

Koh-I-Noor “Mountain of Light”

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Abstract: Kohinoor diamond one of the largest diamonds in the world. The current name of the diamond, Koh-I-Noor is in Persian and means “Mountain of Light”. The Kohinoor diamond was first mentioned in 1306 when it was taken from a Rajah of Malwa, whose family had held the diamond for centuries. It was described as weighing 186 carats and was an oval cut white diamond - the shape and size of a small hen's egg. The name Kohinoor was first used by Nadir Shah in 1739. There is a so-called curse on the Kohinoor that affects males who wear it (but females are unaffected). Since being in the possession of Queen Victoria, only women wore the diamond. In 1526 the Mogul ruler Babur mentions the diamond in his writings, Baburnama. The diamond was gifted to him by the sultan Ibrahim Lodhi. He was the one who described the diamond's value equal to half-day production costs of the world. In 1849, after the conquest of the Punjab by the British forces, the properties of the Sikh Empire were confiscated. The Koh-I-Noor was transferred to the treasury of the British East India Company in Lahore. The Properties of Sikh empire were taken as war compensations. Even one line of the Treaty of Lahore was dedicated to the fate of the Koh-i-noor. In 1937, Koh-i-noor was transferred to the crown made for Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, based on Queen Victoria's regal circlet and is set in a Maltese cross at the front of the crown.

Keywords: Kohinoor, Diamond, Mountain of Light, Queen, Crown, Baburnama

1. Introduction

The Kohinoor is one of the oldest and most famous diamonds in the world. The history of the Kohinoor goes back in the history to more than 5000 years ago. The current name of the diamond, Koh-I-Noor is in Persian and means “Mountain of Light”. Kohinoor diamond once the largest known diamond in the world. The origin of Kohinoor was in Golconda in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India...it changed hand in many rulers of India to Persian ruler and many bitter war was fought for it...the legend also says that its brings a bad luck or misfortune if it worn or kept by male in contrast it brings good luck to female owners What is the origin and history of the Kohinoor diamond Though the history of the diamond is unclear it is said that it was found more than 4000 to 5000 years ago and is mentioned in ancient Sanskrit writings under the name Syamantaka. Hindus believe that Krishna himself obtained the diamond from Jambavantha, whose daughter Jambavati later married Krishna. The legend says that the diamond was stolen from Krishna as he lay sleeping. Another source claims that the diamond was discovered in a river bed in 3200 B.C Historical evidence suggests that the Kohinoor originated in the Golconda kingdom, in the south Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, one of the world's earliest diamond producing regions. This region was the first and only known source for diamonds until 1730 when diamonds were discovered in Brazil. The term "Golconda" diamond has come to define diamonds of the finest white colour, clarity and transparency. They are very rare and highly sought after.

2. Description of the Kohinoor Diamond

The Kohinoor diamond was first mentioned in 1306 when it was taken from a Rajah of Malwa, whose family had held the diamond for centuries. It was described as weighing 186 carats and was an oval cut white diamond - the shape and size of a small hen's egg. The Kohinoor diamond belonged to various Indian and Persian rulers but it became part of the Crown Jewels of England at the time that Queen Victoria was proclaimed empress of India. The

Kohinoor was re-cut at this time and now weighs 108.93 carats and is kept in the Tower of London.

3. Interesting facts

The name means “Mountain of Light” in Persian. It is believed that the name was first used by Nader Shah who took possession of the diamond in 1739. Prior to this date, the name Kohinoor wasn't used. There is a so-called curse on the Kohinoor that affects males who wear it (but females are unaffected). Since being in the possession of Queen Victoria, only women wore the diamond. It is believed that the famous Darya-ye Noor diamond is the Kohinoor's double. The Darya-ye Noor is hosted in Iran and has 182 carats. Both India and Pakistan claim the diamond should be handed by the British back to them.

