

Amazing Story of a Man Who Survived Being Buried 40 Days



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November 19, 2008

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Image by Margaret Bourke-White, 1946

According to a fascinating report printed in the London Telegraph in 1880, a man was buried 'in a condition of apparent death' for 40 days and survived. No tricks or tomfoolery were involved, so how did he do it?

It's often the case that when someone professes to be able to do something remarkable, that great gift of human nature kicks in – skepticism. So when Maharajah Ranjeet Singh heard from an Indian fakir who claimed he could come back to life after being buried for several months in an apparent state of death, the Maharajah could only reply with one statement – proof or it didn't happen.

At once, the fakir, named Haridas, was summonsed before the Maharajah – who regarded the idea as possibly fraudulent – to act out exactly how he could accomplish this amazing feat.

In full view of the Maharajah and nobles of the court, within a short time, the fakir appeared comatosed. One of the witnesses at the time, an Honorable Captain Osborn, made his own account of the event:

“When every spark of life had seemingly vanished, he was ... wrapped up in the linen on which he had been sitting, and on which the seal of Ranjeet Sing was placed. The body was then deposited in a chest, on which Ranjeet Sing, with his own hand, fixed a heavy padlock. The chest was carried outside the town and buried in a garden belonging to the Minister; barley was sown over the spot, a wall created around it, and sentinels posted.”

So was the mistrust of the Maharajah.

The familiar image of a fakir on a bed of nails:



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Image: [Herbert Ponting](#)

After 40 days the fakir was exhumed and the chest opened. The man, although cold, was in the exact same condition as he was in 40 days previously. Revived by having heat applied to the head, his body rubbed and warm air blown into his ears and mouth, the fakir returned to a full state of consciousness.

A second eye witness account by a Sir Claude Wade, present to detect any signs of fraud, better explain the fakir's resuscitation:

“I proposed to Runjeet Singh to tear open the bag and have a perfect view of the body before any means of resuscitation were employed. I accordingly did so; and may here remark that the bag when first seen by us looked mildewed, as if it had been buried some time.

The arms and legs of the body were shriveled and stiff, the face full, the head reclined on the shoulder like that of a corpse. I then called to the medical gentleman who was attending me to come down and inspect the body, which he did, but could discover no pulsation in the heart, the temples or the arms. There was, however, a heat about the region of the brain which no other part exhibited.

The servant then commenced bathing him with hot water, and gradually relaxing his arms and legs from the rigid state in which they were contracted, Runjeet Singh taking his right and I his left leg, to aid by friction in restoring them to their proper action... The servant then put some of the ghee on his tongue and made him swallow it.

A few minutes afterward the eyeballs became dilated, and recovered their natural color, when the Fakir recognized Runjeet Singh sitting close to him, and articulated in a low sepulchral tone, "Do you believe me now?"

The Maharajah did indeed believe him and presented the fakir with gifts of a pearl necklace, gold bracelets and pieces of silk and muslin, those that are normally reserved for people of distinction.

How did the fakir manage to survive being buried for 40 days?

For a long time there have been claims that fakirs, yogis and shamen can control their physiological condition by mind power alone. Reports from 1925 suggest an Egyptian man, Tahra Bey, could increase his heart rate to 140 beats per minute (bpm) and slow it down to 40 bpm, or sometimes stop it completely. And in 1974, a jujuman from Togo in West Africa was buried in a coffin, covered with concrete slabs and layers of mortar. Just as the onlookers began to panic and pleaded with authorities to help him out, the man emerged unscathed. He said his secret was meditating for long periods of time underground.

Fakirs are known to be able to walk on fire without getting burnt:



Photo:

Image: [*The Secret Museum of Mankind*](#)

Hadrias, the Maharajah's fakir, revealed he purged his digestive system some time before the internment and drank only small quantities of milk on the days leading up to the display. On the day he was to be buried he swallowed a strip of linen three fingers wide and 30 yards long, which he withdrew immediately, to clean out his stomach. These pre-theatrics, and a knack for in depth meditation, meant the fakir survived.

On another occasion, the same fakir was buried for a period of four months, this time his beard was shaved off just beforehand, and when he was dug up again his chin was as smooth as the day he was buried, thus proving that suspended animation is indeed possible.

But without pics? Well...