

# The Mughal Gardens along the Grand Trunk Road in Pakistan and Afghanistan

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The Mughal gardens introduced by the Mughal Emperor Babur developed until the late Mughal period. Their architectural features also found a resonance during the Sikh period and consequently became a part of urban culture. Even now the tradition of gardens still prolongs itself in the form of modern parks in all small and large towns of Pakistan. These gardens were not only designed as architectural masterpieces, but hosted activities that transformed the culture of historic cities through a long development process. In that respect the Grand Trunk Road played a pivotal role.

The Grand Trunk Road stretches between Kabul and Bengal. Although it existed from ancient times its alignment did not stay unchanged. The final alignment was laid out by the powerful Afghan chieftain Sher Shah Suri. It starts in Kabul and, passing through the Jalalabad and Khyber Passes, it reaches Peshawar. Moving south it crosses the Indus river near Attock and passing through Rawalpindi and Rohtas it reaches Gujrat after crossing the Jhelum river near Sarai Alamgir. From Lahore this imperial highway enters into India, and after touching Sirhind it reaches Delhi and continues towards Agra and beyond. The Mughal rulers passed along it quite frequently, and each one of them contributed to its enhancement by constructing public structures at convenient distances from one another.

The Grand Trunk Road acted as a vessel for communication and transmission of ideas from one region to another. Its entire route runs across a variety of climates, landforms and geographical features. It passes mountains, valleys and plains and plateau with diverse water features. Thus the presence of wells, natural springs, streams and rivers provided important element for the selection of garden sites, as well as a source of life for them.

Gardens built in the suburbs of existing towns were commissioned at three levels by the court. Initially they were commissioned by the Mughal Emperors, but simultaneously important contributions were also made by court members at subimperial level, and third by ladies of the harem. Later, during the reign of Shah Jahan, every one took lead and thereafter a strong garden city relationship developed at all hierarchical levels. The projects ranged from small house to large retreat gardens. This introduction to a short catalog presents only gardens commissioned at the imperial and subimperial level and by ladies of the harem in towns and settlements located along the Grand Trunk Road. It should be kept in mind that this introduces only part of a much larger garden construction that resulted into a new lifestyle: all sorts of important activities and celebrations by a variety of people used to take place in gardens.

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## *Imperial Commissions*

### BABUR: FOUNDER OF MUGHAL GARDENS

The first Mughal gardens were created in Afghanistan by Mughal Emperor Babur (1483–1530) a native of Mavara un Nahar located in contemporary Uzbekistan. A Timurid from his father's and Chigezid from his mother's side, he spent his childhood in an environment of gardens laid out by the Timurids. Babur was an enlightened person, a poet, a writer and an untiring campaigner. Gardens played an important role in Timurid daily life, and ladies of the harem also participated in the construction of public welfare buildings as well as gardens and this tradition continued throughout Mughal times.

Babur visited the Timurid and Uzbek gardens in Samarkand, Kabul and Herat before coming to Hindustan. He left a description of Samarkand and its fascinating gardens, which most probably stimulated him in developing a meaningful relationship between architecture and urban landscape design. Babur's description of Samarkand ultimately provided a model for cities developing along the Grand Trunk Road. Babur states:

Few towns in the whole habitable world are as pleasant as Samarkand. The Kohik water flows along the north of Samarkand. The Dar-i Gham water flows along the south at a distance of some two miles. This is a large swift torrent, indeed it is like a large river, cut off from the Kohik water. All the gardens, suburbs and tumans of Samarkand are cultivated along it.

After describing the water features and garden development Babur described the gardens and building of Timur and Ulugh Beg Mirz (1393–1449) He also described the various meadows and gardens around Samarkand: "In the middle of the garden Ulugh Beg

built Chil Sutun. Four turret, like minarets, stand on its four corner towers, the way up into them being through the towers." Chil Sutun served as a prototype for pavilions built at the center of Mughal gardens. Babur mentioned another charbagh which entertained a perfect relationship with nature and the landscape beyond. This description indicates that gardens were not thought of as self-contained entities, but rather as part of the surrounding landscape. Views of meadows were brought in and made part of the gardens:

In the time also of Sl. Ahmad Mirza, the great and lesser begs laid out many garden, large and small. For beauty and air, and view few will have equaled Darwesh Muhammad Tarkhan's charbagh. It lies overlooking the while of Qulba meadow on the slopes below the Bagh-i Maidan. Moreover it is arranged symmetrically terrace above terrace, and is planted beautifully nawan and cypresses and white poplar. A most agreeable sojourning place, its one defect is the want of a large stream.

