

## Garden system in Kashmir history: A Case study of shalimar Garden

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**Abstract:**The history of garden creation doesn't go back the Mughals in valley; instead its history goes back to earlier period. The garden tradition improved by sultans of Kashmir and also the Mughals took it to new heights. During Muslim period in valley, the kings were very fond of laying gardens and to construct structures, Howere a similar structures are currently a region of history. Mughal rulers in Kashmir valley laid beautiful gardens throughout length and breadth with vast experience and exposure of Persian garden system. Kashmir opened up a new world and released a flood of creativity to the Mughals whom the making of gardens was a ruling passion.

**Key words:** Ancient, Charm,Garden, Floriculture, Persian, Passion.

### INTRODUCTION:

The kashmir has a long history of garden making, in ancient times, the kings of kashmir laid beautiful gardens from time to time and planted shady trees to add to beauty and Charm of kashmir. Alberuni says that kashmir as so distinctively famous for its floriculture that the worship of somnath linga as considered incomplete without offering it the water of Ganga and the flowers of kashmir. So every day flowers were exported from Kashmir to india<sup>1</sup>. In 1339 A.D. with the establishment of sultanate in Kashmir, there ushered in a new era in the garden tradition of kashmir and these Sultans were very fond of laying gardens and to construct structures, however a similar structures are now a part of history. In fact, all the sultans laid out gardens, the garden established by sultan Shihab-ud-din at his royal place, shahabuddinpur<sup>2</sup>, at the confluence of Jehlum and Sindh, which rightly came to be popularly called shadipur (the place of merry making),

was so bewitching that all the mughal chroniclers made a lofty mention of it. To quote Abul Fazal<sup>3</sup>, “on the 28<sup>th</sup> Akbar went to visit shihabuddinpura. This is a delightful spot on the bank of the Bihat. The chinars there raise their heads to the sky and the verdure enchants the eyesight”. Jahangir also mentions it in his memories, “shihabuddinpur is one of the celebrated places of Kashmir and is on the Bihat, and about a hundred Chinar of graceful form clustered together on one plot of ground. Pleasant and green, join each other so as to shade the whole plot, and the whole surface of the ground is grass and trefoil, so much so that to lay a carpet on it would be superfluous and in bad taste<sup>4</sup>”.

Zain-ul-Abidin, the Sultan of Kashmir was the pioneer in laying beautiful gardens. In every health resort of Kashmir he is credited to have established gardens, especially at every zainagir has become a beautiful rose garden, on 4 sq. miles of land, he planted rows of trees and flower beds, criss-crossed by canals and waterfall on one side and on the other side of the garden he built tall and towering buildings<sup>5</sup>. About this garden Mirza Haidar Dughlat says, “sultan built a charming palace and planted pleasant groves of trees, so that there can be but few more agreeable places in the world<sup>6</sup>”. Similar view is held by Jahangir, who says that the “than this there is no finer place<sup>7</sup>”.

Then the Mughal rulers contributed to the garden making in valley is unprecedented both in terms of quality and quantity and awarded it the title of ‘paradise’ on earth. Such verse,

If you step on the throne of Solomon  
You will view Kashmir a continuous garden of flowers,  
If you observe its haziness with the raven’s eye,  
You will see the thousands of garden as one garden<sup>8</sup>”.

The celebrated mughal gardens of Kashmir owe their grandeur primarily to emperor Jahangir, a lover of beauty, a born naturalist with an inherent passion for laying out gardens particularly round the Dal lake and other places. The intense mughal feeling for Kashmir is expressed by Jahangir in his journal<sup>9</sup>.

“Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring, or an iron fort to a palace of kings-a delightful flowerbed, and heart-expanding heritage for dervishes. Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches, there are verdure and running water. The red rose, the violet, and the narcissus grows of themselves; in the fields, there are all kinds of flowers and all sorts of sweet scented herbs more than can be calculated. In the soul enchanting spring, the hills and plains are filled with blossom; the gates, the walls, the courts, the roofs are lighted up by the torches of banquet adoring tulips. What shall we say of these things or of the wide meadows and the fragrant trefoils”.

