Biruni*, who was surely not a Fasali fanatic, our revered Prophet Lord Zarathushtra was also very much interested in this calendar controversy. “He intercalated the years with the months which, upto that time, had summed up from the day-

quarters ..... Then he ordered all people in all future times to do with the day-quarters the same as he had done, and they obeyed his command” [24].

**That we may also have wisdom to obey his command, is or prayer to Ahura Mazda on this auspicious day!**

#### Key To References :

- [1] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-I, Para-50.
- [2] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-XXV, Para-26.
- [3] Fravardin Yasht, Karda-13.
- [4] Dinkard, Volume VIII, Bab-6, Para-11.
- [5] Dinkard, Volume III, Page-419, Line-15.
- [6] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-XXV, Para-6.
- [7] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-VI-B, Para-2.  
Also, Dinkard, Volume III, 419, 12-15.
- [8] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-XXV, Para-13.
- [9] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-XXV, Para-14.
- [10] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-XXV, Para-3-5.
- [11] Dastan-I-Dinik, Question-30 and its answer.
- [12] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-V-A, Para-1-2.
- [13] Sachau’s Translations, Chapter-V, Page-55.
- [14] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-XXV, Para-24.
- [15] Shahnameh, Kutar Brothers, Volume-5, Pages-4 & 67.
- [16] Shahnameh, Kutar Brothers, Volume-6, Pages-2 & 37.
- [17] Dinkard, Volume X, Dasturji Sanjana’s translation, Page-449, Line-7. Also, please note that the correction is referred to in Dinkard, Volume III, Page-419, Line-17, as ‘Roz .... Vahiz kardan, i.e. addition of a day and not ‘Mah .... Vahiz kardan, i.e. addition of a month as would have been the case if a month was to be added by way of correction.
- [18] Dinkard, Volume III, Page-419, Line-8-10.
- [19] Sachau’s Translations, Chapter-IX, Page-212.
- [20] De lside 47.
- [21] Khurshid Niyaisht, Stanza-8. See also, Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Chapter-VI-B, Para-2.
- [22] Zand-Akaish (Greater Bundahishn), Pehlavi Preface, Paras-3 & 4.
- [23] Dinkard, Volume III, Page-419, Line-16.
- [24] Sachau’s Translations, Chapter-V, Page-55. Please also see Teer Yasht, Karda-36 : *Kadha Airyoo Danghavo hooyarairyao bazaonti* , i.e. When will the Aryan countries become (observers of) a true year? (Dastur Meherjirana’s Gujarati translation). This is enough to indicate why *Barvakht* is so very important for religious observances.

**Behram D. Pithavala**