Origin of the word NAMAZ

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A. Origin

The word **Namaz (نماز)** does not originate from Arabic or Sanskrit; it comes from Persian. It derives from Middle Persian (Pahlavi) *namāč* or *namāg*, meaning reverence, prayer, or act of worship. In Classical Persian literature, it was widely used for Islamic prayer and later spread into Urdu, Turkish, Hindi, Pashto, Kurdish, and several Central Asian languages.

In the Qur'an and Arabic, the term used is always **Ṣalāt (صلاة)**, not Namaz, and Arabs have never used the word Namaz. With the spread of Islam into Persia, South Asia, Central Asia, and Turkey, local Muslims adopted the Persian term Namaz, which is why it is common in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Turkey, Tajikistan, and Central Asia. In contrast, the Arab world, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Africa continue to use Ṣalāt or its local adaptations, never Namaz.

B. Misconcpetion

Some people wrongly assume that "Namaz" is a Sanskrit word because it looks similar to "Namas" (नमस्) in Sanskrit.

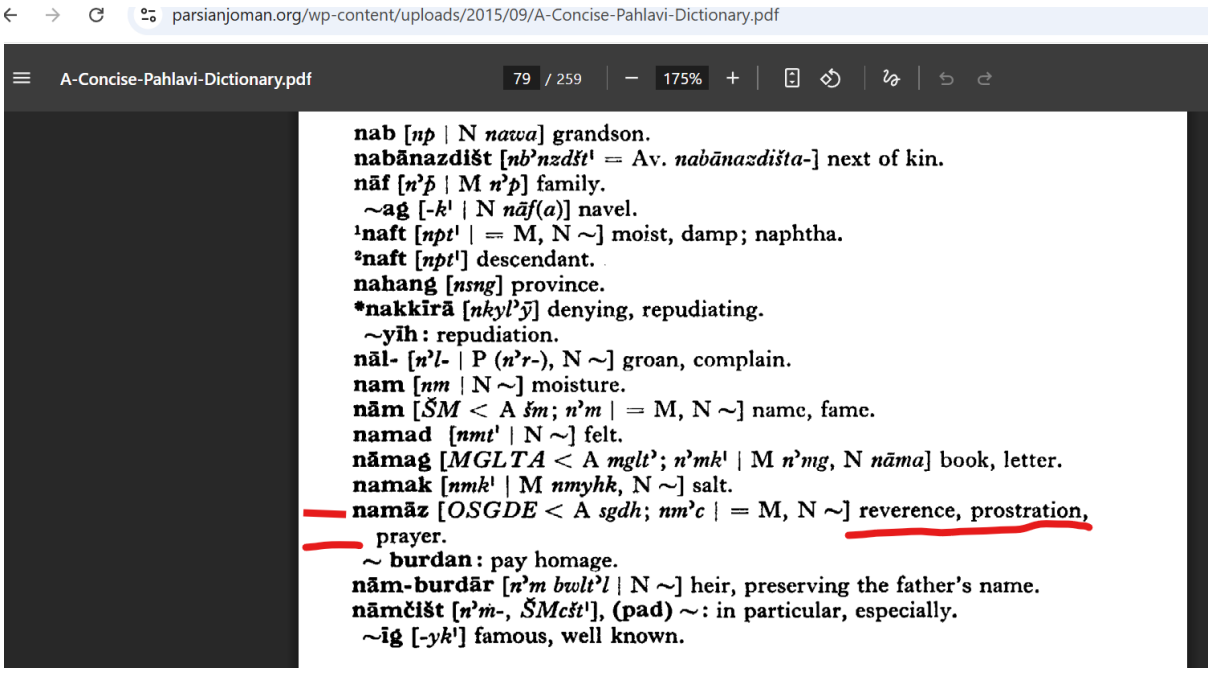
1. **Namaz is not Sanskrit.**

None of the Hindu religious texts—such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Darshanas, Puranas, or the Mahabharata—mention the term "Namaz." No classical Hindu scholar has ever referred to Namaz as a Sanskrit word. In an attempt to establish a closer connection with Hinduism, a few Muslims have made this claim – completely ignoring facts. However, it is important to remember that academic facts take precedence over emotional assertions.

2. **'Namaz' is not found in Sanskrit dictionary.**

Look at the Sanskrit dictionary and try to find the word – Namaz. Result: 0

3. **On the contrary, the Persian dictionary contains the word – NAMAZ.**



Source: https://www.parsianjoman.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/A-Concise-Pahlavi-Dictionary.pdf

Pahlavi was the official Middle Persian language of the Sasanian Empire (224–651 CE), a significant transitional language between Old Persian and Modern Persian (Farsi).

