



ĀS

ĀS, a game of playing cards (see [CARD GAMES](#)) which became popular in the Qajar era, and hence replaced *ganjafa*, the card game associated with the Safavids. The cards were made of papier-mâché strengthened by calico. Their oblong size did not exceed 6 x 4 cm. in general. The surface was painted and lacquered. The reverse side was mostly black. The front sides were distinguished from each other by five ground-colors. They are listed as follows in order of their value, starting with the highest ranking: black: *Ās* (the Ace); green: *Šāh* (the Shah); yellow: *Bibi* (the Queen); golden yellow: *Sarbāz* (the Jack); and red: *Lakkāt* (harlot, the lowest in value).

The above faces are mostly framed, either by simple lines, or by medallions with leaf decoration. In the most common packs, the *ās* is represented by a lion fighting a dragon or attacking a gazelle; sometimes the human-faced sun (*Koršid-kānom*) is added. The *šāh* is mostly shown seated on a chair, wearing a uniform distinguished by regal head-gear, attended by one to three young noblemen in a pose of obeisance. The *bibi* is also shown seated, sometimes with an infant on her knees, and attended by servants but not always distinguished by signs of royalty. The *sarbāz* is mostly represented by one or more soldiers, noblemen or hunters, all wearing clothes of European design. The lowest suit, the *lakkāt*, is represented by a female of low rank like a servant or dancer.

There are four more types of decoration for a pack: flower-designs,



arabesques, erotic scenes, or mythological figures. Some cards of the last type have names of the figures inscribed on them: Kayumart representing the Shah, Farangis the Queen, Kāva the Jack, and Sudāba the *Lakkāt*.

The rules are similar to those of American poker but there is no flush, straight flush, color and straight. Moreover it is not possible to exchange cards because a pack is composed of 25 cards only, with five suits. Normally five persons play, each one receiving five cards. The highest hand is *panj-sar*, which means a player has five cards of one suit. Should more than one player who placed his stakes have a suit, the one whose suit has the higher value wins the game, i.e. the suit of *ās* precedes that of Shahs etc. The next highest hand is *čāhār-sar*, which means holding four cards of one suit. It is followed by *se-opas*, i.e. three cards of one suit and two of another. This is followed by *se-sar*, i.e. three cards of a suit and two cards of different suits. Then *do-pas* follows for which the player needs two cards of two suits each. The lowest hand is *do-sar*, i.e. two cards of one suit. Bluffing is a main feature of this game.

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