From Samarkand, Babur moved on to Kabul before proceeding to the Indian subcontinent. In Kabul he built garden according to his own taste. They display strong Timurid influences beside his personal vision and imagination of a planned landscape environment. He gave special attention to site selection outside the town, good views, availability of water for laying out canals and growing fruit trees. These pleasure gardens were primarily developed for enjoyment, but also for imperial power and wealth display. Babur was always interested in the gardens as an object of beauty and a means of delight.

Babur's first major garden project was a charbagh built outside the city wall of Kabul between Jamadi I, 910 AH/October 1504 and Muharram 911 AH/1505. The garden had a divankahana, suratkhana (picture hall) over the gate, stables and a site for

his tents. It must have served as the primary halting place before one entered at Bala Hisar. Babur's description of this garden indicates that the conceptual design was inspired by a Timurid model. It was built more as a residential environment which included the divankhana, (a sitting place) as well as a picture hall for enjoyment, like the picture halls of the Persians. In addition it had stables for horses as well as camping place where Babur could put his tents for the same pleasure of outdoor life that Timur enjoyed in all his gardens laid out outside Samarkand. He built a splendid gateway which symbolized his dignity as a supreme ruler. This description also highlights Babur's interest in painting and demonstrates that this garden compared to any Timurid or Persian gardens. According to Jahangir, "There was abundance of cherries, each of which looked as it were a round ruby, hanging like globes from the branches." The Jahangir description reveals an important fact that the garden became famous and achieved recognition because of the picture hall (Suratkhana) The Emperor innovated at the same time that he drew inspiration from precedents.

Babur's favorite garden was the Bagh-i Wafa, because of its climate and beauty. It was built in the left bank of the Surkh Rud, a mile south of it and Fort Adinapur (modern Jalalabad) built by Akbar (1542–1605) Babur frequently mentions this garden in his memoirs and repeatedly visited it. He mentioned that the garden laid on high ground and that a one mile long stream flowed through its center, emptying into a ten by ten yard (qari) on the southwest. The miniature paintings of Baburnama indicate that there were open channels in the garden. He laid out a Charbagh and planted orange trees and pomegranates around the reservoir. The whole was then enclosed by a trefoil meadow. Babur planted sugar cane a year before the conquest of Lahore and Dipalpur and banana in the following year; according to him both flourished very well.

Babur continuously searched for suitable sites for

making gardens. In 925 AH/1519 he made additions and alterations to the Bagh-i Kalan (Principal garden) at Istalif, which originally belonged to his uncle Ulugh Beg. The garden was located on a hill side overlooking the Koh-i Daman valley, and contained a spring known as Khawaja Sih Yaran. The natural beauty of the place convinced him to enclose the spring into a ten by ten yard (qari) pool. He purchased the land and carried out a project that he described in the following words:

Few villages match Istalif, with vineyards and fine orchards on both sides of its great torrents, with water needing no ice. Cold and mostly pure. . . . A mill-stream with tree lined banks flowed through the center of the garden and he ordered its formerly zigzag and irregular course to be made straight and orderly, so the place became very beautiful.

He also built a large, circular seating area and planted it around with willows. Since it was at a distance from the city, remnants of this garden still exist.

Kabul remained under the influence of the Timurids and therefore, we find remains of gardens there. Hindustan, at this time, was beset by fights between various groups, which prompted Babur to attack and conquer these territories. He went through the Khyber Pass and followed the Grand Trunk Road for his Indian campaign. His successors used this road very frequently and it literally became an imperial highway.

Babur's interest in gardens never subsided even during his military campaign, In 925 AH/1519, when he first crossed the Indus on his first campaign; the lake of Kalar Kahar, with Salt Range in the background, struck him. The site lies 20 miles (ten kos) north of Bhera and five miles from Malot. It enjoys a good climate, hills, a large lake, peacocks and an abundance of locat trees. Babur described it

as a “very charming place with good air.” He laid out the Bagh-i Safa (Garden of Purity) on the south-west side of the lake. Traces of this garden still exist, including a rock cut platform. (Takht-i Baburi) approached by steps, which was used for sitting.

By now Babur has spent much of his life in gardens or at least in intimate contact with nature. He had a vast experience of Gardens of Samarkand and Herat. In his autobiography he frequently describes the attractive features of the landscape. His sensitivity towards such features led him to try to capture them for his gardens. When he reached Hindustan he felt the absence of gardens acutely:

One of the great defect of Hindustan being its lack of running waters, it kept coming to my mind that water should be made to flow by means of wheels erected wherever I might settle down, also that ground should be laid out in an orderly and symmetrical ways. With this object in view, we crossed the Jun-water (the river Jamna) to look a garden-rounds a few days after entering Agra. These grounds were so bad and unattractive that we traversed them with hundred disgusts and repulsions.

