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Roza Bal

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The **Roza Bal**, **Rozaa Bal**, or **Rozabal** is a shrine located in the Khanyar quarter in downtown area of Srinagar in Kashmir, India. The word roza means tomb, the word bal means place.[citation needed] Locals believe a sage is buried here, "Yuz Asaf",[1] alongside another holy man, Mir Sayeed Nasir Din.[citation needed] The shrine was relatively unknown until the founder of the Ahmadiya movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, claimed in 1899 that it is actually the tomb of Jesus.[2] The tomb is in the shape of a Muslim grave, which Ahmad thought it is replicated by the local Sunni caretakers of the shrine, one of whom said "the theory that Jesus is buried anywhere in the face of the earth is blasphemous to Islam."[3]

Building [edit]

The structure stands in front of a Muslim cemetery[4] It consists of a low rectangular building on a raised platform, surrounded by railings at the front and an entry. Within is a shrine to Yoz-a-Asaph.[5] The building also houses the burial tomb of Mir Sayeed Nasir Din, a Muslim saint who was a disciple of Nooruddin Nooran Al-Rifai, 8th Imam of the Muslims whose shrine is in Shadipal.[citation needed]

The structure was previously maintained by a committee of Muslims, but now maintained by a board of directors consisting of Sunni Muslims.[6] According to Kashmiri writer Fida Hasnain, a supporter of the Ahmadiya movement, the tomb contains a wooden cradle that is said to show that Nazareth crucifixion wounds and the body is buried according to what Hasnain considers are the Jewish tradition of directions and not according to the Muslim tradition.[7] Contrary to Ahmadiya expectations of Hasnain's works has been highly critical - academic dismissing these claims includes Günter Grönbold, Wilhelm Schmaedeke, Norbert Klatt, Jan Gwacz and Gerald Cifuentes.[8]

History [edit]

Buddhist and Hindu period [edit]

There is no record of the shrine during Kashmir's Buddhist period, nor during the Kashmir Sultanate (1346-1589) when many Buddhist temples were converted into mosques, such as the Shankaracharya Temple or Throne of Solomon.[9][10]

Muhammad Dedamani, 1747 [edit]

The shrine is first mentioned in the *Waqi'a-Kashmir* (Story of Kashmir, published 1747), also known as the *Tarikh Ahamd* (History by Ahamd)[11] by the Khwaja Muhammad Azam Dedamari, a local Sufi scholar. Muhammad Azam states that the tomb of a foreign prince named Yuz Asaf (Yuzaf), or in modern local Kashmiri transcription Yoziu Asaph. The name may derive from the Persian "Yuzasaf" or the legend of Balauhar and Yudasaf, Yuzasaf being a name for Gautama Buddha.[12] Yuzasaf occurs as a spelling in the Persian Minam al-Garib of the Brethren of Purity and other sources.[13] Dozon Blochet (Langlois) (1869) notes the connection of the Buddhist Yuzasaf with Kashmir in part because there is a printing error in the Bombay Arabic edition referencing the legend of the Mission of Balahvar which makes the error of calling Kashmir "Kashmar" (كشمر) by confusion with Kushmaha (Persian: كشمه), the traditional place of the original Buddha's death.[14][15]

Court case 1770 [edit]

A court case was brought mentioning the shrine in 1784/1177AD[16]

The Seal of The Justice of Islam Mullah Fazil 1184A.H. verdict: New this Court, after obtaining evidence, concludes that during the reign of Raja Gopadatta, who built and repaired many temples, especially the Throne of Solomon, Yuz Asaph came to the Valley. Prince by descent, he was an adept in the Science of Medicine and had given up worldly pursuits. He spent his time in prayer and contemplation. The people of Kashmir, having become idolaters, after the great flood of Noah, the God Almighty, sent Yuz Asaph as a prophet to the people of Kashmir. He proclaimed the oneness of God to the people. Some of them believed in him and followed the Law of Islam. Yuz Asaph lived a holy life and he spoke and taught the Law of Islam. In the year 971 A.H. Syed Isa-ud-Din, a descendant of Imam Musa-Raza, was also buried besides the grave of Yuz Asaph. Orders. Since the shrine is visited by devotees, both high and common, and since the applicant, Rehman Khan, is the hereditary custodian of the shrine, it is ordered that he be entitled to receive the offerings made at the shrine as before, and no one else shall have any right to such offerings. Given under our hand. 11th Jamadi-ussani, 1184 A.H.