4. **Sanskrit has "Namas" (नमस्)**, which means salutation, bowing, homage (like in *Namaste*). This is an older, independent word from the Indo-Aryan branch. Both

‘Namaz’ and ‘Namas’ come from a common ancient root in the Proto-Indo-Iranian language:

Root: nam नम = to bend, bow.

From this root:

Sanskrit → namas (obeisance, salute).

Persian → namaz (prayer, worship).

Instead, Namaz and Namas are “cousin words” (cognates), both descendants of the same Proto-Indo-Iranian root, but evolving separately in Persian and Sanskrit. These two are different words.

Imagine two cousins who inherited the same family trait of red hair. One grows up in Canada and styles it short, while the other grows up in India and styles it long. Same origin, different expression. These cousins **represent two distinct identities**.

C. **Another blunder some people make**

❌ The False Claim

Some people say:

- NAM (Sanskrit root = to bow) नमः
- AJ (Sanskrit = unborn, eternal, i.e., God) अज
- Together → नमः + अज = Namaj → नमाज़

It’s completely baseless and a classic case of folk etymology (people making up meanings by breaking words into parts that “sound” similar).

It’s like saying the word **“butterfly”** comes from **“butter” + “fly”** because it flies and is yellow like butter. That’s completely **baseless**—English speakers didn’t name it that way.

✅ Why This Is Wrong

1. The word Namaz is attested in Middle Persian (Pahlavi) as namāč/namāg, long before Islam reached India. It was never built from Sanskrit components.
2. We are discussing about Nama**Z** and not Nama**J**. The -z ending is distinctly Persian, not Sanskrit.
3. In Sanskrit, “Aj” does mean *unborn/eternal (a name of God)*, but it was never compounded with “nam” to mean prayer. Compounds in Sanskrit like *namas-te*, *namaskāra*, etc., exist, but “namāj/namaz” is absent in Sanskrit literature.

4. It is against the rule of Sanskrit language to say that नमः + अज = Namaj → नमाज़

Look at this example:

