



## Conversations with Grandmother

It was a cold and snowy day. Goly arrived home from school and was eager to finish her homework. Her family was going to visit her grandmother that evening. After the children had finished their homework, they went to Grandmother's house with their parents and uncle.

On the korsi\*, Grandmother had placed cut watermelon next to fruits, sweets, dried fruits and nuts, and pumpkin seeds. While eating pomegranate, Goly asked, "By the way, what is going on tonight? Why have we all gathered here?"

Her mother laughed and replied, "Tonight is *Shabe Chelle*."

Goly thought a bit and asked, "What does *Shabe Chelle* mean?"

Goly's uncle who was an educator, replied, "Goly jaan, ancient Iranians celebrated the tenth of Bahman and called it "*Jashn e Sadeh*" (Sadeh celebration). Now, if you recall, *Bahman* is the 11<sup>th</sup> month in the Persian calendar that starts in January and ends in February and is 30 days. The month before *Bahman* is *Dey*. There are forty days from the first of *Dey* until the tenth of *Bahman*. People call these forty days "*Chelle*" (*Chel*, meaning forty in Persian). Tomorrow is the first day of *Dey* the first day of winter and the start of *Chelle*. Therefore, tonight marks the night of *Chelle* which is the longest night of the year; it is also called "*Yalda*".

Grandmother laughed and said, "people these days only recognize the "Big Chelle", we also have "Little Chelle" which is the last 20 days of *Bahman*. When "Big Chelle" ends, so does the worst of winter cold and people say, "*Kamar e Sarma Shekaste*" meaning that winter is almost over. However, the worst cold happens at "*Char Char*". Children laughed upon hearing the name "*Char Char*" and asked, "What is "*Char Char*"?"

Grandmother said, "my dears, wait and I will tell you. In ancient times, people believed that the worst cold happens on the last four days of "Big Chelle" and the first four days of "Little Chelle", so they called these eight days "*Char Char*".

Grandmother continued, "when we were little, we were told that winter starts with the "Big Chelle" and after the "Big Chelle" comes the "Little Chelle". The "Big Chelle" and the "Little Chelle" have two twin brothers called "Ahman" and "Bahman". These two brothers are very naughty, but each only stays on earth for ten days. Our ancestors used to say that it is due to these two brothers' naughtiness that the weather of *Esfand*, the twelfth month of the Persian Calendar, changes rapidly. After Ahman and Bahman leave "*Sarmaye Pirzan*", arrives, in other words, the Old woman Cold arrives.

The Old woman tries to make the last days of the year very cold, rainy, and windy. However, the weather in the last days of the Persian calendar year is actually not very harsh (from February to

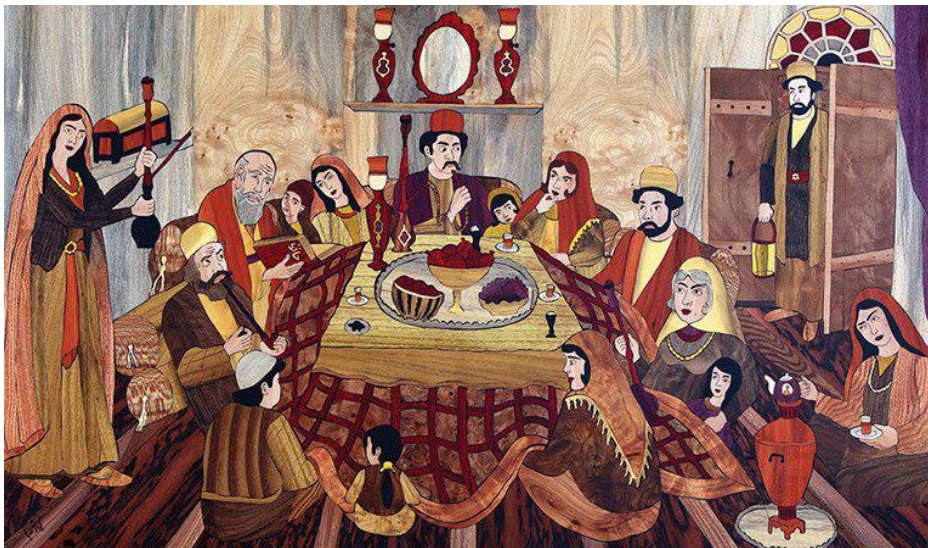
March). Then, as you all know, “*Amu Nowruz*” arrives, which marks that beginning of the New Persian Year, and along with it, comes, Spring, and the blossoms.

#### NAMES OF THE MONTHS IN THE PERSIAN CIVIL CALENDAR

1. Farvardīn	21 March-20 April
2. Ordībehešt	21 April-21 May
3. Kordād	22 May-21 June
4. Tīr	22 June-22 July
5. Mordād	23 July-22 August
6. Šahrīvar	23 August-22 September
7. Mehr	23 September-22 October
8. Ābān	23 October-21 November
9. Ādar	22 November-21 December
10. Dey	22 December-20 January
11. Bahman	21 January-19 February
12. Esfand	20 February-20 March

Image 1: The month of Bahman is about equivalent to the 21st of January to the 19th of February.

\*A **korsi** or **korsí**, or **sandali** (Persian: کرسی) is a type of low table found in Iran and Afghanistan, with a heater underneath it, and blankets thrown over it.



Above: A family sitting around the korsi



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- Persian 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade School Reader (Persian Edition)

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