(translation by Fida Hasnain 1988)

Hasnain's translation follows Ghulam Ahmad in dividing the name of Yuzasaf, found in the Bilhawar and Yuzasaf tradition about Gautama Buddha, into two syllables, "Yuz Asaf."[17] Yuzasaf, Arabic: Yudasaf or Budhasaf, is derived from the Sanskrit Bodhisattva. The Sanskrit word was changed to Bodhisattva in the fifth or 7th century, then to Budhasaf or Yudasaf in an 8th-century Arabic document (from Arabic: ابوذاسف or ابوذاسف) by Abu Ishaq al-Sabi in handwriting.[18]

Indo-Pakistan War, 1965 [edit]

In the aftermath of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 and continuing Hindu-Muslim and Muslim-Muslim tensions and incidents the Zarat Rozabal was desecrated and the grave dug up on 27 October 1965. Indian counterpart Praveen Swami (2006) identified the culprits as a "day-back cow" of Pakistani operatives, but this is not confirmed by other sources.[19]

Ahmadiya claims [edit]

Main article: Jesus in Ahmadiyya Belief

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad [edit]

Legacy of Rozaa Bal shrine

The founder of Ahmadiya, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, inferring from the Verse 23:50 of the Quran, believed that the only occasion in the life of Jesus, son of Mary, that his life was seriously threatened, when a attempt was made to kill him by the cross. The Quran saying that "We...prepared an abode for them in a secluded place, a place of quiet and security, and water-springs were provided for them." Ahmad says, may one fittingly apply to the Valley of Kashmir.[20][21]

In his book Jesus in India, he elaborately explained the Jesus was the tomb of Jesus (Urdu: ईसा, English: Īsā, Persian: عیسیٰ, Arabic: عيسى, Hebrew: ישוע, Aramaic: ܝܫܘܥ, Hindi: मसीह हिन्दुस्तान में, Urdu: مسیح ہندوستان میں).[22][23] The book was fully published in 1908, and the first complete English translation in 1944.[24] Ahmad had suggested that Jesus survived the cross and did not die crucifixion, but travelled to the Indian subcontinent and died there at age 120.[25][26][27] Per Biblical scholars that Ghulam Ahmad segregated Yuzasaf into two components Yuz and Asaf, interpreted Yuz as Jesus and Asaf as Hebrew for gathered as signifying "Jesus the gatherer".[28]

The Ahmadiya writer Khwaja Nazir Ahmad's Jesus in Heaven on Earth (1952) developed Ghulam Ahmad's ideas.[29] There are rumo of a Hindu temple near Srinagar where Ghulam Ahmad claimed Jesus had died.[30] Ahmad's book sold out within weeks of its publication.[31] Nazir's 30 century Apocryphal Acts of Thomas and generally post-15th century Muslim sources in their reconstruction of an eastern travel path for Jesus.[32]

J. Gordon Melton states that having assumed the mujahedat (faith renewers) specialism in the 1880s, and having declared himself the Promised Messiah for the Christians, Ghulam Ahmad simply picked up the legend that Jesus had visited India to increase his self-identification with Jesus.[33] Gerald Cifuentes states that no historical evidence has been provided to support Ghulam Ahmad's theory that Jesus died in India.[34] Simon Ross Valentine describes the theory as a legend and considers the tomb of Jesus in Rozabal in Srinagar to be the legacy of a Jesuit origin of Ahmadiya taking the Holy Grail to Britain.[35] Paul C. Pappas states that from a historical perspective, the Ahmadi identification of Yuzasaf with Jesus was derived from legends and documents which include a number of clear textual errors (e.g. confusing the sign of Constantinople) and that "it is almost impossible to identify Yuz Asaf with Jesus".[36]

