

# **Mughal Hammam Culture In Kashmir**

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## **Abstract;**

Mughal emperor akbar conquered kashmir in 1586 from a local kashmiri ruler Yousef shah chak. Mughals built many beautiful and attractive gardens and monuments in kashmir. The hammam system was brought to kashmir by mughal, it was a unique persian technique of warming the water and the room.this paper traces the History of hammam system and the role of mughals in building hammams in kashmir.

## **Introduction;**

The Hammam has its origin in hot bath of persia with the rise of islamic rule these bath places has been called as Hammams.<sup>1</sup> The first *hammam* of Muslim civilization was built in Asia , adjacent to the palace ‘Qusayer Amara’ built in 712–15 CE during the Umayyad era. The trend of building *hammams* continued through the Abbasid era and developed elaborately in Turkey (Ottoman empire) and Persia (Safavid empire). ). The Arabs constructed their own versions of the Greek-Roman baths following their conquests of Alexandria. Examples of such bath houses have been excavated at Qusayr Amra and Ukhaidar dating back to the Ummayyads rule.<sup>2</sup> . The Mughal hammams were mainly private and located in imperial palaces. *Hammams* were also established in different places depending on the area and requirements.

The first Mughal *hammam* is found at one of the early Mughal gardens built by Babur in India, at a garden known as Ram Bagh (Bagh-i-Gul-Afshan) agra.The hammams found its way to Kashmir in 1586 when akbar conquered kashmir.

Mughal were muslims and In Islam, the bathing is seen as a private activity. Separate hammans were built for men and women. The *hammam* was a new architectural concept, which brought a new element and type of space articulation to the subcontinent's social and cultural life. It has frequently been mentioned that *hammams* did not receive any special attention until the Mughals established them. These *hammams* primarily functioned as small areas attached to palaces, and were not as significant as the vast establishment of royal *hammams* under the Mughals. *Hammams* developed extensively in Mughal period of kashmir.

### ***Mughal Hammams in kashmir;***

Conflicting accounts exist about the person who was responsible for introducing the concept of hammam into the valley of Kashmir. In the period pre dating the advent of Muslim rule in the region, we find no textual or archaeological evidence that would indicate the existence of any such bath system.<sup>3</sup> ". but may b similar rooms serving as a public bath with supply of heating water etc, cannot be ruled out. While some writers give the credit for this innovation to Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen others maintain that the Mughal conqueror Mirza Haider Dughlat was responsible for introducing hammams in Kashmir<sup>4</sup>. Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen is highly credited on account of his patronage for various arts and crafts in Kashmir. His court has a number of unique poets artists and engineers from different parts of asia. Sultan zain-ul-abdeen visited samarkand during the times os timur that's why the architecture of kashmir was highly matching with the persian style. Thus there is a possibility of indruction of hammam by sultan zain-ul-abdeen in Kashmir.<sup>5</sup>. Zain-ul-Abideen built a mauseloum for his mother at Srinagar, Budshah Dumath, on the model of Taimur's tomb, Gur-i-Amir. This building is in fact a unique departure from traditional Kashmiri architecture and bears a great deal of resemblance with Timurid style of building. An argument forwarded for Zain-ul-Abideen as being the introducer of hammam to Kashmir is his construction of a complex near his capital city of Naushera for a prominent Muslim divine at his court, Sayyid Mohammed Madni. This architectural ensemble comprises the tomb of the Sayyid, a mosque and a hammam. The hammam has been recently reconstructed form the plinth and all archaeological remnants of the old hammam have been lost. Historically, the shrine of Madin saheb underwent widespread renovation and additions by various kings and sultans espically emperor Shahjahan.

