

PLAY NAQSH GANJIFA

Playing cards:

Ideally a 48-card Naksh set with the Mughal card suits is needed but the standard 52 card French pack can be used to play Naqsh but with all Jacks removed. In the latter case do not consider the colours of the suits but take only the points (for example the 2's of all suits).

For images of a full set of Naqsh cards from Bishnupur, click this link:
<https://middlebury.emuseum.com/objects/2051/pack-of-naqsh-cards>

Rules:

Kaushal Gupta (1979) describes the rules of the game as played in Delhi (upto the 1920s) as follows:

The whole pack is said to have eight "Tash" (cards) and not suits (Bazi).

- Taj is called Kishmishi (or raisin) Tash
- Safed is called Black Tash,
- Shamsheer is called Tash with lines
- Ghulam is called Katha Putali (Puppet)
- Chang is called Green Tash
- Surkh is called Sun-faced Tash
- Barat is called Tash with bricks
- Qimash is called Urad ki Dal (Tash with black lentil).

There is no distinction or division of the suits determining the value of the cards. All the number cards have their value in the ascending order. The names of the two court cards are Mir (King) and Ghodi (Mare).

The score is calculated as follows :

- Twelve points for a Mir,
- Eleven points for a Ghodi,
- The number-cards have the points according to their value, Ten for a Ten and Nine for a Nine, and so on. There can be five to seven players for the game of Naqsh but the practical number is six.

One card is dealt to each player. He who draws the highest card is the dealer. Then the dealer deals one card unexposed to each player starting from the player on his right. Now a second card is given exposed to the player on the dealer's right. Seeing his card, that player may ask for a third card or a fourth which would also be given exposed. The aim is to make Naqsh which is made with a total of seventeen.

There is no limit to the number of cards to be taken to make a Naqsh of Seventeen points, but the Naqsh with twenty-one points must be declared with two cards only. The Naqsh with twenty-one points are of two combinations only, that is a King and a Nine, and with a Ghodi and a Ten. The Naqsh with the combination of two cards making seventeen points are four, that is, a King and Five, Mare and Six, Ten and Seven, and Nine and Eight. The first player on the right hand of the dealer would announce Naqsh the moment he makes it, and would show his cards and become the next dealer, but he gets no money. If he cannot make a Naqsh he has the option to remain in the field with 14, 15 or 16 points in hand, or to throw his cards, but he has to declare so.

The dealer would then deal the card to the next player and the process is repeated. If none is able to make a Naqsh, then the dealer takes cards for himself in the same manner, and if he makes a Naqsh he is the winner and gets money according to the stake from each player.