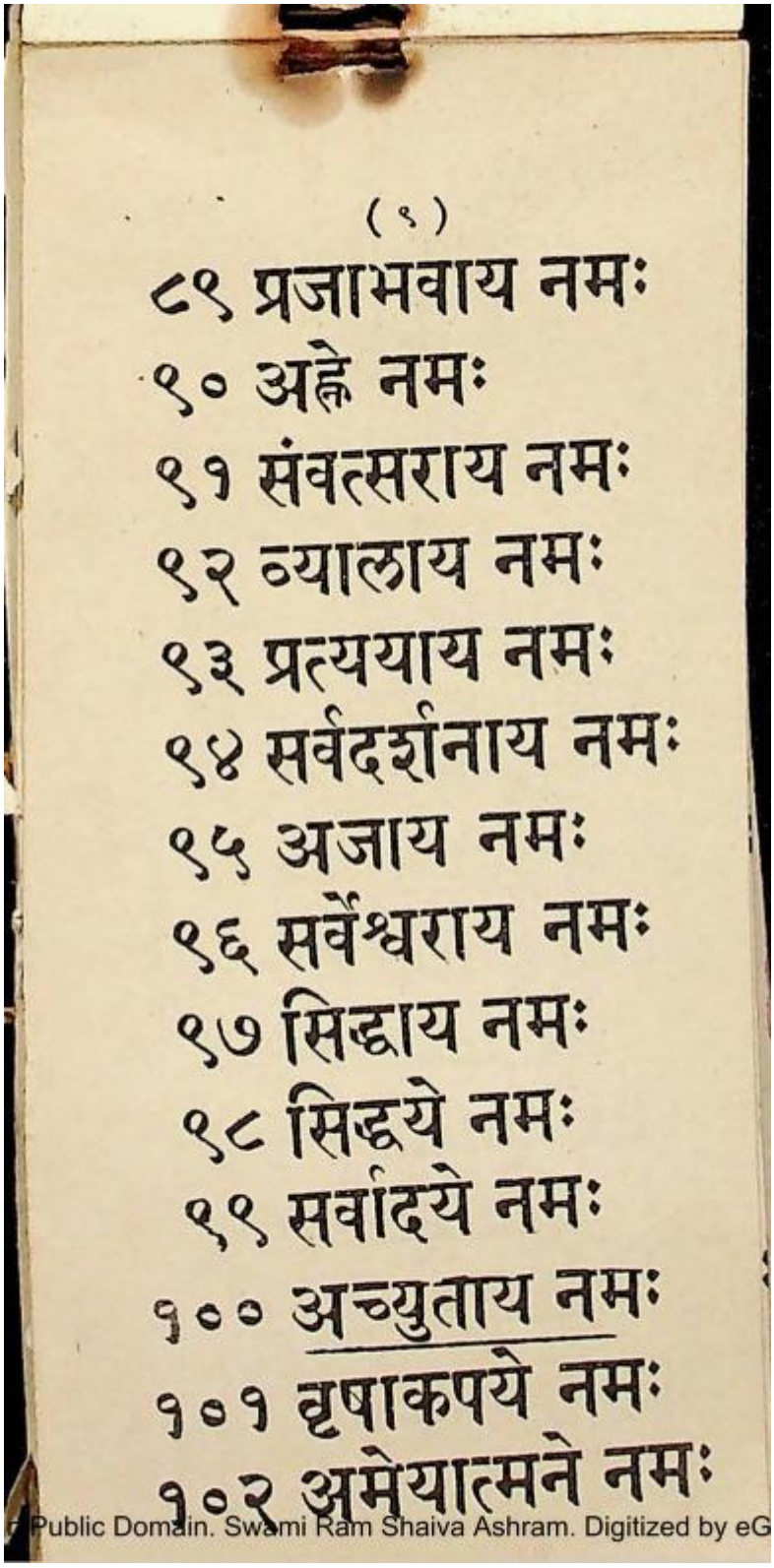
मनः+ज=मनोज

Similarly : नमः+अज=नमोज and Not Namaz (नमाज़)

5. To form a word that denote 'to bow down to unborn (अजन्मे को नमन)' the resulting word will be as follow:

नमः + अजाय = **नमोऽजाय** . Final word will be Namojaae and not namaz.

Look at the following Sanskrit text wherein word नमः has been used with different words. See the pattern.



(९)

८९ प्रजाभवाय नमः
९० अह्ने नमः
९१ संवत्सराय नमः
९२ व्यालाय नमः
९३ प्रत्ययाय नमः
९४ सर्वदर्शनाय नमः
९५ अजाय नमः
९६ सर्वेश्वराय नमः
९७ सिद्धाय नमः
९८ सिद्धये नमः
९९ सर्वादये नमः
१०० अच्युताय नमः
१०१ वृषाकपये नमः
१०२ अमेयात्मने नमः

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6. Another startling fact is that Sanskrit literature uses the exact term – '**Bowing to AJ (अज, One who is unborn)**', but word **NAMAZ is not formed**, rather Namojae (नमोऽजाय) is formed.

शिव का स्वप्नफल दर्शक मन्त्र इस प्रकार है - 'ॐ हिलि हिलि शूलपाणये स्वाहा।'

इसका जप करके अञ्जलि मे पुष्पो को लेकर पुष्पाञ्जलि अर्पित करे तथा निम्नलिखित मन्त्रों से शिव की प्रार्थना करे ।

प्रार्थना मंत्र -

ॐ भगवन् देवदेवेश शूलभृद् वृषभध्वज ।
इष्टानिष्टे समाचक्ष्व मम सुप्तस्य शाश्वत ।।११।।
नमोऽजाय त्रिनेत्राय पिंगलाय महात्मने ।
वामाय विश्वरूपाय स्वप्नाधिपतये नमः ।।१२।।

भगवान् देवाधिदेव! शूलधारी! वृष चिह्न युक्त ध्वजावाले! शाश्वत! शयन अवस्था मे स्वप्न मे इष्ट अनिष्ट फल कहे । अज (कभी न उत्पन्न होने वाले) को प्रणाम है । त्रिनेत्र, पिंगल, महात्मा, वाम, विश्वरूप, स्वप्नाधिपति आदि नाम से युक्त प्रभु आपको प्रणाम है ।

Reference: Vishnu sahastra naam, 95th name

7. Look at another example:

ॐ नमोऽजाय त्रिनेत्राय पिंगलाय महात्मने ।

वामाय विश्वरूपाय स्वप्नाधिपतये नमः ॥ २॥||

नमोऽस्तु तस्मै देवाय निर्गुणाय गुणात्मने।
नारायणाय विश्वाय देवानां परमात्मने॥ ३७

नमो नमः कारणवामनाय
नारायणायामितविक्रमाय ।
श्रीशार्ङ्गचक्रासिगदाधराय
नमोऽस्तु तस्मै पुरुषोत्तमाय॥ ३८

