

JAHANGIR AND KASHMIR

Bashir Ahmad Maliyar

Junior Research Fellow, Department of History, University of Kashmir.

Abstract

All the Mughal emperors from Akbar to Aurangzeb worked for the protection and propagation of historical and cultural heritage of Kashmir, but Jahangir's methods for drawing the attention of people towards Kashmir's culture and history was unique. Jahangir was a naturalist; Kashmir's natural beauty and heritage became the source of his inspiration and creativity. He visited Kashmir frequently and made Kashmir a second home. He made Kashmir the summer capital of the Mughal Empire. However, during his visit to Kashmir he generally collected information regarding the historicity of the places, population, productions and natural features of the region. He recorded the historical facts of Kashmir in his Memoirs, known as *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*. Jahangir records the historical places, natural resources, social life and structure of society in Kashmir in a very realistic manner.

Keywords: Mughals, Kashmir, Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Naturalist.

► *Corresponding Author: Bashir Ahmad Maliyar*

Kashmir was one of the prized *subas* of Mughal empire. It was the northern political borderland of the empire. Kashmir became the summer resort for Mughal kings and they regularly visited the Valley. Jahangir came to Kashmir seven times, no other Mughal ruler visited to this extent.¹ The Mughal Emperor Nur-u-din Jahangir treated Kashmir as most favourite part of the Mughal India because of his unique interest in and abundance love for Kashmir. It is stated that when he lay on his death-bed and was asked to name anything which was dearest to his heart, he said Kashmir.²

The Mughal sources eulogize Kashmir to the pinnacles of glory. Abu Fazl and Jahangir calls it a garden of eternal spring and iron spring.³ The Poets expressed beauty of the valley as Urfi's celebrated reflect:

*Har sokta jan-e- ki Kashmir dar ayad
Gar murg kabah ast ba baal-o-par mei aiyed*

The Period of Jahangir was a period of pacification, healing up on the wounds caused by annexation and the creation of new forces seeking peace, tranquillity and prosperity in Kashmir. The reforms introduced were bearing fruits strife gave ground to concord, instability to consolidation, misery to prosperity particularly due to personal interest taken by Jahangir in the

¹ Fr. J.Xavier, *Letters from Kashmir 1593-1617*, Eng. transl. H.Hoston. JASB NO. XXIII,1927, pp.115-17, Francisco Pelsaert (1626), *Remonstrantie*, trans. W.H.Moreland and P. Geyl, *Jahangir's India*, Cambridge, 1925, pp. 33-34.Nicolso Manucci, *Mogul India (1653-1708) or Storia do Mogor*, (in 4 Vols, Bound in 2), translated with introduction and notes by W, Irwine, Delhi, Reprinted in I, pp.2005, pp.100-1.

² R.K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir 1320-1819*, Srinagar, 2009, p. 301.

³ *Ain*, III, p. 357. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Syed Ahmad, Gazipur and Aligarh, 2006, Eng tr. Alexander Rogers and Henry Beveridge, 3Vols., Delhi, 1968, Reprinted, 2006, Vol, II, p. 143

affairs of Kashmir. Jahangir was a just ruler, one who personally paid heed to the grievances of his people and was known as the patron of arts. Apart from his passionate interest in artistically decorating the pleasure spots in the Valley, other events associated with his reign have historical interest of their own.⁴ Since he was a naturalist, Kashmir's natural beauty and heritage became the source of his inspiration and creativity. Though all the Mughal emperors from Akbar to Aurangzeb worked for the protection and propagation of historical and cultural heritage of Kashmir, but Jahangir's methods for drawing the attention of people towards Kashmir's culture and history was unique. He visited Kashmir frequently and made Kashmir a second home. He made Kashmir the summer capital of the Mughal Empire. However, during his visit to Kashmir he generally collected information regarding the historicity of the places, population, productions and natural features of the region. He recorded the historical facts of Kashmir in his Memoirs entitled *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* and is written in Persian language by Jahangir. Jahangir records the historical places, natural resources, social life and structure of society in Kashmir in very realistic manners.