Babur’s feeling for landscape features in his home country and their absence in the subcontinent were so completely at odds that he engaged in the construction of gardens in the subcontinent. Prior to his arrival on the mainland of the subcontinent Babur had taken advantage of natural stream and spring water to create gardens, but on Indian plain a different approach had to be followed. Therefore he introduced the Persian wheel system to irrigate the charbaghs which he described at length in his autobiography.

His descriptions make clear that Babur stressed site selection: an elevated place with a commanding view over surrounding landscape, and the presence of a spring or flowing water were important

considerations. The orderly and symmetrical layout and the construction of resting place and place for prayer were important architectural features. All of these became permanent features of future Mughal gardens.

After his death and following the Timurid tradition, Babur was buried under a simple marble tombstone in his favorite garden in Kabul. The place was selected since his successor felt more secure at Kabul than in any other place in India, and it followed the Timurid tradition of tomb gardens.

In the Indian subcontinent, Babur laid out gardens of Bagh-e Safa at Kalar Kahar, Agra and Dholpur. These gardens provided a strong impulse towards change in the landscape of urban settlements.

## HUMAYUN (1508–1556)

After Babur’s death, his son Humayun was proclaimed ruler of Hindustan, but strong opposition from the Afghan chieftains led by Sher Shah Suri prevented him from setting foot in the territory inherited from his father. He first fled to Qandahar and then to Kabul in 1540; but three years later he was forced to seek refuge with the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (1514–1576) Humayun finally regained power in 1555, and having settled for the remaining years of his life, he patronized miniature painting and poetry. He began the construction of Purana Qila (old fort) close to the shrine of Nizamud Din Auliya and Jamna River. In the middle he constructed a pavilion known as Sher Mandal. He is said to have fallen from its staircase as he came down from his library on the upper floor, and died.

During the turbulent part of his reign, he constructed a number of buildings, but none of them display a relationship between architecture and landscape. The only contemporary examples of garden building by a Mughal prince are due to his brother Mirza Kamran (r. 1530–1540, 1555–1556) who

is said to have constructed two superb gardens in Lahore. The nolakha garden no longer exist but one adjacent to river Ravi still almost intact. Kamran, who had been earlier granted Kabul and Kandahar annexed Punjab shortly after Babur's death in 1530 and left Humayun with no choice but to confirm this arrangement. A riverfront garden there was the setting for a major conference of the Mughal princes in 1540. The next reference to this garden is found in Akbarnama in an entry under 1591 which describe how Akbar traveled across Ravi by boat with many "veiled ladies" to enjoy the spring flowers. The contemporary sources do not mention the form of this important garden. However the floods of late 1980s and later excavations unearthed some of the hydraulic features. An eight sided star-shaped pool and grid plan represent the continuity of the tradition initiated by Babur.

#### AKBAR (1542–1605)

After Humayun's death his son Akbar (r. 1556–1605) became the Emperor of Hindustan. The earliest project undertook by him was the construction of the tomb garden of Humayun at Delhi close to the tomb of Nizam un Din Auliya. This was the earliest major project undertaken by the Mughals. It not only changed the landscape character of the town but also provided a model for later architecture. The services of a skillful architect, Mirak Syed Ghiyas, who had worked in Herat and Bukhara, were hired. The scale of the building in a charbagh setting, water system and architecture rose to a level of excellence. The entire construction work was executed under the supervision of Hamida Begum, Humayun's widow, and introduced a major change in the city of Delhi landscape.

The reign of Akbar is considered important for the construction of large-scale projects. The emperor was interested in the construction of fortress palaces,

forts at strategic locations, new towns and a few gardens, and moreover members of the Mughal nobility constructed tombs with a landscape setting and pleasure gardens around the major cities of the Mughal Empire, particularly around Agra and Lahore. Hasan Abdal is among such places where garden activity started during Akbar period and every Mughal emperor contributed in it. The tomb of Hakim Abul Fateh Gilani at Hasan Abdal was among the earliest project developed in the town. The tomb is located on the Grand Trunk Road adjacent to a hill with numerous springs. A square fish tank receiving water from one of these springs survives to this day in front of the tomb. This was the earliest site where fish became the dominant feature of a garden.

