

JAMSHEDI NAVROZ

[Translated in English by Mr. Minoo Irani from the Gujarati article which appeared in 'Parsi Avaz' of 31st March 1963 which was a reproduction of a talk given by Late Jehangir Chiniwalla at 8:15 pm on 21st March 1963 on All India Radio. - Editor.]

1. Parsis celebrate Jamshedi Navroz as a festival of Mazdayasni Zarhosti religion. However this festival is also celebrated in today's Islamic Republic of Iran and even in some countries of the far East. Presently this festival is believed to fall on the 21st March of the English calendar. Amongst the Parsis there are two calendars in use at present namely 'Kadmi' and 'Shehenshai'; but 'Jamshedi Navroz' has no concern with them. There is no proof available whether or not this festival was celebrated by the ancestors of the present day Parsis when they came from Iran and settled at Sanjan. Jamshedi Navroz is connected with the Mazdayasni King Shah Jamshed who lived thousands of years ago.
2. There is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars about the date of arrival of the ancestors of the Parsis in India. In spite of this, one thing is certain, that they had established the very first fire temple 'Iranshah' at Sanjan, sometime in the middle of 8th or the 9th century A.D. They must have surely brought with them the 'Zoroastrian' calendar but certain doubts are raised by the scholars about it. During the reign of the last Zoroastrian King of the Sassanian empire, Zoroastrian calendar of 365 days was followed in Iran without the addition of one day of leap year. This is known as 'Pharsi' or 'Persian' calendar. In the Pehelvi book 'Dinkard' this calendar was known as 'Hushmordi' calendar and was for day to day use of common public. Later on, this calendar was known as 'Kadmi' calendar. The names of 30 days and 12 months in this calendar are given after the names of Yazads and Ameshaspands. The additional 5 days are named after the 5 Gathas. There is evidence available which shows that the ancestors of the Parsis used this 'Kadmi' calendar in their day to day life, but later on a 'Shehenshai' calendar based exactly on this 'Kadmi' calendar came in use amongst the Parsis of India and the Navroz day according to this calendar falls exactly one month later. The scholars do not understand when, how, or why this 'Shehenshai' calendar began. Further about 270 years ago a small part of the Parsis of India began the use of the original 'Kadmi' calendar of Iran and Kadmi Fire temples were established. Even at present this Kadmi calendar is in vogue.
3. Since a long time there has been a controversy on following matters among the scholars of the Parsi community – 1) one day must be added during the leap year. 2) the present Hushmordi calendar is wrong. 3) the Fasli calendar is the only correct one. In the year 1927 a committee was appointed by the Bombay Parsi Panchayat to examine the issue of various calendars. A few members of the committee favoured the Fasli calendar whereas the majority were of the opinion that there was no need to make any change in the calendar being followed. Thereafter from the year 1939 a few Parsis began the use of Fasli calendar, and have also established a fire temple but **because of certain intricacies to be observed in religious ceremonies**

which were not observed; several questions have been raised regarding its validity.

4. The scholars have found no proof to show that the earlier Parsis of India used to add one day in the leap year and make use of the 'Fasli' calendar or in Iran there was a practice of adding one day every four years. Despite all the controversy, one fact remains that during the reign in Iran of the Zoroastrian kings, there was a practice of associating Navroz with the vernal equinox and adding one day during the leap year. It is necessary to take an idea as to what vernal equinox is according to the science of astronomy.
5. The earth appears to revolve round an imaginary axis passing through the two poles. Midway between the poles is the equator. When the centre of the sun coincides with the equator, the day and night are equal and the sun appears to rise exactly in the East and set exactly in the West. Further in the sky the stars appear to be bunched in one part. These are known as fixed stars. To the astronomers it appears that the sun is passing amongst the fixed stars. The path traced by the sun is known as ecliptic and the two points where the equator and the ecliptic cross are known as equinoctial points. When this phenomenon occurs, the day and night are equal.
6. The Zodiac has been divided into 12 parts according to the shapes of the group of fixed stars, and have been named as Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. They are considered to be stationary, but in reality they have an exceedingly slow motion: One of the above group of stars on an equinoctial point takes about 72 years to move by one degree.
7. This motion is known as precession of equinox.
7. If we consider the entry of sun in the 1st degree of Aries as vernal equinox, then the New Year according to the 'Sayan' method of astrology is said to have begun. According to the 'Sayan' calendar, when the sun completes the travel through the ecliptic and comes back to the same point; this period is known as a 'Tropical Year'. The length of this year is 365 days, 5 hours and 49 minutes. In present times the vernal equinox occurs on 21st March of the English calendar. However the time taken by the sun to return to the 1st sign Aries after travelling through all the 12 signs is known as 'Siderial Year' and is slightly longer than the 'Tropical Year' and is of 365 days, 6 hours and 9 minutes duration.
8. During the reign of the Zoroastrian kings in Iran, there existed a knowledge of very high calibre on several subjects one of which was astronomy. But after the fall of the last Sassanian king, this knowledge was lost. During the 9th & 10th century A.D. some of this knowledge was revived in Pehelvi language. It is known from this Pehelvi literature, that one day was added every fourth year or one month added every 120 years. Calendar in daily use for general public is known as **Hushmordi** calendar and consists of 365 days whereas the corrected calendar in which 1 day is added every 4 years is known as '**Hu-shumare Vahizki**' or 'Fasli' calendar. Every year when the sun comes opposite to the point of vernal equinox, that day is known as 'Meherangan' which also is an important Zoroastrian festival. This day is known as autumnal equinox and day and night are equal also on this day.

