ational Dessert Day, celebrated every year on October 14, is a sweet reminder to indulge in life's delightful treats. From creamy cheesecakes and decadent chocolates to fruity tarts and warm pastries, desserts bring joy to every occasion. Beyond their irresistible taste, desserts often symbolize celebration, comfort, and togetherness, whether shared with family, friends, or savoured solo. On this day, bakers, chefs, and dessert lovers alike honour creativity and flavour, experimenting with classic recipes or trying innovative sweets. So go ahead, treat yourself to your favourite dessert, and savour the simple pleasures that make life a little sweeter.

y the 7th century, the Zoroastrian civilisation was threatened by Islamic invaders. Many original adherents died, and quarths must be

two communities became difficult. Would they independently remember to make the leap month correction? Oddly, the Indian Parsis remembered and made the correction in 1129 CE, but the Iranian Parsis completely forgot!

invaders. Many original adherents died, and over the next few centuries, many of them migrated to India. They became the Indian Parsis and they outnumbered the Parsis in Persia. For some years, the contact between the

Faravahar is believed to be a depiction of a Fravashi (guardian

राष्ट्रदुत

A Blade of Prestige

The 4,500-Year-Old Crystal Dagger of Copper Age Spain





nestled within the Copper Age necroparchaeologists uncovered a breathtaking artifact that has captivated historians and researchers alike, a 4,500-year-old dagger meticulously crafted from rock crystal. This exceptional blade, set in an ivory hilt, stands as one of the most extraordinary examples of prehistoric craftsmanship ever found in Western Europe.

Unlike the flint tools commonly associated with the era, the use of quartz crystal, a material both challenging to work due to its brittleness and symbolically charged, signals a highly developed level of skill and intention. Shaping such a hard and fragile mineral into a functional and aesthetically refined weapon would have required not only technical knowledge but also a degree of artistic vision rarely attributed to prehistoric artisans. The dagger's construc-

tion from rare and valuable materials, crystal and ivory, immediately sets it apart from everyday tools or weapons. These substances prized for their beauty and difficulty to acquire, suggest that the blade was never intended for combat or labor. Instead, it likely served a ceremonial or symbolic role. embodying power, status, and possibly spiritual significance. Its discovery in a lav-

ishly equipped tomb, accompanied by other prestige items, hints at its association with a high-ranking individual, perhaps, a local ruler, shaman, or figure of considerable social or religious authority. This remarkable find not

only highlights the technical prowess of Copper Age com-Peninsula but also provides a window into their complex social hierarchies and belief systems. The dagger's placement within an elite burial suggests that such objects functioned as markers of identity and instruments of ritual, reinforcing the status of their owners both in life

and in death. Beyond its immediate archaeological importance, the crystal dagger speaks to a broader human impulse: the drive to create beauty, to assign meaning to materials, and to express cultural values through craftsmanship. Its survival through millennia allows us to glimpse the symbolic worlds of our ancestors, reminding us that even in prehistory, humans were capable of profound expression and sophisticated

This singular artifact gleaming after thousands o years in the earth, continues to illuminate the rich cultural tapestry of prehistoric Europe and underscores how much remains to be discovered about the artistry and imagination of our ancient past.



Verna Mohon

ifferent communities

brate their New Year's

Day on different days of

calendars they follow.

The Parsis celebrate

Read on to find out why.

The Parsis are a micro-minority

community in India (by one esti-

spheres: arts, sciences, cinema,

business, military and more. They

have rich traditions and follow a

religion called Zoroastrianism that

One unique tradition is that they cel-

ebrate the New Year twice every

vear. How can a calendar have two

beginnings? Let us start from the

According to Parsi tradition, the

ruled for 700 years by the greatest of

the Peshdadian dynasty king named

Jamshed. (The ancient Persian

temporary Iran. It covered vast

tracts of West Asia.) Jamshed was

wise and compassionate and had the

Empire was much larger than con-

prehistory

is at least 3,000 years old.

Parsis from India, c. 1870.

The Parsi New Year: A **Tale of Two Calendars**

The storm raged for a long time. Then, on the day of the Vernal Equinox (21st March by the modern calendar), the snowstorm passed over, spring arrived, and prosperity returned. Jamshed was now crowned on a new throne, and the good days returned. Evil was suppressed, imperial benevolence grew, disease became non-existent, and people became virtually ageless. The day that Jamshed crowned himself, the Vernal Equinox Day, was celebrated by

blessings of the Parsi god Ahura

Mazda and the counsel of Sarosh

Yazad, an angel of the god. Early in

to take precautions against a humon-

gous snow storm that would strike

the world and cover it with ice. So,

Jamshed moved his people along

with a pair of every species of plant

The storm raged for a long time.