He mentions the Bihat (Jhelum)⁵ river which flows in Srinagar flowed very fast and during rainy season generally the bridges on it were broken. Jahangir was very much impressed from the cultural importance of the Verinag spring.⁶ It is an octagonal reservoir about 20 yards long and the diameter of the spring was 40 yards.⁷ Near it are the remains of a place of worship for ascetics and rock cut caves. The water is extremely pure. After the accession of Jahangir, he ordered to build them the sides of the spring round with the stone. They made a garden round it with a canal and built halls and houses about it, and made a place such that travellers over the world can point out few like it".⁸ For Jahangir, the streams and springs of Kashmir provided plenty of water to the people of Kashmir. One can assume the extent of Jahangir's interests in these water resources extracted from his Memoir.

When he visited a fountain of *Inchh* village he was much impressed with the characteristics of the fountain, and described in these words: "I first visited the fountain of Inch. This village had been given by my father to Ram Das Kachhwaha and he had erected buildings and basins at the spring. Undoubtedly, this place is exceedingly sweet and delightful. Its water is perfectly pure, clean and clear and many fish swim in it."

*So clear the water that the grains of sand at bottom
Could be counted at midnight by a blind man.*⁹

As I gave the village¹⁰ to my son Khan Jahan, he prepares an entertainment there, and presented offerings. I choose a trifle in order to please him. About half a koss from this spring there is a fountain that they call *Macchi Bhawan*¹¹ above which Ray Bihari, one of the servants of my father (Akbar) built an idol temple. The beauty of this spring is more than one can describe and large

⁴ R.K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir 1320-1819*, p.302.

⁵ *Tuzuk*, p. 297

⁶ Mutamid Khan, *Iqbalnama-i- Jahangiri*, ed. Moulvi Abdul Hay and Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, 1952. Urdu tr. Mohammad Zakira Mayil, Karachi, 1963, p. 153

⁷ Abdul Majid Matto, *Kashmir under the Mughals 1586-1752*, Srinagar, 1988, p. 20

⁸ *Tuzuk*, p. 92

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 173

¹⁰ Ram Das had died eight years before this.

¹¹ Mutamid Khan, *Iqbalnama-i- Jahangiri*, p.154

trees of ancient years, planes, white and black poplars, have grown up round it. I passed the night at this place. The spring of *Achval* attracted the attention of Jahangir and latter not only described the attractive features of these, but also evaluated the historical value of them. Appreciating the significance of *Achval* spring Jahangir writes, “The water of this spring is more plentiful than that of other and it has a fine waterfall. Around it lofty plain trees and graceful white poplars, bringing their heads together, have made enchanting places to sit in. As far as one could see, in a beautiful garden, *jafari* flowers had bloomed, so that one might say it was a piece of Paradise”. The garden of *Achval* served Jahangir for drinking and merry making spot.¹² Similarly, Jahangir records the springs of Loka Bhawan and andha Nag. The spring which they call Andha Nag¹³ is a blind fountain.¹⁴ This spring (loka Bhawan) became a pleasant spot.¹⁵ He got the spring of Verinag ramparted and built around it the buildings, markets and royal gardens¹⁶ but they have all perished due to vicissitudes of time.¹⁷ However, the most mesmerizing garden was constructed around Dal Lake. Jahangir laid out Shalimar Garden and served as a summer residence of Jahangir and Nurjahan.¹⁸

Jahangir’s memoir reveals some useful information about the ancient times and the various dynasties of that period. He mentions that the country in old times was in the possession of Rajas. Their dynasty lasted for 4,000 years. An account of them, and a list of their names, are given in the *Raja-tarangini*, which by his father’s (Akbar) order, was translated from the Sanskrit (Hindi in text) into Persian. In the Hijri year 712(1312-13 CE) Kashmir was illuminated by the religion of Islam. Thirty-two Muhammadan princes reigned over it for 282 years, until, 994(1586), Akbar conquered it. From that period till his time, being a period of thirty- five years, the country has been in the possession of the Crown.