In Kashmir, there are only four remaining ruin hammams that were built by the Mughal prince Dara shikoh<sup>6</sup>, during the reign of Shah Jahan at Shalimar, Achabal, Nagar-Nagar and Pari Mahal. Of the four, three were built under the joint collaboration between Dara-shikoh and Mulla Shah, those at Achabal, Nagar-Nagar and Pari Mahal. Prince Dara Shikoh constructed a palace for himself on the foothills of Koh-i-Maran hillock. The palace was built within the walls of Mughal city of Nagar Nagar, founded by Emperor Akbar. To the west of the palace, Dara Shikoh constructed a mosque for Mulla Shah. The mosque is locally called as Mulla Shah Masjid . This mosque comprises of a series of cells or cubicles at two levels which formed a part of a caravanserai. Between the sarai and the palace, a public hammam was constructed at a lower level. The entire area between the hammam and the mosque was laid on the pattern of a traditional Mughal bagh comprising series of terraces. Due to the absence of any archaeological studies makes it impossible to co-relate the Mulla Akhoon complex with its surrounding area. Some information gathered from available historical records reveals that the palace of Dara was situated on a lower level further east of the hammam in close proximity to Kathi Darwaza – the main entrance gateway to the city of Nagar Nagar. Over a long period of time, the hammam has been exposed due to effects of atmospheric situations and capillary damp, which has resulted in the degradation of the construction and its materials, as well as caused the destabilization of the structure. Other causes of degradation include destructive behavior by citizens who have misused the structure for residential and public activities. Another great hammam associated with Jehangir, is located at Achabal. This hammam is a part of the pleasure garden of Begumabad constructed by Jehangir. Though the garden was laid down by Jehangir, yet it is not clear whether the hammam forms a part of his design or is a part of the reconstruction and alterations undertaken by his granddaughter, Jehanara begum .

Presently Kashmir is famous for its natural beauty and Mughal gardens. The *hammams* constructed by the Mughals in Kashmir were primarily part of these beautiful Mughal gardens. They followed the established imperial layout in terms of spaces.

The hammams that were constructed by the Mughal emperors in Kashmir follow established a special in terms of organizing of spaces. The hammams were based on three functional units, a rakh- kan (dressing room), a sard-khana (cold room) and a gara- khana (hot room). The rakht-kan is commonly referred to as jamvar-khana in Kashmir. There was no architectural norm for the shape and arrangement of these individual units, which could be anything from a single chamber to a group of interconnecting rooms.<sup>8</sup>.

The Hammam built by Dara-shikoh in the foothills of Zabarwan Mountain near Nagar-nagar or within the Pari Mahal complex. The only entrance to the hammam is located in the middle of the east wall rather than a side entrance as seen in most hammams in the rest of north India which guarded the space against

the sun and hot winds to keep the interior cool. On the other side of the entrance a series of unknown rooms were built, which appear to have been the *hammams*. This is confirmed by the fragments of the water pipes which still project from a corner of its domed ceiling.

The date of construction of this *hammam* is derived from the Persian chronogram:

*Tarikh-i hammam-o masjid-i Sultan Dara Shikoh Hammam-i tu o masjidat ai dida bazGarm ast yake yake jama'at pardaz Tarikh-i bina-i har du ra goyad Shah Yak ja-i wazu amad-o yak ja-i namaz.*<sup>7</sup>

Which means; *Thy hammam and thy mosque: one affords warmth and the other adorns the congregation. The king tells the date of the foundation of both: the one is the place of ablution and the other the place of worship.*<sup>7</sup>.

Interestingly, apart from imperial *hammams* in Mughal palaces, historical references show that from the Mughal period, the first known construction of a public *hammam* in Kashmir is recorded during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb, when Fazil Khan, the subedar of Kashmir constructed a *hammam* for worshippers at Pathar masjid in Srinagar city in 1697<sup>9</sup>..

In present Kashmir hammam culture is very common, but its not like the complex system of Mughal *hammams*, modern homes have a complete system of underfloor pipes and a furnace for heating the space. It does not function as the bathing space to which the term *hammam* (bath) generally refers, but as a heated room where all members of the family get together.