Then, on the day of the Vernal

Equinox (21st March by the modern

calendar), the snowstorm passed

over, spring arrived, and prosperity

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crowned on a new throne, and the

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pressed, imperial benevolence grew,

disease became non-existent, and

people became virtually ageless.

The day that Jamshed crowned him-

self, the Vernal Equinox Day, was

celebrated by Parsis as the dawn of

a new era. And it was called Navroz

(meaning 'New Day') or Jamshedi

Navroz. This New Year has been cel-

ebrated for centuries ever since, not

only in Iran but also neighbouring

Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia,

Afghanistan and others (which

Remember, many ancient soci-

were probably influenced by the

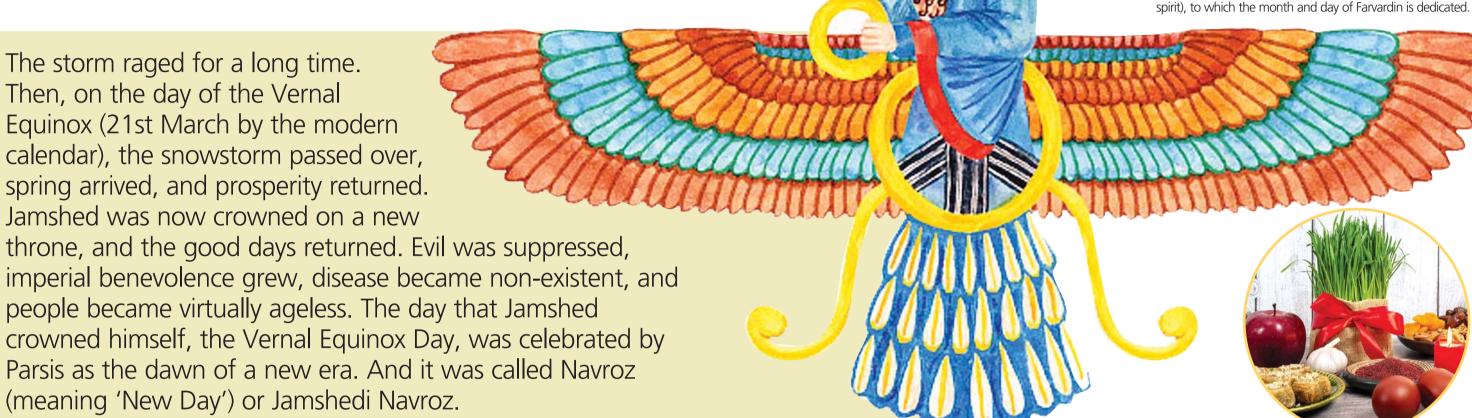
greater Persian Empire).

countries

and animal to a higher region.

Ancient Persian Empire,

(meaning 'New Day') or Jamshedi Navroz.



#CALENDAR



Khurshedji Cama, fourth from the left, back row

eties (like the Arabs, Egyptians,

Greeks, and the Indians, of course) extremely astronomers. Even with naked-eye observations of the Sun and the Moon, they could measure time with a fair degree of accuracy. The Moon gave them measurement of the month, the Sun gave them measurement of the vear. Ancient Persian astronomers calculated a month as 30 days (known as Roj). This was an approximation of the actual interval of 29.5 days between one new moon and the next. Interestingly, each Roj had a name (unlike the Gregorian and Hindu calendars, where we have names only for the seven days of the week). These names repeated every 30 days, because each of the 12 months (known as Mahs) had a standard number of 30 days. The Persians also calculated a year as 365 days. Now, the problem was that 12 months did not add up to one year $(12 \times 30 = 360, \text{ not } 365)$. Even in Jamshed's times, they recognised this and added five days (known as Gathas) to the 12th month. The new year began on the first of Farvardin, which was the first month. This system, called the