4. Cutting

Cutting of Kohinoor diamond when the Koh-I-Noor diamond arrived in the hands of the British royal family it weighed 186 carats (37 grams). Prince Albert carefully searched for a diamond cutter with a very good reputation and headed to Netherlands where he gave the mission to cut the diamond to a certain Mr. Cantor who began the difficult task of cutting it. Mr. Cantor worked 38 days on the diamond. The diamond was cut into an oval shape and the weight was reduced to its current form and weigh of 108.93 carats. According to witnesses Prince Albert wasn't satisfied of the cutting work as the diamond did not shine as much as before.

5. Origin/Meaning of the name Kohinoor Diamond

The Kohinoor (Koh-I-Noor) originated from India in Golconda at the Kollur mine and was specifically mined from the Rayalaseema diamond mine (meaning Land of Stones) during the rule of the Kakatiya dynasty. The Kohinoor was then passed from one ruling dynasty to the next. The original name of the diamond was ‘Samantik Mani’ (Prince and leader among diamonds). In 1739 Nadir

Shah, the King of Persia, invaded India and was said to refer to the diamond as the "Mountain of Light". The Persian-Arabic words for "Mountain of Light" were Koh-I-Noor. The magnificence of the diamond and its value symbolized the power of an Empire. Possession of the Kohinoor led to murder, torture, mutilation and betrayal and stories of the Curse of the Kohinoor Diamond.

6. The Curse of the Kohinoor Diamond

The Curse of Kohinoor Diamond dates back to a Hindu text from the time of the first authenticated appearance of the diamond in 1306. The Curse of the Kohinoor Diamond reads:

"He who owns this diamond will own the world, but will also know all its misfortunes. Only God, or a woman, can wear it with impunity."

The history and lives of the rulers who owned the Koh-I-Noor diamond were filled with violence, murders, mutilations, torture and treachery. Whether or not people believe in the Curse of the Kohinoor Diamond, the history of the stone is undeniable - and the threat of the Koh-I-Noor curse is enough to make people cautious. The British Royal families were obviously aware of the Curse of the Kohinoor and from the reign of Queen Victoria, when the Kohinoor diamond came into their possession, it has always gone to the wife of the male successor to the British throne. The History Timeline details the story of the Kohinoor diamond

7. History of the Kohinoor Diamond

Myths and legends surround the stone. It was of incredible value and described by one of its owners, the Emperor Babur, the Great Mogal, as "Worth the value of one day's food for all the people in the world". The men, who fought for it, and the Kingdoms and great Empires that were won and lost, produced many stories of ill-luck that plagued the owners and became part of the history of the Kohinoor diamond.

It is believed that the diamond was first mentioned more than 5000 years ago in a Sanskrit script, where it was called the Syamantaka. Up until 1304, and the diamond was in the possession of the Rajas of Malwa, but back then, the diamond was still not named Kohinoor. In 1304, it belonged to the Emperor of Delhi; Allaudin Khilji. In 1339, the diamond was taken back to the city of Samarkand, where it stayed for almost 300 years.

In 1526 the Mogul ruler Babur mentions the diamond in his writings, **Baburnama**. The diamond was gifted to him by the sultan Ibrahim Lodi. He was the one who described the diamond's value equal to half-day production costs of the world. One of the descendants of Babur, Aurangzeb, however, was not a fear-inspiring and great ruler like his grandfather.

The Persian general Nadir Shah went to India in 1739. He wanted to conquer the throne, which had been weakened

during reign of Sultan Mohammad. The Sultan lost the decisive battle and had to surrender to Nadir. When Nadir Shah heard of the diamond, he decided he wants it in his possession. It was him the one that gave the diamond its current name, Koh-I-Noor meaning "Mountain of Light". But Nadir Shah did not live for long, because in 1747 he was assassinated and the diamond got to one of his generals, Ahmad Shah Durrani. A descendant of Ahmad Shah, Shah Shuja Durrani brought the Kohinoor back to India in 1813 and gave it to Ranjit Singh. In exchange Ranjit Singh helped Shah Shuja get back the throne of Afghanistan.

