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CB Login**Interview with Yashendra**[Key People - Researchers & Authors](#)< [Prev](#)[Next](#) >**An Interview with Yashendra**Writer & Director of '[The Rozabal Shrine of Srinagar](#)'

Yashendra was kind enough to answer some questions from us about his exciting new project, a film on the Rozabal tomb.

Tell us about yourself, what is your background?

Yashendra: Born in Gopalganj (Bihar State), India, just a few kms away from Kushinagar where Lord Buddha breathed his last. Topper in Masters in Geography from University of Mumbai. Served as a lecturer in Geography/Environmental Studies in Mumbai before becoming full-time film-maker. Mumbai is the centre of film-world in India.

Have been brought up, from very childhood, in a very invigorating intellectual & spiritual environment.

Respect to all thoughts, ideologies & Prophets have been inculcated in me as per Hindu traditions of 'Ekam Satyam Vipra bahudha Vadanti' ('Truth is One, Expressed in different ways by different knowers'). In fact, this film on Rozabal quotes this very well-known Vedic saying in its beginning.

As a kid I saw my grandfather, parents & surroundings in my hometown (Gopalganj is a very small township in the Gangetic plains of North India) revering Jesus, Mohammad & many greats of the world, just like other Indian seers & Prophets.

**Tell us about this project - what is the aim and how did it start?**

Yashendra: Well, I have been aware about the issue of Rozabal since long. Always wanted to explore the issue myself, but, you know, it requires resources & facilities. Luckily, an opportunity came I submitted this



project to the producers. We also think that the Rozabal can become a major tourist destination in India. It's a great symbol of convergence of all the major ideologies of the world today.



Christianity-because its supposed be the tomb of Jesus himself. **Vedic**: because Jesus travelled to India also in his teens & youth to acquaint himself with Indian wisdom in Puri, Varanasi, Rajgriha etc. He also interacted closely with the Shiva-worshipping Nath sect. He is still revered as one of the ancient Nath-Yogis. He was highly supported by King Shalivahan & King Gopananda. Ancient inscriptions in Srinagar have revealed that Jesus as Youza Asaf was requested by King Gopananda to guide repair of the ancient Shiva Temple atop Gopadri Hill in the city. Vedic thought subscribes to the view that Advents (Messengers of God) keep appearing from time to time to re-establish the principles of life & growth. According to Dr. Fida Hassnain, a leading authority on Rozabal & Ex-director of Jammu & Kashmir's Deptt. Of Archeaology,Museums & Research, the actual grave in Rozabal is in Jewish direction & style & the small rock temple above it in Vedic style. **Buddhist**: Because Jesus as Youza Asaf guided Buddhism. He is also supposed to have been the main force behind the 4th Buddhist Council which took place in Harwan, Srinagar while he was living in the area.King Kanishka, who was a Buddhist, issued two coins, one in the name of 'Budho' while the other in the name of 'Yuzo'. Thus, its obvious that he respected Buddha & Jesus equally. **Islamic**: Quran respects Jesus as one of the Prophets. It is so well-known. After the arrival of Islam in India, Islamic saints continued the 'Rishiyat' (Rishi-order) of Kashmir which is still going on. Started by Vedic Rishis, carried forward by Buddhist monks, this was continued by the Islamic Saints. Bam Uddin, Zam Uddin, Nasir Uddin, Payam Uddin, Qutab-Uddin, Qayam-Uddin, Shingar Bibi, Dih Bibi, Sheikh-UI-Alam Hazrat Noor-Uddin Wali etc. have been some of the famous names. **Baba-Zain-ud-Din Wali's shrine at Aish Muqam (near Pahalgam) is considered to be an ancient cave of the Rishis where Isa (the name by which Jesus is known in the East) also spent some time. Isa's supposed rod (staff) is still preserved there. The great Islamic saint Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, in late 19th century, did fabulous research on the Rozabal Shrine & called it the tomb of Jesus. He had got the tomb thoroughly investigated & also checked the historical records & local traditions of the area.**

Thus, Rozabal is a convergence point of all major thoughts of the world !

So, I was lucky that this project was approved by the producers.

When did you first hear about the Idea of Jesus travelling to India?

Yashendra: In early 80's, first time I read about this in the literature of Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra ji (1888-1969), a great seer who was born in the interiors of Bengal &, later, got settled in Devghar, Bihar.