Calendar, was a good approximation, and reconciled the lunar and solar calculations of a year. Faravahar is believed to be a depiction of a Fravashi (guardian spirit), to which the month and day of Farvardin is dedicated. Yet, they ignored one problem. A vear (the time taken by the Earth to

orbit the sun) is 365.25 days, not 365. At first, 0.25 days seemed like a very small difference. But every four vears, it added to a full day. So, every year, the Parsis were celebrating the Navroz earlier and earlier. In the year 1006 CE, the Shahenshahi calendar had swallowed a full vear, so that the Vernal Equinox day of the Shahenshahi and Gregorian calen-

dars had a perfect match! The problem was no longer small and so Parsi scholars consulted the Denkard, the Parsi Religious Manual, for a permanent solution. What they found was amazing! The ancient Parsi sages had already anticipated this problem. The Denkard offered not one but four solutions: a leap day every four years, or ten leap days every forty vears, or five leap months every 600

years. The first alternative, a leap

day every four years, would have

been most convenient (this is what Pope Gregory chose in 1582 CE). But the scholars chose the third option: a leap month every 120 years. Now, who would remember to make the correction after 120 years?

By the 7th century, the Zoroastrian civilisation was threatened by Islamic invaders. Many original adherents died, and over the next few centuries, many of them migrated to India. They became the Indian Parsis and they outnumbered the Parsis in Persia For some years, the contact between the two communities became difficult. Would they independently remember to make the leap month correction? Oddly, the Indian Parsis remembered and made the correc tion in 1129 CE, but the Iranian Parsis completely forgot! Another 120 years passed. By now, both the Parsi communities had completely forgotten the leap month adjust

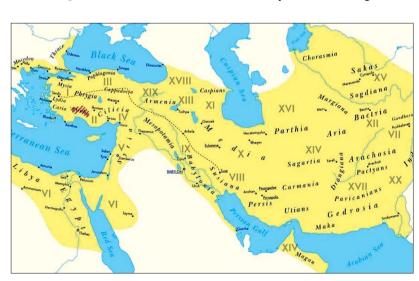
In 1720, an Iranian Parsi priest Jamasp Peshotan Velati, came to India and noticed that the calendars for religious dates were not tallying with the Iranian version. Neither priests of Surat in India decided to follow the dates that Velati had mentioned. This became the Qadimi ver-Shahenshahi, Qadimi and the Fasli sion of the calendar and was folcalendars coincided on Navroz day. lowed by some Parsis. The basic This was a good opportunity to majority of the Parsi community cholarly Parsi reformer from felt that that change would be incon-Iumbai (and father-in-law of the venient. On 21 March 2632 CE, the Fasli and Shahenshahi calendar ndian freedom fighter Madam Bhikajii Cama), studjed the prob will once again coincide: till then perhaps, the Parsis would joyously em carefully and argued that the best way was to add one leap day celebrate two New Years! after every four years. This day

Postscript

It is amazing how many ancient civilisations have similar memories of a global disaster. Hindu scriptures talk of Pralaya or a massive flood, and the Old Testament (which is sacred to Muslims, Christians and Jews) also talks of a similar flood. Jamshed's high settlement appears remarkably similar to Mount Ararat in which Noah's Ark anchored.

The system of adding one month is not entirely unique to Zoroastrian thought. In some lunisolar Hindu calendars, 12 lunar months of 29.5 days add up to a lunar year of 354 days. But a solar year is 365.25 years so, an extra month is added after 32.5 months. The Jews make a similar correction after the month of Adar, and the Buddhists do the same after Ashada or Waso month.

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could be added to the five days that

they were already adding in the twelfth month. This was called the

Fasli Calendar. Fasli supporters

argued this was the accurate solu-

ion and other forms of the calendar

were being followed for political

rather than religious reasons. But

the Parsi orthodoxy of India was

reluctant to change. Meanwhile, by

1930, the Iranian Parsi community

formally embraced the Fasli calen

dar (though some Iranian Parsis

still follow the Qadimi system). The

observing Navroz also converted to

Navroz or New Year is the Vernal

Equinox day or 21st March. That is

the 1st of Farvardin in their Fasli

calendar. The Indian Parsis also cel-

ebrate this as Jamshedi Navroz. But

functionally, the Indian Parsi New

Navroz which is a shifting date. In

Year begins on the Shahenshah

2023, the Shahenshahi Navroz is on

16th August. In 1992, the

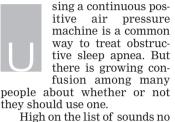
So, in Iran and Central Asia,

the Fasli system.

#SLEEP APNEA

Do You Have Sleep Apnea?