### **SHALIMAR GARDEN:**

*O Shalimar! O Shalimar!*

*A rhythmic sound in thy name rings*

*A dreamy cadence from afar*

*Within those syllables which sings<sup>10</sup>*

The famous shalimar garden is located at the far end of the Dal Lake. Early origins of the shalimar garden go as far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Pravarasana constructed here a pleasure resort calling it shalimar, which in Sanskrit is said to mean, “the abode of love<sup>11</sup>”. An early Muslim ruler, sultan bud shah, is said to have created the canal and an embankment to shalimar. The garden was laid out by Jahangir as Farah Baksh around 1620, as a paradise within the paradise. Jahangir writes in his memories: “in these two or three days I frequently embarked in a boat and was delighted to go round and look at the flowers of Phak and shalai Tiar... shalimar is near the lake. It has a pleasant stream which comes down from the hills and flows into the Dal Lake. I bade my son Khurram dam it up and make a waterfall, which it would be a pleasure to behold. This place is one of the sights of kashmir<sup>12</sup>”.

The Mughal governor of Kashmir, Zafar khan<sup>13</sup> in 1632 A.D., during shah Jahan’s reign added the “Fayz Baksh”, or “Bountiful”. The garden is about 600 yards long and 260 yards broad<sup>14</sup> and included the building of the black Marble pavilion in the zenana.

Shalimar garden is arranged in five main terraces or parts that make up two and half chahar Baghs. As per the requirement the shalimar garden is divided in two parts. The first three terraces of the lower portion was the Diwan-i-Aam where the emperor used to hold public audience. The upper two terraces of the shalimar garden are also called Diwan-i-Khas, where exclusively for his courtiers and the emperors. These two parts were screened by means of a thick masonry wall having two similar gateways at each side of the water channel and top most terrace of the garden is also called the zenana or ladies garden<sup>15</sup>, is flanked by two small guardrooms<sup>16</sup>. Bernier quoted about this garden, “the whole of the interior is painted and gilt, and on the walls of the chambers are inscribed certain sentences, written in dark and beautiful Persian characters. The four doors are extremely valuable being composed of large stones and supported by two beautiful pillars. The doors and pillars were found in some of the idol temples, demolished by shah Jahan, and it is impossible to esteem their value. I cannot describe the nature of the stone, but it is for superior to porphyry or any species of marble<sup>17</sup>”.

The whole texture of the garden, in fact is a result of the relationship of the gardens built and landscaped environment. In the shalimar garden the two important structures are the black pavilion located in the Diwan-i-Khas and the pink pavilion in the Diwan-i-Aam. The enclosed shalimar garden has six watch towers at each corner and also in the middle. Over the water channel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> terrace is the pink pavilion. The shalimar garden is constructed in traditional badshahi bricks is rectangular open pavilion. The black pavilion of the shalimar garden is also rectangular in plan is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> terrace in the zenana, the walls of the pavilion have stone facing, with recessed niches and paintings on wall and it is constructed principally in brick masonry. The outstanding features of the garden are lies in the synthesis of its landscape and its architecture.

### **CONCLUSION:**

In Kashmir the surrounding was a natural paradise and the natural setting of Kashmir valley inspired garden making, elsewhere in India it was replaced by a refinement of design, previous materials and skilled workmanship. Every Kashmir garden and of the landscape is the heavy solidity of Chinar trees. Not only do they give weight, shade and

from within the gardens, but their scale is a vital element in relating the gardens to the scale of lake and mountain. Climate also offered a wide choice of trees and flowers which was continuously extended by imports from other regions especially from iron.

In sum, there is a long tradition of garden making in Kashmir, yet it reached to its climax during the Mughals who because of their exemplar love for Kashmir invested their huge his man and material resources to create paradises within paradise.



*Shalimar Garden*



*Diwan-i-Aam (Shalimar Garden)*



*Diwan-i-Khas (Shalimar Garden)*

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