This Seer always said that Jesus survived the crucifixion and migrated to live in Kashmir. His literature is full of elaborate details about how this all happened. Sri Sri Thakur ji has preached equality of all ideologies & his followers revere

Jesus, Mohammad, Buddha & Ram & Krishna etc. equally. He has preached this as the uncorrupted Vedic thought. He opines that all these Prophets are for the entire humankind and are points of convergence.

The erring followers have misused teachings of the Prophets to create conflict in the society, Sri Sri Thakur ji claimed. He has disciples from all communities but he has forbidden 'conversion'. As per him: "*Conversion is no version of religion*". He goaded Muslims to become better



Muslims & Christians to become better Christians. " *If you come to me to leave Christ or Mohammad, then I cannot help you and I doubt if anyone can.*" Sri Sri Thakur ji used to say. " *But if I can help you understand and follow Christ or Mohammad more effectively, I am prepared to try.*"

... Sri Sri Thakurji used to cry when crucifixion was mentioned to him. He said Jesus never wanted crucifixion, but he had no other way to win over the heart of Peter in whom he had seen the great tool of his future work. As per Sri Sri Thakurji " Jesus wants you to be perfect as his Father in the heaven is perfect." His followers pay daily obeisance to all prophets, including Jesus & Mohammad.

Actually, Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra ji has given so many & such details that all researchers on Jesus Christ must use them for further research. He has given deep & elaborate insights to several Biblical verses. He said that Matthew & Pontius Pilate were in hands & gloves in the plot to save Christ. True, Sri Sri Thakur ji is not a historian, rather a Seer with spiritual insights. But these insights can be used for further explorations on the subject.

I feel that Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra ji provides the best & most comprehensive theoretical framework to understand the life & deeds of Jesus. Unfortunately, there was not enough space in my film to include all these things.

Anyway, it was a big surprise to me to read that Jesus survived the crucifixion. So, I started reading more books. Holger Kersten's 'Jesus Lived in India' was one of the firsts. Swami Abhedananda's book vindicated Nicolas Notovitch's discovery of the Hemis manuscripts. Abhedananda's Guru Ramkrishna Paramhans (1836-1886) had also preached just like Sri Sri Thakurji.

In preparation for this film, I have read many more books & interacted with experts personally.

From your experience, what is the view of the government in regards to the tomb?

Yashendra: I think that the Govt. of India is neutral. It does not want flaring up of any conflict on this issue. Personally, I would like the Govt. to be proactive to get scientific investigations, like DNA testing of the tomb, done. However, the environment has to be amicable for this.

There are elements in the world, as well as in Kashmir, who do not want this. They do not want to allow scientific investigation at Rozabal. The Govt. of India & all of us need to find a way to get it done without flaring up violence. The Govt. must step forward to take the Rozabal Shrine under its protection & facilitate tourism there.

Protection & conservation of the site is of utmost important. India Govt's relevant ministry & department are best fit to do the job. This can be done without disturbing anyone's religious sentiments. The site should be open to all. No one has the right to ban anyone's entry. It's a common heritage of the mankind, no one's private property. ... I hope my film galvanizes efforts towards this cause. More so, because, after all, it's a film by Govt. of India itself.

What can we look forward to in your film ?

Yashendra: It is perhaps the most comprehensive film ever made on the Rozabal Shrine. So, you will find great content, though it was not possible for me to include all the facts & evidences. The subject covers such a vast geographical space. It also includes not less than 100 sub-topics on which separate films can be made !



We have worked in a shoe-string budget, you know how tiny govt. budgets are ! I wanted many more technical facilities & more time to shoot, but we simply did not have that kind of money. We have made the entire film in a budget which might be just a daily expenditure for shooting crews

of channels like Discovery or the National Geographic !

Still, you will find a story told in a way no one has ever told. Though we have not made any final claims, it will be very, very difficult for you to disagree with the view that it's the tomb of Jesus Christ himself..... I feel that another success of the film lies in conveying the all-encompassing love of Jesus to humanity, cutting across all boundaries of religions, cultures & creeds. Like all the prophets, Jesus was fulfiller of all diversities. All diverse natures, cultures, isms & philosophies can find fulfillment in Jesus, one of the Saviours of Mankind. Rozabal signifies this very message. Its relevance increases in today's strife-torn world.