Jahangir’s description of some of the places of Kashmir highlights the historical importance of them. He traces the history of the Shihabuddinpur village of Kashmir.¹⁹ According to him, this village was one of the celebrated places of Kashmir and is on the Bihat. The village has about a hundred plain trees (*chinar*) of graceful form clustered together on one plot and the whole surface of ground, pleasant and green, join each other so as to shade the whole plot. The whole surface of ground is full of grass and trefoil; so much so that to lay a carpet on it would be extravagance. The village was founded by Sultan Zain-ul Abidin. It is important to mention that according to many historians the Sultan Zain-ul Abidin (1420-70) was the most renowned ruler of the fifteenth century. He was popularly known as Badshah (Great King) of Kashmir who founded and promoted building industries in Kashmir. Jahangir mentions of Shihabuddinpur²⁰ village in historical perspective which shows how much the Mughal emperor was concerned with thenatural beauty along with the historical changes in Kashmir. When Jahangir visited Baramula town he asked the people what was the meaning of Bara Mula? The people of that area told him that

¹² Ibid.

¹³ This is a corruption of Anantnag- Islamabad.

¹⁴ See *Iqbal nama*, p. 166

¹⁵ Mutamid Khan, *Iqbalnama-i- Jahangiri*, p.155

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Peer Hasan Shah Kuihami, *Tarikh-i- Kashmir*, Urdu trans. Shams-ud-din Ahmad, Srinagar, 2003, p. 252

¹⁸ R.C.Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, Delhi, 2000, p. 89

¹⁹ *Tuzuk*, p.135

²⁰ Ibid.

Baramula was derived from Hindi language Bara or Vara mula. It was made of two words, the first Bara or Varaha which means boar and second Mula which means place. Thus, Baramula means Place of boars.²¹ According to him, "Among the incarnations that belong to the Hindu religion, one is the boar incarnation, and by constant use of Bara Mula has become Bara mula. It is one of the noted towns of Kashmir and 14 koss distant from the Srinagar, situated on the bank of the Bihat.²² A number of the merchants of Kashmir live in it and have built houses and mosques on the bank of the river and spent their days in ease and contentment.²³ Jahangir mentions the village of Riwand, Kuwarmat and Wachaha. The village of Baltar was broad and plain after plain and mead after mead of flowers.²⁴ Jahangir mentions Kakapur and the *bhang* of Kakapur is well-known. It grows wild on the bank of the river in quantities. 'I halted at the village of Panj Bhara.²⁵ This village²⁶ has been bestowed on my fortune son Shah Parwiz. His vakils had prepared a small building and a little garden overlooking the river. In the neighborhood of Panj Bhara there are a meadow (*Julga*) exceedingly clean and pleasant, with seven lofty plane-trees in the middle of it, and a stream of the river flowing round it. The Kashmiris call it *Satha Bhuli*.²⁷ It is one of the great resorts of Kashmir.

The Mughal Kings increased its population by constructing buildings and gardens there. In course of time Padamanpurah was called Pampur by the people.²⁸ Jahangir mentions the village of Pampur as the producer of the largest quantity of the saffron (*zaffron*).²⁹ It was estimated that about 12000 acres of land was under Saffron cultivation.³⁰ Qasbah Durah, situated at the bottom of Verinag in the centre of Shahabad. It is a beautiful qasbah built by the rulers of the place who had planned markets and buildings and had promoted commerce. The goods of Devahsar, Shahabad and Bring are sold there.³¹

Kishtwar was another important place situated to the south of Kashmir, which is 120 miles from Srinagar. In Kishtwar there was much abundance of *wheat, barley, lentils, millet* and *pulses* production. About a hundred hawks and falcons are caught there (annually). The saffron of Kishtwar was superior to that of the saffron produced in the Valley.