8. British East India Company

In 1849, after the conquest of the Punjab by the British forces, the properties of the Sikh Empire were confiscated. The Koh-I-Noor was transferred to the treasury of the British East India Company in Lahore. The Properties of Sikh empire were taken as war compensations. Even one line of the Treaty of Lahore was dedicated to the fate of the Koh-I-Noor.

9. The History Timeline of the Kohinoor Diamond

1200 - 1300's

There were many dynasties who owned the Kohinoor diamond including the Slave dynasty (1206-90), the Khilji dynasty (1290-1320), the Tughlaq dynasty (1320-1413), the Sayyid dynasty (1414-51), and the Lodi dynasty (1451-1526), these were all brief reigns ending with war and violence.

1306

In 1306 the Rajah of Malwa was forced to give the diamond to the rulers of the Kakatiya Empire

1323

Soon after, in 1323, the Kakatiya Empire fell after a rule stretching from 1083 to 1323. The diamond was taken by Muhammad bin Tughluq who became the Sultan of Delhi from 1325 to 1351

1323 - 1526

The diamond came into the possession of the Delhi Sultanate which consisted of many Muslim dynasties that ruled in India to 1526. During the Delhi Sultanate Muslim armies consisting of Mongol, Turkic, Persian, and Afghan warriors invaded India

1526

In 1526 the Kohinoor Diamond passed to the Mughal Empire when the Timurid Prince Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last of the Delhi Sultans, at the First Battle of Panipat. Mughal is the Persian word for Mongol. Babur mentions in his memoirs, the Baburnama, which the diamond had belonged to an un-named Rajah of Malwa. The Mughal Empire ruled most of the Indian subcontinent for two hundred years and the Kohinoor passed from one Mughal Emperor to the next. Violence and bloodshed followed these years often marked by the sons of the Emperors rebelling and overtaking their fathers. The

Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1592 – 1666), who was famous for building the Taj Mahal, had the Kohinoor Diamond placed into his ornate Peacock Throne.

1639

The Koh-I-Noor changed ownership several more times until the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan took the throne. In 1639 a struggle for the Empire started between his four sons - Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad Baksh when brother killed brother. Shah Shuja executed his brother Dara Shikoh and in then 1658 Aurangzeb defeated Shuja and Shuja who was tortured to death together with all his family

1665

In 1665 Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605 – 1689), French traveler and pioneer of jewelry and diamond trade with India, recorded his experiences in which he describes a great Mughal diamond said to be the biggest in the world. It was called the "Great Mogul" by Tavernier

1739

In 1739 the Persian King Nadir Shah invaded the Mughal Empire defeating their Emperor and stole the great Koh-I-Noor diamond (Nadir Shah is credited with giving the diamond the name it is known by today). The Koh-I-Noor Diamond was taken to Persia

1747

In 1747 the empire of Nadir Shah quickly disintegrated after he was assassinated - the Curse of the Kohinoor strikes again? After Nadir Shah's assassination, the diamond passed to his successors, each were dethroned and ritually blinded (Blinding was used to render an enemy powerless and make him a burden on his community.)

1800

1800 - Ranjit Singh took the Empire and possession of the Kohinoor diamond. Rajah Ranjit Singh died in 1839 and his successors lacked his bravery and vision. The hoisting of British flag was on March 29th, 1849 Lahore where Punjab was formally proclaimed a part of the British Empire in India. One of the terms of the Treaty of Lahore was:- "The gem called the Koh-I-Noor which was taken from Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk by Maharajah Ranjit Singh shall be surrendered by the Maharajah of Lahore to the Queen of England." Dr Sir John Login was entrusted with two charges: to take the Koh-I-Noor out of the Toshakhana (the jewel house), and also the guard's manship of the young Duleep Singh. It was formally handed over to the Punjab government of Sir Henry Lawrence (1806-1857), his younger brother John Lawrence (afterwards Lord Lawrence, the man who in February of 1859 would break ground on the future Lahore railroad station), and C.C. Mausel.