Construction activity under the patronage of the emperor started at Agra fort and continued at Fatehpur Sikri, Ajmer, Attock, Gujrat and Kashmir etc. He gave very little attention on the construction of pleasure gardens. The only pleasure garden built on his order is at Baghanwali in Jehlum District in Pakistan.

The site is located on main highway connecting Lahore with Kashmir and Kabul. It is located in the same area where Emperor Babur planted Bagh-i Safa. A large number of specialist Baghbans must have been appointed there for the upkeep of this garden. And yet only a settlement, now known as Baghanwali, still reminds us of the historic garden. This highway garden belongs to a category of gardens so far never mentioned by scholars. They fulfilled a dual purpose: first, to improve the landscape character of the area, and second, to provide a resting place with the necessary conveniences for travelers moving in either direction. Besides, this project contributed to regional development. It is interesting that even today such types of landscape projects are rare in the contemporary world.

Akbar's reign brought about an important transformation of the image of the cities., monumental buildings were constructed in Agra and Delhi. Delhi

already had earlier Sultanate period monuments. Akbar made Lahore as capital of the Mughal Empire between 1584 and 1598. He enclosed the city with double defensive wall and enclosed the fort with a permanent wall having two gate openings. Within the fort he began the construction of buildings for his residence as well as those to perform the official activities of the empire. The Akbar period buildings were mainly located in the northeastern corner overlooking the river Ravi. In Lahore the construction of pleasure gardens by important nobles started transforming the landscape character of the city.

### JAHANGIR (1569–1627)

Jahangir's reign (1605–1627) transformed the landscape character of cities in Pakistan and Afghanistan as the emperor himself and other members of the royal family constructed gardens in and around major cities. Jahangir's love for nature and animals provided the main drive for his landscape developments. He also made architectural and landscape contributions to fortress palaces built by his father. At this time ladies of the harem's involvement in landscape development increased manifold. The construction of gardens in Agra, Lahore and Kashmir by Nur Jahan and his family is unrivaled. Jahangir also ordered the construction of Kos Minars (distance markers) between Lahore and Attock. He also ordered the plantation of trees on both sides of the road between Agra and river Attock. William Finch who traveled in India during Jahangir's reign admired the mulberry trees planted on both sides of the road between Agra and Lahore.

Jahangir liked Lahore and Kashmir very much and contributed architecture and landscape designs there. Sheikhupura, a town west Lahore on the ancient road to Kabul and Kashmir, was his favorite hunting ground where he constructed a minaret in

the memory of his favorite antelope, a large water tank and a palace (daulat khana) beside a fort for his stay.

Jahangir completely overhauled the landscape. Starting from the Hiran Minar, water tank and pavilion, he also constructed on the same site a small village, Jahangirabad, and a massive Sheikhupura fort at some distance. He wanted easy access to and from Lahore, and since the perennial streams of Nala Dek and Bhed created problems on the way during the rainy seasons he built three bridges on them and paved the road with bricks on either side of the bridges. All these developments completely changed the landscape character of the area, as the road became frequently used and traveling between Lahore and Sheikhupura easy and safe. These bridges are later mentioned in Shah Jahan period sources.

Jahangir improved the garden of Raja Man Singh and remodeled the existing gardens of Hasan Abdal by adding a few structures.

Emperor Jahangir built another garden in Kabul in the vicinity of Shahr Ara garden made by Shahr Bano Begum, daughter of Mirza Abu Said. It was famous for its fruits and sweetness. Jahangir himself mentioned it in his autobiography:

In the neighborhood of this garden an excellent plot of land came to view, which I ordered to be bought from the owners. I ordered a stream that flows from the Guzurgah to be diverted into the middle of the ground so that a garden may be made such that in beauty and sweetness there should not be in the inhabited world another like it. I gave it the name of Jahan-Ara (world adorning).

### SHAH JAHAN (1592–1666)

The reign of Shah Jahan (1628–1658) is considered to have brought a climax to Mughal gardens

building in the cities along the Great Trunk Road. He constructed gardens at Kashmir, Lahore, Delhi and renovated the garden of Hasan Abdal.