Jahangir's account of the geography of Kashmir is very useful for the study of the historical geography of the region. Kashmir belongs to the fourth climate. He has not only shown the different places of Kashmir in terms of topography, climate and production. But more importantly, he has also described the several places of Kashmir in terms of the distance of one place to the other place and their administrative division of Kashmir. Measuring the distance of one place to

²¹ Ibid., pp. 130-131

²² Ibid., p.134

²³ Mutamid Khan, *Iqbalnama-i- Jahangiri*, p.133

²⁴ *Tuzuk*, p. 134

²⁵ Jarret, II, 356, Where it is written Vej Brara.

²⁶ Mutamid Khan, *Iqbalnama-i- Jahangiri*, p.164

²⁷ Seven fountains.

²⁸ Hassan Shah Khoiham, p. 254. Pampur is a large town. Lat. 34° 1', Long. 74° 58' situated on the right bank of the Jhelum about eight miles south-east of Srinagar. According to Stein, it was founded in the beginning of the 9th century by Padma, the powerful uncle of the puppet King Cippata-Jayapida. (stein, II, p. 459). Saffron is still the most important product of Pampur.

²⁹ Mutamid Khan, *Iqbalnama-i- Jahangiri*, p.157

³⁰ *Tuzuk*, p. 296

³¹ Hasan Shah Khoihami, *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, p. 252-53.

the other place Jahangir writes, “Kashmir from the place of Buliyasa³² to Qambardar is 56 Jahangiri koss long and its breadth is never more than 27 koss or less than 10 koss.³³ Shaikh Abul Fazl (a court historian of the Mughal emperor Akbar) has in his *Akbarnama* division by guess and conjecture, that the length of Kashmir from the Kishan Ganga to Qambardar is 120 koss, and its breadth from 10 to 25 koss. ‘I, out of prudence and caution, appointed a number of trustworthy and intelligent men to measure the length and breadth with robes (tanab).’ The result was that what the Shaikh Abul Fazl wrote as 120 koss came out as 67.³⁴ As it is agreed that the boundary of country (Kashmir) is the place up to which people speak the language of that country, it follows that the boundary of Kashmir is Buliyasa, which is 11 koss on this side i-e east of the Kishan Ganga. So, according to the preceding figures the length of Kashmir is 56 (67-11) koss. The variations in breadth were found to be not more than 2koss. The koss³⁵ which is in use during my reign is that prescribed by my father. That is a koss is 5,000 yards and the yard is 2 *shar’i* yards, each of the latter (yards) being 24 digits ‘(*angusht*).’³⁶

Jahangir found Srinagar as the most attractive and well-planned city of Kashmir. He has recorded the existing features of the Srinagar in these words: “The name of the city is Srinagar³⁷ and the layout of the city of Srinagar was excellent beautiful and expanded over on the both banks of the river Jhelum. They call its fountain- head *Vir-nag*,³⁸ combined of two words Vir and Nag. It is 14 koss to the south. By the order of Jahangir, they made a building and a garden at that source. There have been built in the city (*Srinagar*) four very strong stone and wooden bridges over people come and go. They locally known call a bridge in the common language as *kadal*. In Abul Fazl’s time (1587), the city was so attractive and beautiful. He records: “Srinagar is a great city and had densely populated. The river Behat (Jhelum) flows through it. Srinagar the largest city and continued to enjoy the status of a capital for a long time during the Sultanate period. The Persian Chronicles call it *Shahr-i-Kashmir*, i.e., city of Kashmir. The two towns, Baramullah and Islamabad were spread over the same river (Jhelum).³⁹ There is a very lofty mosque in the city, one of the marks of Sultan Sikander,⁴⁰ built in 795(Hijri) (1393 A.D.). After some time, it was burnt, but was rebuilt by Sultan Husain. It had not been completed when the mansion of his life

³² Qambardar is Farutar in text. The *iqbalnama*, 147, has Qambardar. It is evidently the Qambardar of Jarret, II. 347 and 361. It lies in the south-east of Kashmir. Measured by the compass, Jahangir’s 67 is much more correct than Abul Fazl’s 120. Lawrence states the approximate of the Valley as 84 miles and the breadth as from 20 to 25 miles