Ghulam Ahmad's theory that Jesus died in India is based on the Tomb Inscription of Nicolas Notovitch that Jesus travelled to India in his earlier years (before the start of his ministry) during the unknown years of Jesus and Ghulam Ahmad specifically disagreed with Notovitch.[37] Notovitch's claims to have found a manuscript about Jesus travelling to India and Ladakh and being crucified in Kashmir was a hoax.[38] Notovitch later confessed to having fabricated his evidence.[39] Modern scholars generally hold that in general there is no historical basis to substantiate any of the claims of the travels of Jesus to India.[40][41]

20th century [edit]

Khwaja Nazir Ahmad [edit]

After Notovitch and Ahmad the next widely noticed text was the 1908 The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ = Transcribed from The Book of God's Remembrance (Akashic Records), which Levi H. Dowling (1844–1911) claimed he had transcribed from an "Akashic Record".[42]

Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, an Ahmadi missionary in Woking, developed Ghulam Ahmad's ideas in the 1940s. He also claimed that Moses was buried at Bost on Mt. Nittoja near Bagdad.[43] In 1952, Ahmad published a translated section of the Bible and/or of Shia authority Ibn Babawayh (c. 991, called "ibn-Babuya") where Yuzasaf (Armaic) "Yuz Asaf" is mentioned:

> He compared the tree with Bodhisattva which he used to draw people, the spring with learning, and the birds with the people who are around him and accepted the religion preached by Bodhisattva. Buddhi after coming to Kashmir, many other people also embraced this religion which is called Kashmir. He travelled in it far and wide and spread there and spent his remaining life there until death overtook him. He left the earthly body and was elevated towards the Lord. Before his death, he made a disciple of his, Bidhad (Thomas) by name who used to serve him and was well-versed in all matters. Translation into English from Original Arabic of Ismail ibn-Ali Ibn-Ibrahim Ibn-Mohammad Ibn-Ali Ibn-Abdullah Ibn-Abbas Ibn-Abdul Muttalib Ibn-Hashim Ibn-Abdul Manaf. Second Edition Lahore 1952 Page 31 Section 3 Ahmad 1908 translation.

The claim that this text relates to Isa (Jesus) and not Buddhasaf and Josaphat originates in Ahmadi's earlier 1902 use of the same text. Ahmadiya claims that this section of the Ahmadi edition of Ibn Babawayh relates to Isa (Jesus) is rejected by Shia Muslims.[44] The Orientalist Max Müller had already translated this section into German (1894), when writing the claim of Yuzasaf to be Buddhasaf.[45]

Ahmadi websites and print sources cite various local documents and traditions in support of Ghulam Ahmad's identification of the Srinagar shrine as Jesus's tomb. These include:

- Islamic versions of the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat, in Arabic Budasaf or Yuzasaf.
- Ankaun-Zuri of Ibn Batrugal (c.950 AD) - regarding the Christian version of the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat.
- Gita-shastra, Gita Shastra Yuzasaph wa Nabin Bakashar (The Story of the Prince Yuzasaph and the Philosopher Bakashar) 19th-19th century Urdu version of the Buddhist Barlaam and Josaphat.
- The Ain-ul-Hayat of Ibn-Muhammad Habib Muhammad Imlani, Aligarh Mahjis (1816–1899)[46]

(c) Texts mentioning Jesus (Isa):

- Risalat-us-Safa of Ibn-Muhammad Ibn Khawand (1417, published 1852 Bombay) - which contains a version of the legend of Abgar concerning the conversion of the king of Edessa (called Nasibain or Nisibis in Persian) in Turkey before Jesus' crucifixion. Ghulam Ahmad Urdu, 1899, English 1975 quotes Jesus, Abgar, Thomas.
- Ibrahim-ya Maha Purana (after 1739), a Hindu text with a section discussing Jesus and Muhammad, also Queen Victoria