1851

1851 - Dalhousie arranged that the Kohinoor diamond should be presented by Ranjit Singh's successor, Duleep Singh, to Queen Victoria, the Empress of India

1851 - The Great Exhibition was staged in Hyde Park in London when the Koh-I-Noor was put on view by the British public

1852

In 1852 Prince Albert ordered that the Koh-I-Noor diamond to be re-cut from 186 carats to its current 105 carats thus increasing its brilliance. The Koh-I-Noor diamond was mounted in a crown with more than two thousand other diamonds. The Koh-I-Noor diamond was then used as the centre piece of the crowns of the Queen consorts to the British Kings. The Queen Consorts, Queen Alexandra and Queen Mary wore the crowns

1936

In 1936, the stone was set into the crown of the wife of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth (later known as the Queen Mother), wife of King George VI.

10. The Queen's Crown

Prince Albert (Prince Consort) and Sebastian Garrard stated that the Koh-I-Noor was badly cut; it is rose-not-brilliant-cut. It was decided to seek the advice of practical and experienced diamond cutters. A small steam engine was set up at Garrard's shop, while two gentlemen, Messrs Coster, Mr. Voorzanger and Mr. Fedder, travelled to London to undertake the re-cutting of the diamond. The Koh-i-noor was embedded in lead, two weeks later, after examining the stone. Mitchell thought that it had lost nearly all its yellow colour and become much whiter. The re-cutting took 38 days and cost £8000 (\$40,000). The final result was an oval brilliant diamond weighing 108.93 metric carats, which meant a loss of weight of just fewer than 43 per cent. It was now in stellar brilliant-cut, possessing the regular 33 facets, including the table, while the pavilion has eight more facets than the regular 25 bringing the total number of facets to 66.

In 1853, it was mounted on a magnificent crown for the Queen, which contained more than two thousand diamonds. Five years later, Queen Victoria ordered a new regal crown for the diamond. In 1911, Garrards made a new crown that Queen Mary wore for the coronation – it contained diamonds, among them the Koh-I-Noor. In 1937, this was transferred to the crown made for Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, based on Queen Victoria's regal circlet and is set in a Maltese cross at the front of the crown.

11. Koh-I-Noor other name of a 'Deadly Curse'

It is widely believed, British kings possessed 'Koh-I-Noor' without knowing how to use properly, and therefore it became a mixture, more of a curse than a blessing. The history of this jewel speaks itself, the British Empire which had once expanded throughout the world ever shining like the Sun, is now restricted to a fixed territory.

This jewel is slow, belongs to Saturn, a slow moving planet, and hence affects the possessor cautiously rather than quickly. Normally it takes several years to start its

effect between 10 and 25 years, it gives luck only to those who know its procedure to keep it purified.

Otherwise, it forces the possessor to dispossess his or her territory and to disturb home peace. It is equally less lucky for the queens, they are to dispossess many valuables and land to ward off its evil effects, or face some tragedy.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh got this jewel in 1813 and it affected him after 25 years and he suffered from a paralyzed attack in 1839 and died in the same year. In 1849, exactly after 10 years, the British forces toppled his kingdom, which was controlled by members of his family. Further, all of Duleep Singh's eight children died childless.

The effect of Koh-i-noor makes females or queens more possessive, self centered and self-seeking, forcing them to lose some territory, reputation and brings unhappiness at home, breaks home and ultimately may end the monarchy as per some occult reading of this Gem.

Great Britain had to struggle hard to retain possession of the Falkland Islands also known in Spanish as the Islas Malvinas. They also had to surrender the colony of Hong Kong to China in 1997, faced the tragedy of Prince Diana in the same year, suffered reputation in Iraq attack in 2003, by facing the wrath of their people, and then new marriage of Prince Charles with Camilla in 2005 and uncertainty of future King of England.

Hence Koh-I-Noor has turned out to be unlucky for the Queens and the Kings as universally believed unless they observe and maintain the purity of the diamond.

Author's Profile

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