³³ *Tuzuk*, p. 140

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.141

³⁵ The word used by Jahangir is *dara*, which is given by Steingars as Arabic and as meaning a yard. *Zara* again, is given as equal to a cubit. Clearly Jahangir uses the word here as equivalent to a gaz or yard, for he says that there are 5,000 *dara* in the *koss* adopted by himself and his father, and Abul Fazl in the *Ain* (Jarret, II. 414) says the *koss* is 5,000 gaz. The word *dara* is also rendered gaz in the Hindustani translation of the Memoirs.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.141

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.141-42

³⁸ *Vir* is willow, so *Vir-nag* means Willow- fountain.

³⁹ *Tuzuk*, p. 296

⁴⁰ Jarret, II.387. The I.G., XXIII. 100, says that Zain-ul Abidin. The inscription shows that Zain-ul Abidin built it (Sir Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Srinagar 1895, p. 290). It is stated that it was also burnt in 1020, A.H- i.e., in the year of Jahangir’s visit.

fell down and in 909 (1503-04) Ibrahim Maqri, wazier of the Sultan Husain finished it handsomely. From that day till now it is 120 years since it has been in existence. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (may his grave be sanctified) was stayed for some time in this city.⁴¹ Jahangir provides very useful and interesting information regarding the administrative divisions of Kashmir and its mode of the payment of revenue. According to him, the country of Kashmir has thirty-eight parganas. It is divided into two provinces; the territory on the upper part of the river called *Marraj* and that on the lower part known as *Kamraj*. Jahangir writes regarding the mode of payment that it is not the custom to use gold and silver for the payment of revenue from land or in commerce, except for a portion of the cesses (*sair-jihat*). The Kashmiris reckon the value of things in kharwars of rice, each kharwar being three *maunds* and Jahangir's account shows that it was not easy to enter Kashmir because of the existence of a few and difficult routes between the Punjab and Kashmir. Eight seers make one trakh. The revenue of Kashmir is 3063050 *kharwars* and 11 *trakhs*, which in cash represents 74670000 dams.⁴²

Jahangir's account mentions the routes between Punjab and Kashmir. It was not easy to enter Kashmir because of a few and difficult routes between the Punjab and Kashmir. However, he mentions two routes, Bhimber and Pakli, though which one could enter Kashmir. For him, "Though that by Bhimber is the shorter route if one wishes to find spring in Kashmir and the other is Pakhli, for other roads at this winter season are blocked with snow. Jahangir's description of the various features of the different places of Kashmir indicates that the Mughal emperor had very minutely and sincerely those features of Kashmir which were rare in other parts of India. According to him, Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring or an iron fort to a place of dervishes. Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches, there are verdure and running water. The red rose, the violet and the narcissus grow of themselves; in the fields, there are all kinds of flowers and all sorts of sweet-scented herbs more than can be calculated.⁴³ In the soul enchanting spring the hills and plains are filled with blossoms; the gates, the walls, the courts, the roofs are light up by the torches of banquet-adorning tulips.

Jahangir's interests in the water resources and historical places indicate that the Mughals were very much conscious of the preservation of the natural heritage of Kashmir. The Mughal emperor acted as a conservator of the resources. Jahangir's translated memoir reflects a fresh light on some unexplored areas of Kashmir, it is socio-economic fabric, political stability etc. Moreover, he also provides the popular perception of these resources. Jahangir's interests in these places brought rich dividends to the people of Kashmir in terms of constructive activities. The places such as Buliyasa, qambara, Srinagar and panj bara are mentioned by Jahangir with reference to the potentialities of cultural development. By recording the features of the historical places Jahangir acted as the propagator of the concept of the protection of heritage of Kashmir to create social consciousness towards them.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Dams were copper coins and 40 dams were equivalent to one rupee.

⁴³ *Tuzuk*, pp. 143-4.