गुह्याय वेदनिलयाय महोदराय
सिंहाय दैत्यनिधनाय चतुर्भुजाय।
ब्रह्मेन्द्ररुद्रमुनिचारणसंस्तुताय
देवोत्तमाय वरदाय नमोऽच्युताय॥ ३९

नागेन्द्रदेहशयनासनसुप्रियाय
गोक्षीरहेमशुकनीलघनोपमाय ।
पीताम्बराय मधुकैटभनाशनाय
विश्वाय चारुमुकुटाय नमोऽजराय॥ ४०

नाभिप्रजातकमलस्थचतुर्मुखाय
क्षीरोदकार्णवनिकेतयशोधराय ।
नानाविचित्रमुकुटाङ्गदभूषणाय
सर्वेश्वराय वरदाय नमो वराय॥ ४१

भक्तिप्रियाय वरदीप्तिसुदर्शनाय
फुल्लारविन्दविपुलायतलोचनाय ।
देवेन्द्रविघ्नशमनोद्यतपौरुषाय
योगेश्वराय विरजाय नमो वराय॥ ४२

ब्रह्मायनाय

होनेवाले (आप) योगोद्भवको नमस्कार है। विश्वेश्वर, देव, शिव, हरिको नमस्कार है। निर्गुण और गुणात्मा उन (प्रसिद्ध) देवको नमस्कार है। विश्वात्मा, नारायण एवं देवोंके परम आत्मा (आप)-को नमस्कार है। कारणवश वामनरूप धारण करनेवाले, अतुल विक्रमवाले नारायणको नमस्कार है। श्री, शार्ङ्ग, चक्र, तलवार एवं गदा धारण करनेवाले उन पुरुषोत्तमको नमस्कार है॥ ३५—३८॥

गुह्य, वेदनिलय, महोदर, दैत्यके निधनके लिये सिंहरूप धारण करनेवाले, चार भुजाओंवाले, ब्रह्मा, इन्द्र, रुद्र, मुनि तथा चारणोंके द्वारा स्तुत किये गये वरदानी देवोत्तम अच्युतभगवान्‌को नमस्कार है। शेषनागके शरीरपर प्रसन्नतापूर्वक शयन करनेवाले, गोदुग्ध, स्वर्ण, शुक एवं नीलघनकी उपमासे युक्त, पीला वस्त्र धारण करनेवाले, मधु-कैटभका विनाश करनेवाले, सुन्दर मुकुट धारण करनेवाले, वृद्धावस्थासे रहित, विश्वकी आत्मा आप देवको नमस्कार है। नाभिसे उत्पन्न हुए कमलपर स्थित ब्रह्मासे युक्त, क्षीरसमुद्रको अपना निवास बनानेवाले, यशस्वी, अनेक प्रकारके विचित्र मुकुट एवं अङ्गद आदि आभूषणोंसे युक्त, वरदानी तथा वरस्वरूप सर्वेश्वरको नमस्कार है। भक्तिके प्रेमी, श्रेष्ठ दीप्तिसे सर्वथा पूर्ण सुन्दर दिखलायी देनेवाले, खिले हुए कमलके समान विशाल आँखोंवाले, देवेन्द्रके विघ्नोंका विनाश करनेके लिये पुरुषार्थ करनेको उद्यत वरस्वरूप, विरज योगेश्वरको नमस्कार है॥ ३९—४२॥

श्लोक 40 में अंतिम शब्द नमोऽजराय

ब्रह्मा और अन्य देवोंके आधारस्वरूप, लोकाधि-

Source: मन्त्रमहार्णवः/खण्डः ३ (उत्तरखण्डः)/तरङ्गः ०२

Same word NAM (नमः) is used along with sanskrit word AJAR (अजर : Immortal)

The **resulting word is Namoajraay**. It is on similar line of Namojae.

Namah + Ajaraay = Namoajraay

There is no scope of NAMAZ word formation in Sanskrit.

D. Conclusion

For nearly 800 years, Persian was the language of power, culture, and spirituality across South and Central Asia. As the official court language of India (11th–19th century), it left a lasting impact on Urdu, Hindi, Turkish, and Central Asian languages.

Persian words such as **Namaz**, **Roza**, **Mehfil**, **Dost**, **Khawab**, and **Zaban** remain embedded in South Asian languages.

The word **Namaz is entirely of Persian origin**—it is not Sanskrit.