

How not to buy Topaz instead of Sapphire in India.

Written by Ashutosh
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In India, the Pukhraj (Sapphires) are very much in demand due to their popularity as panacea for all Jyotish cures, especially the yellow pukhraj. Marriage problems, career troubles, health issues, anything it may be, a Pukhraj is prescribed to almost everyone by the multitude of pseudo-astrologers. So, one can understand that the market for Pukhraj is very huge in India. This demand for yellow sapphires is widely exploited by the dishonest jewelers and astrologers. Now, I will tell you about one of their successful tricks.

In some English-Hindi dictionaries the English meaning of the term Pukhraj is given as 'Topaz'. Whereas, it should have been 'Sapphire' and not 'Topaz'. The clever gem dealers keep such a dictionary with them. When someone approaches them seeking a Pukhraj they sell them a Topaz instead of a Sapphire. They also show certificates from a gem testing Laboratory for the shown Topaz which says that it is a genuine 'Topaz'. Then, the term in the dictionary is shown to the customer to convince them that a Pukhraj is actually a Topaz.

What the less aware gem buyers do not know is that the Topaz is a semi-precious gemstone and is a much more abundant in nature than the Sapphire. Sapphires are rare and are counted as actual precious gemstones. The price, demand and the allure of the Sapphires are only next to Diamonds. In terms of hardness as per the Moh's Scale of hardness, Diamonds are at number 10, the hardest gemstones, and Sapphires are at 9, only next to Diamonds, although there is a great difference between the actual hardness of diamonds and sapphires. There being no other harder gemstone than sapphires after diamonds the sapphires are kept at number 9 on Moh's Scale.



A Topaz is at number 8 on the Moh's Scale of hardness and its absolute hardness is only 50% of a Sapphire's absolute hardness. A Sapphire's absolute hardness is 400 while the Topaz's is 200. A diamond's hardness is 1600. You can understand the difference in hardness by this

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comparison. The Sapphire is a corundum variety of gemstone just like a Ruby too is and its chemical composition is mostly Aluminium Oxide. A Topaz consists of mainly the silicate mineral of aluminium and fluorine. A Topaz has lesser density and specific gravity than a Sapphire. A 5-carat Topaz would look as big as an 8 carat Sapphire. A Topaz is much lighter than a Sapphire of a similar size and shape.

The Topaz is also much lesser in cost as compared to a Sapphire, is worth around one-fifth to one-tenth the price of a Sapphire. You can imagine the profit the gem dealers make when they sell a Topaz at the price of a Sapphire. One other reason, besides the wrong entry in dictionary, why people fall in this Topaz trap is that the Topazes have a better and more diverse shade of colours than the Sapphires. Thus, they look more attractive and alluring to the unaware buyer when it is compared to a genuine natural sapphire.

So, next time you want to buy a Pukhraj, insist on buying a Sapphire and not a Topaz.