Shah Jahan always stopped at the Garden of Hasan Abdal on his way to Kabul and Kashmir. His likeness for this place is due to the beauty of the natural landscape. He celebrated two of his birthdays there and altogether visited nine times during his reign. Sometimes around 1645 AD Ustad Ahmad Mimar was summoned by the governor of Punjab to make additions and alterations to the existing layout. He seems to have designed and built two baradaris and raised the level of the terrace and the tank. At the same time the fountain channel was tessellated and a zanana (ladies) garden was added. Aurangzeb stayed there for almost a year and a half (26 June 1674–23 December 1675) during which the garden served as the capital for the Mughal Empire. He added a farudgah (rest house) on the east side. It is still as lovely a place as it was during Mughal times. Surrounded by hills, an abundance of trees, a natural stream, and several fountains, it is very different of the gardens in the hot plains. Throughout history both court historians and European travelers praised its beauty; Salih Kambo called it Bagh-i Gulistan-i Iram (The rose garden of Iram). At this place he also constructed a caravanserai west of the town. Hasan Abdal became a garden city with the completion of tombs of Abul Fateh Gilani and Hakim Hammam, Garden of Hasan Abdal, Sarai and Gurdwara Punja Sahib.

Shah Jahan being a great patron of architecture commissioned buildings and gardens every where in his empire. The construction of Nimla garden near Kabul in the west and a terrace garden along the bank of Ana Sagar Lake in Ajmer in the east, Shalamar garden in Lahore and Delhi are living examples of such patronage. The emperor took extraordinary interest in works of arts and architecture and therefore spent a huge amount of time finalizing even minute details of projects. The craftsmanship

as well as the technology of hydraulics reached its zenith under his rule.

Lahore became the city of gardens during Shah Jahan's reign. Its boundaries spread over a radius of about nine kilometers from the historic town. To the north, gardens were located on the right bank of river Ravi, to the east, its boundaries touched Fateh Garh where two beautiful gardens were still extant until recent times.

Like other Mughal emperors Shah Jahan also contributed in Lahore fort. Shah Burj commonly known as Shish Mahal was among his important architectural contributions in Lahore fort. The project was completed in 1631/32. The paved courtyard with fountain in the middle was surrounded by Shish Mahal (Hall decorated with Mirrors) on the north and Naulakha pavilion on the west side.

In 1633 while proceeding from Lahore to Kashmir, the emperor ordered the construction of Khwabgah and opposite to it on northern side Diwan-i-Khas was built. A charbagh was also planned in between the two buildings having a raised fountain basin in the middle.

The Shalamar Garden built by Shah Jahan on the east side of Lahore on the Grand trunk Road constitutes a classical example where architecture, landscape design and hydraulic system may be seen at their best. Whereas the Taj Mahal is considered one of the finest achievements in architecture, Shalamar Garden is the finest example of a garden built in the hot plains. Beside their technological achievements, gardens achieved spiritual dimensions. Sufi saints used to spend more and more and more time in gardens to appraise the God's creation. In addition some of them have also founded gardens. Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan mentioned the name of several gardens where Mian Mir (his spiritual master) used to spend time, meditating upon and appraising God's Creation. The canal brought from the River Ravi to irrigate the Shalamar Garden proved an important catalyst for urban expansion. Several

gardens were built in and around Baghbanpura and irrigated by water channels drawn from the canal. The garden activity was so intense that Lahore turned into a city of gardens when compared to other cities of the Mughal Empire. More gardens were built during this than during all previous regimes.

The canal from the river Ravi was brought to Lahore on Ali Mardan Khan's request and cost over one lakh (one hundred thousand) of rupees. When the canal reached the suburbs of Lahore, Khalil Ullah Khan was ordered to take architects and engineers to select a suitable site for a garden near a canal. The site had to be naturally terraced so that it could have tanks, canals, cascades and fountains as described by the emperor.

After a careful consideration of a number of possible sites, Khalil Ullah Khan laid the foundation of Shalamar on June 12, 1641. The garden has three terraces. The lowest terrace is meant for public use, the middle was the emperor's garden, and contains the most elaborate water system among all Mughal gardens, and the highest was reserved for the harem. The upper most garden was named Farah Bakhsh and the middle and lowest terrace which really forms one division, are comprised in the name of Faiz Bakhsh. In the Shalamar garden the combination of aesthetic and technical ingenuity produced a garden that must have stunned early visitors, never before had a garden of such an exceptional quality been constructed on the hot plains of the subcontinent.

Shah Jahan built a garden in Nimla which according to Inayat Khan, "is a most charming spot, near Kabul. On the 18th of Shaban 1056 AH/29 September 1646, a sublime farman (Royal order) was issued for the planting of a new garden at this locality, and for the construction of a canal four yard wide, by which the stream near that town could be made to flow through the grounds and summer houses. (P 364)

Nur Jahan, Jahangir's widow, died in 1645 and buried in the west of her brother, Asaf Khan in a

tomb she is said to have commissioned during her life time. The tomb was located in the middle of a garden. The stone cladding has been striped off by during the Sikh period. The original garden was invariably damaged when the British cut a railway line late last century between the two tombs, i.e. Nur Jahan and Asaf Khan. A new garden (smaller than original one, which was probably 300 gaz square like the tomb of Asaf Khan) was created by Archaeological Survey of India in 1911.