In Kashmir Hammam served as a major public institution. Most houses in Kashmir have personal hammams. Hammam served as religious places as it was built almost in every mosque in Kashmir. An interesting feature of these communal hammams is their absence in any Hindu place of worship, though many Kashmiri Pandit residences boasted of this feature. The reason may be the communal form of Muslim worship at fixed times, which insured that

certain basic civic features related to ablution; bath etc would remain available to the worshipper. Sir Walter Lawrence writes in his *Valley of Kashmir* speaks about these public hammams being a great institution, and there are four public baths in Srinagar.'<sup>10</sup> Of the principal Muslim religious places in Srinagar, public hammams existed at Khanqah-I-Maulla and Dargah Hazratbal. The hammam at Khanqah-I Maulla was apparently constructed in the Afghan period during the time of subedar Mir Hazzar Khan, while repairs were conducted by the Sheikh Ghulam-ud din in the 19th century. The hammam at Hazratbal was constructed by Nawwab of Decca, who traced his ancestry to Kashmir.<sup>11</sup>

Mughals introduced hammams as a royal institutions after their conquest of Kashmir in the 1586. Initially, reserved for the nobility, they soon became a part of the social-cultural landscape of the land when major mosques, khanqahs and aastans were endowed with hammams. Gradually, during the later part of the 19th century these hammams were also linked with the residential architecture of the region, when many wealthy merchants and jagirdars constructed hammams within their residences. The phenomenon of hammams became more widespread in the post-independence period as local Mohall mosques that were being reconstructed also adopted this unique feature linked with social comfort, physical hygiene as well as religious tenants of ablutions. Simultaneously, while the residential architecture of the region became increasingly delinked from the historical vernacular architecture of the region, hammams continued to be built, thus marking a cultural continuation of an architectural tradition that became widespread in the 19th century.

## ***Conclusion***

The hammam system introduced in Kashmir by Mughals has developed in different ways in different places either its for personal use or for public or religious use Hammam served as a place of high preference by local people as well as the immigrants. The *hammam* should not be seen only as a Turkish bath but as a complex system of mechanisms and an elaborate layout of rooms and corridors interconnecting with the *hammam*. It is clear that *hammams* were not only used for bathing but represented more a private space used during extreme hot and cold weather conditions. The Mughal *hammams* derived inspiration from the Persian world, it was not a public establishment as found in other Islamic countries. The Mughal hammam was a private hammam which was used for royal persons only, but probably Emperor Aurangzeb built a public Hammam, which was open free for public. The Mughals created an elaborate space in terms of size, decoration and materials, which was suitable for hot and cold climates, but the complexity of Hammams were much more luxurious, romantic and ornate in character than most modern establishments. We should not take the Mughal *hammams* as Turkish baths, as Mughal *hammams* right from Babur up until Shah Jahans time were closed apartments which were attached to residential quarters and primarily used as summer palaces. Mughals were credited with building the modern Hammams but some writers give the credit for this innovation to Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen others maintain that the Mughal conqueror Mirza Haider Dughlat was responsible for introducing hammams in Kashmir'. Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen is highly credited on account of his patronage for various arts and crafts in Kashmir. He has visited Samarkand during the times of Timur that's why the architecture of Kashmir was highly matching with the Persian style. Thus according to Historians is a possibility of introduction of hammam by Sultan Zain-ul-Abideen in Kashmir. Mughals built many hammams in Kashmir, but unfortunately only three hammam ruins in Kashmir survived till now and these are Hammam at Shalimar, Hammam at Achabal and Hammam at Nagar-Nagar built by Dara-Shikoh, This Nagar-Nagar Hammam was built in the foothills of Zabarwan Mountain within the Pari Mahal complex. The only entrance to the hammam is located in the middle of the east wall rather than a side entrance as seen in most hammams in the rest of North India which guarded the

space against the sun and hot winds to keep the interior cool. On the other side of the entrance a series of unknown rooms were built, which appear to have been the hammams. This is confirmed by the fragments of the water pipes which still project from a corner of its domed ceiling.

The Mughal Hammams served as a place of hot bath only but during the course of time people built new Hammams which are used for warming a room and for hot bath. Hammams are very common in Kashmir now almost every house has a personal Hammam. Hammams are also used in mosques for hot bath and for warming the mosques.

## *References*

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7. <https://www.sahapedia.org/mughal-hammam>. Dr Richika arora
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