9. The Arab conquerers had adopted practically everything of Iran of Zoroastrian days including the Zoroastrian calendar but Sultan Jalaluddin Malekshah of Salejuki dynasty had started 'Malekshahi' calendar on 15th March 1079 A.D. The Navroz according to this calendar fell on the day of the vernal equinox and the names of the 12 months were also adopted from the Zoroastrian calendar; but the number of days in a month were kept from 29 to 32 depending upon the time taken by the sun to pass through each sign of the Zodiac from Aries to Pisces. After the start of this 'Jalali' calendar the earlier Iranian Zoroastrian calendar was known as **Kadmi** calendar. According to this Jalali calendar, Navroz is celebrated on the same day in Iran both by the Muslims and the Zoroastrians. The liturgical ceremonies and prayers form an essential part & essence of the Zoroastrian religion and both are connected with the Zoroastrian calendar. The present day students of the Zoroastrian religion do not understand fully the composition of these ceremonies and their relation to the calendar. All the prayers and the liturgical ceremonies prescribed in our religion have been considered worthy of practise with devotion right from the ancient times.

10. Before the downfall of the Sassanian empire, the holy zoroastrian saints known as 'Abeds' sought recluse in the mountains of Iran. This fact is mentioned in the Pehelvi literature available at present. Iranian priest Manuscher who lived in the 9th century A.D. has made a note of this fact.

In the beginning of the 20th century A. D. late Ustad saheb Behramsha Shroff who possessed vast esoteric knowledge of the Zoroastrian religion acquired from the 'Abeds' of Demavand under strange

circumstances, established a school of esoteric Zoroastrian philosophy known as '**Ilm – e- Kshnoom**'. With the help of this knowledge a new light has been shed on the subject of Zoroastrian calendar. Majority of the community agree with the clarification given by Ilm-e-Kshnoom.

11. As per the teaching of Kshnoom, a period of 4 years is considered starting from the day of the vernal equinox. For 3 years Navroz falls on the 366th day according to the Fasli calendar but in the 4th year, it falls on the 367th day this calculation is made according to the motion of the sun, but as the fraction of a day is not considered it is rounded off to an integer. Navroz and Meherangan days as per this Fasli calendar are considered very auspicious, as it is believed that beneficial Divine energies are showered by nature on these days. Also on these days the incessant battle going on between the forces of white and dark side of nature comes to a halt for 24 hours and this phenomenon is reflected in day and night being equal on these days. As revealed by Behramshaji when the ancestors of the Parsis came to India under the leadership of the great pious mobed Nairyosang Dhaval, they had brought with them the original Fasli calendar and the Holy Iranshah fire temple was consecrated and established by performing the religious rites calculated as per the Fasli calendar. They used to correct their calendar every 4 years. This practice was followed upto 1006 A.D. in India, but when the great mobed realized that it, would be impossible for the future day Parsis to observe the strict and intricate rules of performing Zoroastrian rites and rituals due to bad times he had left certain instructions with his followers one of them was that in future when 'Navroz' according

to the Fasli and Hushmordi calenders fell on the same day, the Fasli calender should be discontinued after performing certain ceremonies and the Hushmordi calender should be continued. In the year 1005 Navroz fell on the same day as per both the calenders, and following the great mobed's instructions, his descendants performed required ceremonies which took one month to complete. Due to this, there was a difference of one month between the new Hushmordi calender followed in India and the original Kadmi Hushmordi calender followed in Iran. Mobed Nairyosang Dhaval came from the royal family of the Sassanian dynasty – therefore the new Hushmordi calender was given the name **Shehenshai**. Thus in India, after starting the new Hushmordi calender (without the addition of one day every 4 years) the old practice of celebrating the onset of spring or Fasli Navroz continued by performing 'Jashan-e-Navroz'. The later day Parsi priests also had a good knowledge of astronomy and therefore they could determine the day of Vernal Equinox accurately with the help of astronomical calculations. In present times, the vernal equinox falls a few hours before or after the 21st March because of which Jamshedi Navroz is celebrated on 21st March. This thus is an explanation provided by Ilm-e Kshnoom for the 'Kadmi' and 'Shehenshai' calenders. The Congress government of free India had also appointed a 'Calender Committee' comprising of astronomers. This committee had also accepted the calculations of the 'Sayan' year and had declared 21st March as a national holiday on account of Navroz.