(c) Local history of Kashmir:

- A 1940 photograph of a single page purporting to be from Tarikh-i-Kashmir (History of Kashmir) a text written by Mullah Nadri 1420 AD, used as a source by Haidar Malik (1589). Khwaja Nazir Ahmad quotes it in Jesus in Heaven on Earth (1952) as saying: "The text in the photograph contains mention of Yuzasaf, but the standard text of the Mullah Nadri traditions transmitted by Haidar Malik contain no mention of Yuzasaf, and no historian cites Tarikh-i-Kashmir as containing a Yuzasaf tradition. The original page, which Ahmad tried to buy in 1948 is now lost, so no tests can be conducted to the age of the document.
- Waqa'a-Kashmir of Muhammad Azam Dedamari 1747 (Story of Kashmir, mention of Prince Yuzasaf)
- Official Decree of 1770 court case, - identifying the two saints at the Rozabal as Yuzasaf and Sayid Nasiruddin.
- Bagh-i-Sulaiman (The Garden of Solomon) of Pir Sadruddin Kashmiri (1790), a history of Kashmir which comments on the other Muslim holy man buried at the Roza Bal shrine, Sayyid Nasiruddin.[47]
- Waqiaat Takashif of Abdul Nabi Khwaja (1887) - History of the 8th period of Kashmir which mentions the Rozabal as grave of Sayyid Nasiruddin and prince Yuzasaf.
- Tahqi Sulaiman (Throne of Solomon), remains of a temple in the hill of Takht-i-Sulaiman, Srinagar.
- Tarikh-i-Kashmir-Azam, of Haji Moulvizadeh, (Amritsar, Surat Bhaskar Press, 1892) - the first source to mention that some believe the Roza Bal to be the tomb of Jesus (Isa), years before after Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's identification.[48]

Pappas states that the analysis of any possible combinations of date assignment to Nazir Ahmad's theory about the travels of Jesus indicates that none of the scenarios can be consistent with the generally accepted historical dates such as the reign of Gondophares, in part because Nazir Ahmad relied on the dating methods used in the court of Zaina-Kadal.[49]

Andreas Faber-Kaiser and Holger Kersten [edit]

In 1976 Andreas Faber-Kaiser, a Spaniard, in Chicago, and in 1983 Siegfried Obermeier and Holger Kersten, two German writers on esoteric subjects, popularized the subject in Christ Died in Kashmir, Christ in Kashmir and Christ Lived in India respectively.[50] Kersten's ideas were among various expositions of the theory circulated by Günter Grönbold in Jesus in Indien. Das Grab des Gottessohnes (Munich, 1985).[51] Kersten claimed that the work of Nicolas Notovitch (Jesus in Buddhist Sources) and The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ, Notovitch's forerunner, contained "hidden" Buddhist sources.[52] Gerald Cifuentes (in Australian Jesus) pointed out that Kersten's work is simply the recapitulating of a legend for consumption by the general public.[53]

The interpretation that the tomb is aligned Eastwest[54][55][56][57][58] is found in the Ahmadi publications such as, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Kashmir Nabi[59] and Ahmadiya official magazines Islamic Review 1981 and Review of Religions 1985.[60] Gerald Cifuentes (in Australian Jesus) states that Kersten's work is simply the recapitulating of a legend for consumption by the general public.[61]

Kersten's theory that Jesus died in India is based on the Tomb Inscription of Nicolas Notovitch and Ahmadi's claim that the Roza Bal shrine is aligned East-West.[62] Kersten's claim that Jesus's tomb is in the Roza Bal shrine is rejected by Shia Muslims.[63] The Orientalist Max Müller had already translated this section into German (1894), when writing the claim of Yuzasaf to be Buddhasaf.[64]

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Mainstream Muslims belief [edit]

Since mainstream Muslims, and secular historians do not accept the Ahmadiya claims of a visit by Jesus of Nazareth to India, mainstream Muslims and scholars also reject any possibility that the Roza Bal shrine is the tomb of Jesus. After Howard Walter (1919) in the Muslim World, a Christian missionary journal, he reported that local Muslims were of the opinion that the shrine had previously been a Hindu grave until the 14th century when Sayyid Sharifuddin Nizar Bukhari (d. 1327 CE, popularly known as Bulbul Shah) had brought Islam to Kashmir, and declared the grave to be not of a bodhisattva but of a Muslim saint.[89] Journalist Christopher Gordon Gribble (Jesus Christ Lived in India) quotes Walter's report of the local Muslim belief and Ghulam Ahmad's theory and Jesus in Kashmir is quote-mined to Islamic shrine over the course of Kashmir's history.[90]

See also [edit]

- Abbas Tabriziya, leader of a Jesus in India faith.
- Ella Maria Gulbhai, proposed grave of Mary, mother of Jesus, in Pakistan.
- Sacred Hypothesis, ideas that Jesus did not die on the cross.
- Tomb of Jesus, proposed graves of Jesus.
- Unknown years of Jesus, ideas on what Jesus did in a time not described in the New Testament, and other supposedly surviving crucifixions.
- Yuzasaf, proposed as a place Jesus stayed at in India.

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6. ^ Shuden Mahdi (Ch Bal Sahib). being a history of Kashmir from the earliest times to the end of the Afghan rule (1885). p. 1. "Roza Bal means a place and is applied to a tomb, or building in the form of a tomb."
7. ^ S. M. Mufti - My years with Nehru: Kashmir - Volume 2 1971 - Page 177 "Due to the presence of the Mirza Ahmadiya in the Valley, the people gradually acquired the name Ahmadiya (that in Kashmiri means lake) and the mosque came to be known as the Ahmadiya Masjid. Nearby is the present Ahmadiya village ..."
8. ^ Nagel, Tilmann (nach) Lorenzen, Angela (Hrsg.) Islam in Indien. Die Muslime in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart. Festschrift für Hermann Kulke. Wiesbaden 2008, S. 255 ff. Gribble, Jason (2012). "Review of Jesus Christ Lived in India". Journal of Religion in Europe. 5 (1): 74–77. doi:10.1163/187489212X633164. S2CID 159561311. "Nagel's Islamic investigation of a stranger's contrite tomb guide to some visits 1987 Page 225 (although that means Iran in Urdu, in this context, it means Kashmir) Gordon Gribble, Jesus Christ Lived in India (1988) p.140-2 Gribble's Jesus Christ Lived in India is the only work beyond the meaning to Europeans and those associated with ..."
9. ^ Andrew Wilson The Abode of Snow: Observations on a Journey from Chinese Tibet to ... 1875 reprint 1983- Page 343 the present a place, and Ala is the capital of Kashmir.
10. ^ Pandy Devaki Pandy Devaki's Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. Kashmir - 2004 Page 175 "Hence, Kashmir was known as the land where fakir ran down (Ikara). The ...
11. ^ Dedamari, Khwaja Muhammad Azam. Waqa'a-Kashmir (Story of Kashmir). Srinagar: Kashmir Publishers. p. 28. ISBN 978-0-00-000-000-0. Archived from the original on 8 February 2012. Retrieved 5 September 2010.
12. ^ Indology, Indiaenxus, and Orientalism by Douglas T McGetchin 21 January 2010 Fairleigh Dickinson University Press ISBN 9780838640968 page 133 "Faced with this cross-examination, Notovitch confessed to fabricating his story."
13. ^ "All the People in the Bible by Richard H. Cotsch 11 May 2005 Xlibris Corporation ISBN 9781597500388 page 1"
14. ^ "Ibn Warrad, Ibrahim (1995). Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence. Eerdmans Publishing. ISBN 0-8028-4308-5. Google Books".
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16. ^ "Ibn Ishaq al-Sabi, Ibn al-Jawzi, Ibn al-Muntazim, Ibn al-Kathir, and Ibn al-Ghazzali