Kambo states that; "on 10th Shaban 1057 AH/10 September 1647 Emperor Shah Jahan alighted in the Nimla Garden. The foundation stone was laid last year. It comprised three buildings. This garden got completed this year and named Bagh-i Farah Afza." Inayat Khan mentions that the planting of the garden had been commenced the previous year (Kambo 1971, 394). The above description indicates that the Mughal used to begin planting trees and shrubs soon after the laying out of foundations and that at the time of completion of the buildings and of the visit of the emperor the garden would show its maturity and completeness.

Damtour is yet another important spot on the way to Kashmir beyond Hasan Abdal. Emperor Jahangir and Shah Jahan frequently halted there on their way to Kashmir. It is the first point beyond the Punjab plains to receive snow. The site had a number of natural springs. During the reign of Shah Jahan a number of tanks were constructed here to enjoy the beauties of water. During the British period, a new town, Abbotabad, was planned and built to the west of it. The expansion of the town in recent years has also encroached the site and today only one tank and some water feature survive today.

The remains of some of these gardens can be seen today several miles from the main town. One of these gardens, probably built during Jahangir's or in the early years of Shah Jahan's reign lies in the Fatehgarh, a suburb of Mughalpur, east of Lahore.



Garden activity along the Grand Trunk Road continued during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707). At Attock, several surviving mosques and tombs on the left bank of the river Indus near Mallahi Tola constitute an important archaeological site in the region. At the same time Lahore continued to witness garden activity during Aurangzeb's time. A ladies' garden was built on the left bank of the River Ravi on the road leading to Multan. This garden was built by a Zebinda Begum, probably a daughter of Aurangzeb. The glory of this walled garden may be observed from its surviving majestic gateway which is comparatively most monumental in scale than any other garden of Lahore. Nadira Begum also built a beautiful garden east of Lahore. It had an elaborate water system. A causeway still survives along with other landscape features. After her death she was interred in her own garden. It is apparent that the Mughal nobility built gardens on the main roads several miles away from residential areas, and that subimperial commissions continued to fill the space.

Dara Shikoh (1615–1659) loved gardens. He used to spend much time in the gardens of Lahore, which he praised in his writings. Fatehgarh, a beautiful garden, which used to exist quite some time ago in the east of Lahore, in Gulshan Park, is even attributed to him.

Looking at the planning of both Fatehgarh gardens it is quite apparent that these gardens derive very much from earlier garden traditions, and yet at the same time they also have contributed to the development of garden architecture. The rectangular enclosure on the east side of the gardens emulates the concept adopted in the Shalamar garden. The hammam is also found in the imperial gardens of Pakistan such as Shalamar and the garden of Hasan Abdal. The upper portion of the gateway of Dara Shikoh garden is similar to the one seen in Doraha Sarai on Ludhiana-Khanna Road in East Punjab.

## *Patronage of Gardens at Subimperial Levels*

After the Imperial levels important contributions in landscape design were made at subimperial level. The governors and important nobles built gardens throughout the Mughal Empire. Beside Kashmir towns located on Grand Trunk Road received special attention. After the death of Babur, two gardens of Mirza Kamran, in the northwest and south east and another garden east of Lahore, built by the Governor of Lahore near the shrine of Bibi Haj Taj, changed the character of the urban landscape.

During the reign of Akbar members of the nobility started building gardens in the suburbs of smaller towns or settlements imbued with scenic beauty, along the Grand Trunk Road. Raja Man Singh built gardens and landscape features at important locations. Around 1578–1587, Raja Man Singh laid the foundation of an important garden about two kilometers south east of the city of Hasan Abdal. He built a pavilion and a water tank on a terraced site. A beautiful waterfall, the abundance of trees surrounded by hills and a stream of water were so exquisite that future Mughal emperors felt the urge to develop the site into the most important garden of Mughal India. The garden had a pavilion and a large tank full of fish. This was not a formal charbagh but an effort to transform the landscape into a pleasure spot.

During Akbar's time Lahore became the capital of the empire for fourteen years, from 1484 to 1498. Important nobles constructed their houses and gardens in Lahore. Most of these gardens were built on the banks of the river Ravi. The most important of these gardens were Dilafroz, where Jahangir stayed in 1015 AH/1606 on his way to Kabul, Bagh-e Nizam ud Din Ahmad, Bagh-e Khan-e Azam, Bagh-e Andjan, Bagh Malik Ali Kotwal, and Bagh-e Zain Khan Kokaltash. The later one had terraces,

pavilions, corridors arches, walkways and sawan bhaddon with chini khanas lit by lamps at night. This garden is reported to have existed till 1820. A number of these gardens were mentioned by Dara Shikoh.