Let us all pray on this auspicious day of Navroz that the entire creation on this earth may be able to benefit for the coming year

by assimilating the bountiful blessings showered by Lord Ahuramazda, and may there be peace, prosperity and happiness for the peoples of all nations on earth.

Jamshedi Navroz as seen from religious point of view

[Translated by Mr. Minoo Irani from the Gujarati article appeared in Parsi Avaz of 17th March 1963].

1. Mobed Nairyosang Dhaval had not only consecrated and established the Holy Iranshah Fire Temple but most importantly he had established connection of Iranshah fire with the celestial fortress of Divine energies earlier established by Prophet Zarathustra known as "Pav Mehel" the direct link with Ahuramazda.
2. Ustad Saheb Behramshah Shroff had said that to start the Fasli calender and to preserve it, is no small task. It can be done only by highly evolved and spiritually advanced male and female saintly souls known as 'Ashwans' because they only have the full knowledge and understanding to establish a new talismanic connection with the 'Pav Mehel'.
3. To continue the Fasli calender it is necessary to perform extremely difficult* and intricate rituals every 4 years and to rejuvenate the spiritual powers and activate the fields of the various instruments (Alaats) used in these ceremonies. This can be done by those priests who strictly follow the Zoroastrian path of purity in their day to day life and who are attuned with the forces of Nature. It is said that once they perform such ceremonies, they have to retire from the active life of priesthood. When the priests of those times who were in service of the Holy Fire realised that this task would not be possible in future because of the

inferior calibre of the priests they stopped the Fasli calender and continued the 'Hushmordi' calender and stopped adding one day every 4 years. There are religious ceremonies prescribed even for performing this task (closing of the Fasli calender) which the priests of those times knew. Accordingly they had used their spiritual authority to lock the 'Pav Mehel' that is to say, they had put spiritual lock to some of the 33 doors of communication with the talismanic garrison by the 'Stoat' vibrations of the formulae recited. This was done to prevent the attack of the Dark forces of Ghanamin on the spiritual energies stored in the consecrated instruments; thus preserving the talismanic magnetic circuits within those instruments intact, so that they could be effectively used even whilst performing the liturgical ceremonies in the Hushmordi way.

4. Ilm-e-Kshnoom throws more light on why the day of Jamshedi Navroz is so very significant in Nature. It teaches that every year during the last 10 days of the year there comes a time when the Dark Forces of Nature are in abundance in the atmosphere due to the sins committed by mankind during the whole year. Dark clouds

formed out of collective evil thoughts, words and deeds of men envelop the earth during these 10 days prior to Jamshedi Navroz. These are known as 'Ten Dark Nights! There is a mention of this phenomenon in the 13th para of the Farvardin Yasht.

5. To fight against these hordes of Dark Forces and disperse them, Ahuramazda Himself along with Ameshaspands, Yazats, Fravashis and the entire assembly of souls who have achieved salvation, descend on earth to help 'Spenamino' and his army of White Forces of Nature in this great fight against Ghanamino. At this time even the souls of the dead Zoroastrians who are busy in the other worlds trying to dissolve the hard shell of their earthly deeds, descend on earth i.e. so to say they take a holiday for these 10 days leaving aside their task.
6. This event is named 'Muktaad' By the mobeds of yesteryears, because at that time the souls of the dead Zoroastrians are given 'Mukti' or freedom from their task. According to Behramshaji, the entire assembly of 'Divine Brotherhood' is mostly attracted towards 'Firdaus' the unseen abode of the saintly 'Abeds' where the ceremonies performed in their honour is of the greatest devotion and highest order.

SERIES OF LECTURES DURING FASLI GATHAS

As usual, these lectures will be held on 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20th March, 2006 at Mehella Patel Agiary. Speakers and Topics will be announced later.

- Editor

ફસલી ગાથા દરમ્યાન ભાષણોની હારમાળા

રાબેતા મુજબ આ વર્ષે પણ તા. ૧૬, ૧૭, ૧૮, ૧૯ અને ૨૦મી માર્ચ ૨૦૦૬ના દિવસો ઉપર મહેલ્લા પટેલ અગિયારીમાં ભાષણોની હારમાળાનું આયોજન કરવામાં આવ્યું છે. વક્તા અને વિષય પછીથી જાહેર કરવામાં આવશે.

- અધિપતિ