About half of the 90 million people who snore have obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a condition that actually disrupts breathing, and is linked to heart disease



one wants to hear is the snoring of a bed partner. But sometimes that harsh, rasping sound is more than just annoying: it can be life-threatening

About half of the 90 million people who snore have obstructive sleep apnea (OSA), a condition that actually disrupts breathing, is linked to heart disease, and can even be fatal. Even more troubling, it's possible to have the condition and not even know it. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many people avoid seeking help for snoring because they don't think it's a big deal. Or they do, but don't want to under go a sleep test in an overnight lab (which is how OSA is typi-

cally diagnosed). Or they're worried they'll be diagnosed with University Center for Sleep Medicine, and Andrey Zinchuk most common, and notoriously who directs an Advanced Apnea difficult to tolerate, treatment. Management Program at Yale, A recent recall of one com-

pany's device has added to pubic confusion. To clear things up

put together seven things you need to know about obstructive sleep apnea, advances in CPAPs. and other OSA treatments 6. A PRECISION

O bstructive sleep apnea is the most common form tion of obstructive and central apneas. Whether or not of sleep apnea, a disorder in they are aware of it, some peowhich your breathing during ple with OSA experience hunsleep repeatedly stops and dreds of episodes of stopped starts. There is also central or interrupted breathing each apnea, when the brain doesn't night, and this can have regulate breathing properly, severe impacts on their qualiand mixed apnea, a combina-

2. THERE HAVE BEEN IMPROVEMENTS TO CPAP MACHINES

little background. The breathing during sleep. CPAP machine, considered the 'gold standard' of sleep apnea treatment, is designed to regulate

However, it is notoriously perceived to be unpleasant and, thus, doesn't work for

3. PUTTING THE RECENT CPAP RECALL IN CONTEXT

ne thing that may be top-of-mind for people is the recent recall of some CPAP devices. In June 2021. one CPAP manufacturer,

Phillips Respironics, voluntarily recalled certain ventilators, BiPAP, and CPAP machines because of potential health risks.

stomach instead of on

mon procedures to the

nose, tongue, or palate.

One promising CPAP

alternative is the surgical

implantation of a pace

maker-sized device called

the hypoglossal nerve

Surgery, including com-

your back.

4. THERE ARE AVAILABLE TREATMENTS OTHER THAN CPAP

here is good news, especially for those who don't tolerate the CPAP machine.

- Lifestyle changes. Oral appliances, which are devices placed in your mouth to keep the airways open, may be prescribed
- Performing upper airway exercises.
- Sleeping on your side or

5. IT'S NOW POSSIBLE TO DO SLEEP STUDIES FROM HOME

T p until a few years ago, it was standard for a doctor to recommend sleep tests in overnight labs for suspected sleep apnea. But now, more people are taking their sleep

tests at home. The equipment is less cumbersome. "Home tests" have been used for hospitalized patients who are sick with an illness in addition to suspected sleep apnea.

MEDICINE APPROACH TO DIAGNOSING OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNEA

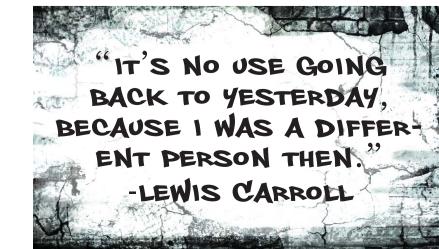
O bstructive sleep apnea is not always a simple diagnosis. Machine learning techniques, or 'cluster analytics, are used to identify patterns important to your health. And one of the most exciting breakthroughs is that by using sleep data analysis, doctors can now often predict who will do well on CPAP therapy and who is likely to have difficulty tolerating it.

7. WHY IT'S IMPORTANT **TO TREAT SLEEP APNEA**

 \mathbf{T} t's important to know that

lacksquare sleep apnea can affect anyone, but men are at higher risk than women (about 25% of mer suffer from OSA), as are people over age 50 and/or overweight according to the National Sleep Foundation. As important as identifying the condition is figuring out the sleep apnea treat ment that is best for you, not only to manage the condition, but also to avoid the litany of other problems sleep apnea can cause. OSA can lead to mental health disorders, including depression. People who have untreated OSA are also at increased risk for cardiovascu lar conditions, high blood pres sure, liver problems, metabolic syndrome, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, and complications with medications and surgery. The list goes on to include poor work performance and car accidents that result from daytime fatigue.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES







By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott ZITS



I'M GONNA INDEPENDENTLY WAKEUPEARLYANDEATA HEALTHY BREAKFAST EACH DAY BEFORE SCHOOL.



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman