

## The Kashmiri Calendar

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### Abstract

*The Tibetan ruler's son, Reincin, fled to Kashmir to avoid persecution after his father's death. Reinchin during the course of time, become the cynosure of the king Sah Dev. When Tatari Warrior Zulqader Khan invaded Kashmir, Reinchin took the reins of power in his hands and proclaimed himself the ruler of Kashmir in 1320 AD. He later converted to Islam. After Reinchin's death, Udhyan Dev recaptured the throne. In 1335 AD, a Turk warrior invaded Kashmir. Udhyan Dev ultimately declared abdication of his throne quite willingly. Shah Mir the army chief of Udhyan Dev, captured the throne and proclaimed himself king of Kashmir.*

*Lokik Calendar was in place in Kashmir till the accession to the throne by Reinchin. Who issued a decree that Hijree Calendar would henceforth remain in place officially throughout the kingdom. But it could not gain currency. Shah Mir's rule saw the invention and introduction of a new Calendar. There is a discrepancy between the two.*

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*Hassan Shah writes: the months recorded in the Kashmiri Calendar or the months of the Kashmiri Calendar year were named according to the name of months in Yazdi Jardi Calendar. It is significant to mention here that Hijree or Islamic calendar is essentially Lunar while as the Kashmiri Calendar is basically Solar. In the Lunar calendar, the year consists of 354 days and 22 hours while as according to the solar calendar the year consists of 365 days and 36 seconds. In order to rectify this discrepancy Sultan Shams-U-Din Shah Mir issued an order that after the completion of nine months of the year, "the following month shall also be the 9<sup>th</sup> month". Kashmiri calendar introduced by shah Mir lasted for 264 years. However, this calendar forfeited its currency from the very beginning of the Mughal rule in Kashmir. The Muslim calendar or Hijree Calendar took its place. The name of the Kashmiri months still held the sway. The fact remains that the festivals held in honour of the renoun Kashmiri saints or softi are celebrated by and large as per the months and dates of the Kashmiri Calendar.*

The centuries- old culture of Kashmir, have traversed all along on the pathways of progress and prosperity seemed to be all set to embrace, with its open arms, a concatenation of new and novel changes and challenges, emerging in the opening decades of the fourteenth century AD.

Quite incidentally, during this period, the Tibetan ruler, Bugyan, passed away and his son, Reinchin, fled to Kashmir to avoid and escape persecution and oppression at the hands of his over - ambitious and ruthless uncle who wanted to usurp the throne and kingdom of Tibet. After his flight to Kashmir, Reinchin sought refuge with Ram Chander Dev, the commander - in-chief of the then ruler of Kashmir, Sah Dev's army.

Reinchin emerged as a prominent public figure in the course of time and turned out to be the cynosure of both the common masses and the king, thanks to his exceptional intelligence, sa-

gacity, valour and hard-work. He became an immensely popular and powerful figure in the spheres of administration.

Sah Dev, the ruler of Kashmir was highly pleased with the personality & performance of Reinchin so much so that he showered his lavish and liberal favours and honours upon him. Besides he granted him Jagirs (fiefdom) as a token of gratitude of his unswerving loyalty as well as allegiance to the throne.

Mean while a ferocious Tatar Warrior Zulqader Khan invaded Kashmir with a massive military and material might. Consequently, the cowardly ruler of Kashmir, Sah Dev took to his heels as he found himself to be quite helpless and defenceless against the phenomenal might of the brutal. Barbaric Tatar invader, leaving behind him both Kashmir and the Kingdom sought refuge with his in-laws in Kishtwar. Sah Dev's brother, UDHYAN DEV too fled towards Pukhli. Reinchin and Shah Mir (Shah Mirza) also went into hiding, taking refuge in the Gagangir Fort along with Sah Dev's army commander-in-chief Ram Chander Dev.

Seizing the opportunity, Reinchin put Ram Chander Dev to death within the walls of the fort and proclaimed himself to be the ruler of Kashmir in 1320 AD. Highly impressed by the piety and saintly get-up of Hazrat Syeed Sharaf-u-Din Abd-ur-Rehman, Reinchin embraced Islam along with his family members. The said saint was popularly known as Bulbul Shah Sahib - the king of nightingales. Reinchin adopted a Muslim name, Sader-u-Din and entered into wedlock with Ram Chander Dev's daughter, Kota Rani. He showered favours and honours upon Ravn Chander Dev, Kota Rani's brother.

Ultimately Sader-u-Din left for his heavenly abode after having ruled Kashmir for two years and seven months. Close upon the heels of Sader-u-Din's death, Udhyan Dev returned from his exile, reached Pukhli and captured the throne by marrying Kota Rani. Thus he became the king of Kashmir. Udhyan Dev appointed Shah Mirza (or Shah Mir) and Peicha Bhat as his ministers. He

ruled over Kashmir for fifteen long years.

In 1335 AD, a Turk warrior named Owardawn invaded Kashmir with full military might. On receiving the message of invasion and advance made by the Turk warrior, Udhyan Dev, who was already terrorized by Zul Qadar Khan and his aggressive incursions abdicated his kingdom and escaped to Tibet. Being the loyalist and staunch supporter of the Kashmiri rulers all through his life, Shah Mirza plunged into the fray by virtue of his being the army chief and mobilized all the tribal chiefs land - lords and the nobles (nawabs) from all over Kashmir by entering into correspondence with them and solicited their support to crush the enemy, who had unleashed a hell and brutal of barbaric acts everywhere in Kashmir. The enemy was defeated and driven away. But Udhyan Dev's wife Kota Rani occupied the throne and looked after the affairs of administration and kingdom in absence of her husband. However, soon after his return, Udhyan Dev decided and declared abdication of his throne quite willingly and he relinquished control over kingdom voluntarily

Exploiting the situation, Shah Mir captured the throne and proclaimed him-self to be the king of Kashmir. Meanwhile Udhyan Dev passed away and his wife, Kota Rani tried her best to keep her grip over the administration and kingdom. But Shah Mir arrested Kota Rani and kept her imprisoned within the walls of InderKot Fort. However, under the pressure of circumstances, Kota Rani assented and consented to enter into a wedlock with Shah Mir. Thus Kota Rani returned to the capital. But as ill-luck would have it, Kota Rani committed suicide on the first night of consummation of marriage and ended her life.

According to the historians, Shah Mir / Shah Mirza happened to be the inhabitant to Kunar Swat area. His father was Tahir Shah and Fore Shah his grand father. Fore Shah was a pious and righteous person, gifted with some miraculous and occult powers. Shah Mir arrived in Kashmir along with his family members dur-

ing the reign of Raj Sah Dev, spurred by the prophecy made by his grandfather, Fore Shah. It is pertinent to mention in this context that Fore Shah had once prophesied that Shah Mir would one day ascend to the throne of Kashmir and he, as well as, his descendants would rule over Kashmir.

Obviously, Shah Mir was given a hero's welcome on his arrival in Kashmir. He was lavishly showered with honours and favours by Sah Dev in lieu of his unswerving allegiance and loyalty to the King. He too was given a fiefdom, (Jagir). Ultimately he was appointed the Army Chief in due consideration of his administrative and intellectual qualities and capabilities.

Eventually, Shah Mir ascended to the throne and proclaimed himself to be the king of Kashmir in 1335 AD. He came to be known as Sultan Shams-u-Din and thus he laid foundation of the Sultanate in Kashmir - the kingdom of Kashmiri Kings. He is truly regarded as the originator and ancestor of the Kashmiri rulers

It was Lokik calendar that was in place or in vogue in Kashmir till the accession to the throne by Sultan Sader-u-Din (Reinchin). This calendar was introduced in Kashmir from the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Kaljug calendar. However, Sultan Sader-U-Din issued a decree that Hijree Calendar would henceforth remain in place officially throughout the kingdom. But the Hijree Calendar and the names of the Hijree months could not gain currency or public popularity among the Kashmiri for a longer period as the reign of the Sultan Sader-U-Din lasted for only two and a half years. Udhyan Dev ruled for fifteen long years during the intervening period. Consequent upon the demise of Udhyan Dev, Sultan Sader-U-Din Shah Mir occupied the throne and introduced and invented a new Calendar which had already been approved and introduced by Sultan Sader-U-Din Reinchin in the year of his accession to the throne in 1320AD. As per this Calendar, 2007 corresponds to 687 Kashmiri Calendar year. The months in the Kashmiri Calendar were named exactly according to the taste and temperament of

the Kashmiris as well as their environment / climate.

The well-known historian, Hassan Shah writes in his book: The months recorded in the Kashmiri Calendar or the months of the Kashmiri Calendar year were named according to the months in Yazdi Jardi Calendar.

Pertinent to note here i.e. that "Yazdi Jardi" Calendar was introduced in Iran (Persia) from the time when Yazdi jardi ascended the throne and become the king of Iran.

Refer to the below given table which denotes the months of the year as per Yazdi jardi Calendar against the names of the months recorded in the Kashmiri Calendar as recorded by the historian, Hassan Shah in his book \_\_\_\_\_ Tarikh Hassan, VOL.\_I.

S. No	Name of months in Yazdi Jardi Calendar	Name of the Kashmiri months	Greek/ English Translation as per 12 Zodiac signs	
			Greek	(English version)
01.	Mahi Hamal	Waheq	Aries	(Ram)
02.	Mahi Saur	Zeeth	Taurus	(Bull)
03.	Mahi Joza	Har	Gemini	(Twins)
04.	Mahi Sartan	Shrawan	Cancer	(Crab)
05.	Mahi Asad	Baader	Leo	(Loin)
06.	Mahi Sumbala	Aeshid	Virgo	(Virgin)
07.	Mahi Meezan	Kartiq	Libra	(Balance)
08.	Mahi Aqrab	Monjhoor	Scorpio	(Scorpion)
09.	Mahi Quos	Pooh	Sagittarius	(Archer)
10.	Mahi Jadi	Magh	Capricornus	(Goat)
11.	Mahi Dolaw	Phaagun	Aquarius	(water Carrier)
12.	Mahi Hoot	Chither	Pisces	(Fish)

Note:-Month is called 'Mah' in Persian language.

While the first month in the Yazdi Jardi calendar is known as Hamal (Aries/Ram in English) the first month in the Kashmiri calendar year is called Waheq. Pertinent to mention here that the important and sacred festival known as Soonth (Spring) is celebrated with gaiety and fervour in Kashmir. This festival of Soonth or Spring is always celebrated in the first month called 'Waheq' of Kashmiri calendar.

According to Hassan Shah, a historian, there is a red letter day known as Soonth (Spring) that fall in the month of Hamal in the Yazdi Jardi calendar corresponding to the month of Waheq in the Kashmiri calendar. This day i.e. Soonth (Spring) is celebrated with great pomp and pageantry by the Kashmiris, just like the festivals of Idd (eid) - *Tarikh Hassan, Vol.-I*).

The late Iqbal Nath of Wanpoh (Anantnag) in South Kashmir writes about the significance and popularity of this day in these words:

This day assumes great importance in the Kashmir calendar as the sun shining exact over the equator, enters the Northern hemisphere of the earth on this day. Since Asia being situated in this hemisphere of the earth, the day assumes all the more significance, particularly for the agriculturalists and peasants of Kashmir. The entire gamut of agricultural activities are set into motion on this very day. The Shiates observe this day as the day of "Eid-I-Nowroze" (*Sheeraza Kashmiri Vol. 01. Edtion:IV*)

It is significant to mention here that Hijree or Islamic calendar is essentially Lunar while as the Kashmiri Calendar is basically Solar.

In the Lunar calendar, the year consists of 354 days and 22 hours while as according to the Solar calendar the year consists of 365 days and 36 seconds. Obviously the discrepancy existing between the two systems cannot be ruled out. Days and night are of equal duration on the occasion of Nowroze. But in the Islamic

(Hijree) calendar, Nowroze does not fall on the same date, since this calendar is basically Lunar and the days and nights are reckoned as per the movement of the moon. In order to rectify this discrepancy Sultan Shams-U-Din Shah Mir issued an order that after the completion of nine months of the year, "the following month shall also be the 9<sup>th</sup> month". Illustrating this it could be said that if the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the year was Poch, it could be named as 'Goud Pooh' (Initial Pooh) and the next month as 'Pot Pooh' (Later Pooh) or the following Pooh

Significantly, the Kashmiri calendar introduced and popularized by Sultan Shams-U-Din Shah Mir lasted for 264 years and it enjoyed official patronage as well as public acceptability/popularity. However, this calendar forfeited its popularity as well as its currency from the very beginning of the Mughal rule in Kashmir. The Muslim calendar or Hijree calendar took its place, though the names of the Hijree months could not gain popularity with the people here.

The name of the Kashmiri months still held the sway and were in fashion for a pretty long time. Pertinent to mention here that the name of Kashmiri month are still used by the Kashmiri poets and writers. The folklore still contains the name of the months. Even the modern poets repeatedly use these names for the dissemination of their poetic experiences and expression, courtesy their creative work. Presently, it is the Gregorian Calendar that is officially in use and in common practice over here but the common people make use of the Islamic / Hijree Calendar, too.

But unfortunately, the use and vogue of the Kashmiri calendar has since been given a good bye by the people here. However, the old fashioned people living in the remote rural area of Kashmir still make use of the Kashmiri months on some special occasions, especially, for undertaking and initiating their agricultural activities. But only rarely!



All in all, this is an established fact that the festivals (Urs) held in honour of the renowned Kashmiri saints and sofis are celebrated by and large as per the months and dates of the Kashmir Calendar. It may particularly be mentioned here that the urs (festival) of Hazrat Sheikh Noor-U-Din Noorani. (RA) is always celebrated on the 26<sup>th</sup> of Pooh of the Kashmir Calendar. The *urs* of Hazrat Baba Naseeb -u-Din Gazi. RA. and the *urs* of Hazrat Zaina-u-Din Reshi RA are celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Harr and the 12<sup>th</sup> of Waheq respectively.

Pertinent to mention here that the most of the epitaphs and tomb-stones installed in the grave yards in Kashmir carry the date of death written/ inscribed in terms of Kashmiri Calendar.

However, the Kashmiri Calendar has, honestly speaking, passed into oblivion and there is little or no hope of its revival. There is left absolutely nothing of this calendar except a negligible but long forsaken and long-forgotten part of it which constitutes the scintillating feature of some historical events as well as the Kashmiri cultural ethos and cultural heritage.

### References

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