



**Interview  
with  
Ashwin  
Sanghi**

**Author of  
The Rozabal Line**

**Q: The Rozabal shrine in Kashmir has reportedly received such a surge of pilgrims and tourists that the caretakers have closed access to it.**

At the heart of this matter lies the fact that the tomb at Rozabal is viewed as the final resting place of two Muslim saints—Syed Naseerudin and Yuz Asaf—by local Muslims. On the other hand, there are those who support the view that Yuz Asaf was none other than Issa, or Jesus Christ. My novel, *The Rozabal Line*, is a piece of fiction that builds upon this notion that Yuz Asaf could have been Jesus Christ and that his bloodline may continue to survive in Kashmir till the present day. While my book is a work of fiction, there are those who believe that the theory can be proved through DNA testing. The closure of the shrine is a reaction to this fundamental conflict in beliefs.

**Q: Is it true that your book *The Rozabal Line*, already into reprint, was one of the reasons for the burst of interest?**

Before *The Rozabal Line* was published there had been several works of non-fiction on the same subject. For example *Jesus Lived in India* by Holger Kersten, *Jesus in Kashmir: The Last Tomb* by Suzanne Olsson, *The Fifth Gospel* by Fida Hassnain, *The Unknown Life of Jesus* by Nicolas Notovich and *Jesus in Heaven on Earth* by Khawaja Nazir Ahmad. Unfortunately there are few readers interested in non-fiction about a relatively obscure tomb. *The Rozabal Line*, on the other hand, was a work of commercial fiction—a thriller.

**Q: What kicked off your own interest in the tomb?**

The notion that Jesus may have left a bloodline came to my attention in late 1999 when I read *Holy Blood Holy Grail* by Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln. A couple of years later, I read some of the material on Rozabal and was fascinated with the idea that Jesus could have been inspired by Buddhism and that he may have drawn much of his spiritual learning from India. The fact that the Russian explorer Nicolas Notovich had found Buddhist scrolls that specifically referred to Issa—or Jesus—at the Hemis monastery in Ladakh was also a point that fascinated me.

**Q: Your book seems to suggest that Christianity is not alone; it is joined by Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism in its basic concept. Were you not afraid of angering some readers?**

Not really. My book starts with a disclaimer that it is a work of fiction. I have never claimed that my novel is a version of the 'truth' because in matters of religion I think that there is indeed nothing more relevant than personal belief, and what one believes may not be the same as another. However, I do personally think that there are far too many oddities to be wished away as mere coincidence. My effort has been to highlight each of these little nuggets of information as part of the overall story. Many of my readers have written to me saying that they enjoyed the novel much more when they read it a second time because they were able to pick up all the little hidden treasures. I am a storyteller not a historian or theologian. My job is to entertain. Period.

**Q: Some of your characters are unsavoury to the extreme. How can you link them to divinity?**

*The Rozabal Line* is not merely a thriller about the occupant of the tomb at Rozabal. It's also a story that has a karmic basis. In the world of karma there is nothing that can be labeled as good or bad—it merely is. My objective of writing *The Rozabal Line* was not to get the reader to love or hate specific characters but to highlight the fact that all actions are rooted in karmic events.

**Q: Are you working on another book? Will it be anything like *The Rozabal Line*?**

As we speak, my second novel is under editing and will be published later this year by Westland under their imprint Tranquebar. My next book has two key similarities with *The Rozabal Line*. The first is that both books have a very strong historical foundation and are based upon years of research. The second similarity is that both books use historical events to explain events that happen in the present day. However, unlike *The Rozabal Line*, which combines history with theology to produce a story, my next novel combines history with politics to achieve the same end result.

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