During the reign of Jahangir Lahore turned into a garden city. Important personalities of the reign preferred to live in Lahore as the emperor was regularly visiting the place on his way to Kabul and Kashmir. The important gardens added in Lahore include Bagh Mirza Momin Ishaq Baz, Bagh Shamsuddin, Bagh-e Dilkuska and Bagh-e Anarkali. William Finch who traveled in India during the reign of Jahangir also came to Lahore and mentioned the gardens of Lahore. He gave an elaborate description of the haveli garden of Asif Khan.

The city of Lahore which served as the capital of the empire during Akbar's time continued to be a favorite city where to live during the reign of Shah Jahan. Chandar Bhan, a historian of Shah Jahan's reign, mentions that the officers of the Mughal Empire maintained a mansion in Lahore even if they were posted elsewhere in the Mughal Empire.

During the reign of Shah Jahan, Ali Mardan Khan-being the governor of Lahore, Kabul and Kashmir-built gardens in all important locations. In the North West Frontier Province he built two beautiful gardens in the northwest and west of Peshawar. During this period another garden was built in the south west of town. These gardens were irrigated by the Bara River which used to flow close to the town and must have had a very charming landscape. Ali Mardan also built garden in Sohdra (a small town on the left bank of river Chenab) and also had a tomb garden built for his mother in Lahore.

In 1655 Mirza Sultan Beg, a Persian noble built Ghulabi Bagh (the garden of rose water) on Grand Trunk Road two kilometer short of Shalamar Garden from Lahore walled city. The said garden like many other gardens has disappeared and only a majestic gateway exists. The gateway has rich and

vivid mosaic tile work and superb calligraphy on plaster base.

Sufi saints also took the lead in improving the landscape character of the Grand Trunk Road. Shah Daula, a sufi saint of Gujrat, constructed bridges on Bhimbar Nala near Gujrat and on Nala Dek near Sadoki and Sialkot. Similarly Mulla Shah, a disciple of Mian Mir constructed a garden in Kashmir. The meeting of sages and poetry reading usually took place in gardens also became important an theme for miniature paintings. The court historians such as Salih Kamboh talked about these subjects in his writings.

During the reign of Aurangzeb (1650–1707), Behram Khan, son of Khushal Khan Khattak built a walled garden on Grand Trunk Road at Attock overlooking the river. The site was much frequented by travelers. The site is picturesque due to the hills and the Indus River, and at this point emperor Akbar built a fort Attock fort and subsequently Begum Ki Sarai was built there. Several tombs and mosques in Mallahi Tola settlements further enriched the landscape. Behram Khan garden is divided by water system into charbagh with baradari on the south side. The concentration of large number of monuments in close proximity makes this site unique on Grand Trunk Road.

## *Patronage of Gardens*

### *by Women*

The patronage of gardens and landscape projects by ladies is something special which was carried out throughout Mughal Empire. This raised several question in the context of our own contemporary social environment. Was ladies of the harem had many powers (both financial and administrative to take independent decisions or there were such

education which gave more liberty to women's to act independently as the ladies were writers, poets, philanthropists and patrons of gardens and important structures.

Jahangir also mentioned two other gardens which were existed there from the time of Babur. These were the garden of Bika Begum (wife of Babur) and the Shahr- Ara (city adorning) garden made by Shahr Bano Begum, daughter of Mirza Abu Said. This description point out that garden tradition was very much popular in Kabul during the reign of Babur. The answer to this question will be dealt slightly later). During Babur's reign ladies of the harem equally contributed in changing the landscape character of the cities of the Mughals.

During the Mughal period, ladies of the harem had a prominent role in the affairs of the realm including participation in construction activity in general and garden in particular. This is primarily because women enjoyed considerably more freedom than those in Central Islamic regions. The wife of Timur was highly independent person. Bibur's maternal grandmother, Isan Daulat Begum (d. 1505), the wife of Younus Khan Mughal, who after the dead of Babur's father managed everything for her grandson, took over the administration of Andijan territories and dealt with conspirators. Besides taking part in the realm of the empire, women also, participated in sports and leisurely activities including excursions. Gulbadan wrote an amusing account of an early trip to Afghanistan by Humayun's women, during which they visited a particularly beautiful waterfall. They were taught by special teachers and consequently a number of them were poetess and writers of exceptional quality.