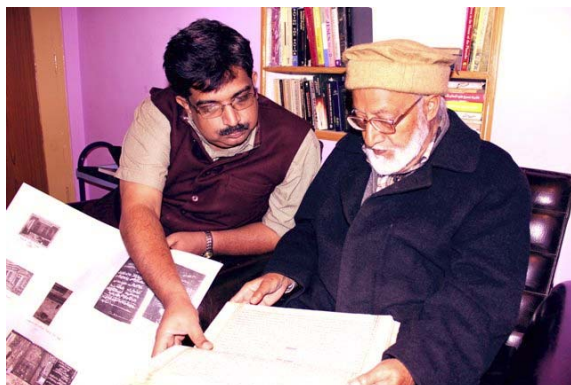
This is what you will find in the film.

Who were the experts you sought out during the production of the film?

Yashendra: I have used almost all important books & materials available on the subject. And I have tried to find the inherent links in different researches. In living experts, it is Dr. Fida Hassnain, ex-director of Jammu & Kashmir's deptt. of Archeaology, Museums & Reseach who is the main guide, as he lives in Srinagar itself & has personally seen all things. The other is Suzanne Olsson who lives in the USA. Their interviews are also there in the film. I tried my best to personally contact Holger Kersten, as his interview would have been another vital testimony in the film. However, by the time I could do so, my edit was over. We have to work in a limited timeframe, you know.

Were you able to visit the tomb itself and what was the atmosphere around the tomb like?

Yashendra: Oh, don't ask me this question. It was a thrilling experience to be at the tomb. But the atmosphere around it is disgusting. Its complete intolerance out there. The locals have been brain-washed by vested interests in Kashmir. These vested interests do not want this tomb to be recognized & propagated as the tomb of Jesus, not even with the "supposed " prefix. The local youth & others are paid to pelt stones. One needs personal high-level & inside-contacts among them to shoot or photograph the place. It can't be done publicly.



Did your personal religious views have any input in to this film project?

Yashendra: When I work on any topic as a film-maker, I work from a neutral point of view. In particular with such topics on should be a skeptic and explore from the contrary point of view. The only religious (if you call them 'religious') views which I always kept is that love of Jesus & for Jesus is of paramount importance, and other things are secondary; and that I revere all prophets. Nothing apart from that.

To me, spiritually, it does not matter whether Jesus lived or died or where was he buried or not buried & 'went to heavens'. What matters is that whether we love him or not, whether we implement his teachings into our character & behavior or not. This I can do even if do not believe in the Rozabal tomb. That is the reason I also like the Christian Church or anyone who promotes love for Christ. I may not agree with Church on many issues, including the crucifixion & conversion topics, but I am with them when its about the Love for Christ.

The Rozabal issue is important from another angle. It shows the real story, the real history. The Life, deeds & teachings of Jesus are far greater than what is commonly taught. When we look at

Rozabal, we realize that Jesus played a greater role in human history that previously understood. Moreover, his life, deeds and teachings are so heavenly, divine & miraculous in themselves that they do not need the crutches of un-natural happenings like 'going up to heavens'. He lived a normal life, but an abnormally normal one !

To anyone who realizes & accepts Rozabal & its full story, all disharmonies vanish in a second ! No communal disharmony can exist for such an individual. ...Thus, Rozabal shows the way to solution to today's world.

I would like to tell you an anecdote. When we were about to switch on the camera for the first shooting in Srinagar, we were informed that it was a Good Friday ! We had been so busy in travelling & shooting another documentary in New Delhi that we had virtually lost touch with outside world. So, it was a pleasant surprise & we took it as a divine blessing.

When and where will the film be shown? Will it be available to purchase at any time?

Yashendra: The producers of the film is the Films Division, Govt. of India. They have their own strategy about their films. So, it not possible for me to correctly answer this question. However, I have been told that this documentary film will go to relevant film festivals and will be shown on India's national network Doordarshan. I hope they make it commercially available or upload it on the net for universal viewing. They have already uploaded many of their documentaries on the net.



Having done the research what is your personal opinion about the theory and the tomb?

Yashendra: My film has put a disclaimer right in the beginning that we make no final claim. We do not want to show disrespect to anybody's religious beliefs. However, personally I am fully convinced that this is the tomb of Jesus Christ. Proper unbiased scientific investigations, like the DNA testing of the tomb, must be done now. And the shrine must be protected & preserved by the Gov. of India as a common heritage of mankind.

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