Womens were also financially independent. A special part of a women's wealth was allotted to them in outright gifts of land. Munucci reported that usually a women's allowance was paid half in cash and half in the grant of a land assignment (jagir) from which she could collect an often sizable amount of

money. The women used part of this money to lay-out gardens, waterways and to construct buildings, like sarai's for travelers or mosques for worshipers or tombs for relatives.

Nur Jahan, wife of Emperor Jahangir, made a significant contribution in buildings and gardens. In fact, the amount of construction undertaken under her patronage is rare even in our own time. This is not only her but other ladies of the harem also built gardens and due to their patronage the landscape character of the cities changed quite dramatically. Women built tombs for themselves and their male relatives—such as Salima Sultan Begum for herself; Nur Jahan for her father, Itimaduddaula, and for herself; and Zinatunnisa, a daughter of Aurangzeb for her—as well as gardens, sarais, mosques, wells, poorhouses, monasteries and reservoirs. The sarai that Jahanara built was called by Manucci “the most beautiful sarai in Hindustan,” and Jahangir often walked through what he called “the famous garden of Kabul,” three of which had been made by his women relatives: Bika Begum, great grandmother, Maryan Makani grandmother, and Shahr Banu, an aunt of Babur's. In addition Jahangir's mother Maryamuzamani, built a garden and well at Justat in 1613 and when the emperor himself inspected then a few years later, he pronounced the baoli a grand building . . . [which] had been built exceedingly well and found that his mother had spent only Rs. 20,000 in constructing it. Similarly Aq Aqayan, a female relative built a garden, a sarai and a tomb in Delhi. Later women, such as Jahanara, Raushanara and Zebunnisa and Bibi Akbarabadi (a wife of Aurangzeb,) built gardens and wells. Like wise Nur Jahan proved an extravagant builder. She built gardens in Lahore, Agra and Kashmir, sarais, tombs and wells. Most of these gardens and buildings were built near major cities. And the sarai's and wells built away from towns became important cities in later years. These projects helped urban development and the expansion of existing cities. At Lahore

Nur Jahan built Dilkusha Garden on the right bank of river Ravi. After death emperor Jahangir was interred in the Dilkusha Garden. Presently the tomb comprise of charbagh with raised fountain basins in the middle of four walkways.

## *The Role of Gardens in Mughals' Lives*

Because of their natural inherent beauty, gardens were chosen by the Mughals to perform a variety of activities. These activities ranged from personal family functions to official gatherings. Some of the uses included grand festivals like naurauz, mushaira (poetry recitation), feasts, meetings of Sufis and Saints, birthday parties and combating contests. These gardens were also used as official halting places, daulatkhana-e-khas-o-aam; whereas portions of garden were exclusively reserved for women (zenan khana) and provided with auxiliary facilities, like hammams. There was no strict distinction between gardens and building in the Mughal gardens, each flowed seamlessly into the other, but in palace gardens in particular there was a functional segregation of spaces, and areas designed for court ceremonial became increasingly separated from residential quarters.

By the end of Aurangzeb's reign, towns and cities were transformed into garden cities. There were tomb gardens, pleasure gardens as well as residential gardens. And a variety of activities were performed both in royal and private gardens. A large number of gardens were built on the riverfront or close to some water body such as canal, springs, lake or waterfall. After Aurangzeb's death, cities along the Grand Trunk Road went into decay. According to Manrique, "Lahore was subject to periodical invasion, pillage and depopulation, and was thus reduced

from a mighty city to a little more than a walled township in a circle of ruinous waste." City land use became predominantly devoted to private gardens alongside ruined imperial gardens built during the Mughal period. City cultures changed with the development of gardens in urban areas, and gardens became part of the life of the commoners as well as the elite. This tradition extended even into the Sikh period. Eminabad, a town north of Lahore was eclipsed by a series of Sikh period gardens and more or less similar situation was found in other cities such as Alipur Chatta, Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Gujrat Attock etc, located along the Grand Trunk Road. British travelers praised the gardens of cities of the Subcontinent. According to Fra Sebastian Manrique:

Lahore is a handsome and well ordered city, with large gateways and pavilions of various colors . . . Lahore, the second city of the Mughal Empire is ornamented with fine palaces and gardens, also tanks and fountains. The riches of the principal street if shown to advantage would equal the richest European mart.

During the Mughal period gardens served a number of functions. Many large scale activities in these gardens also trickled down to the subimperial and finally to general public level. The use of Gardens at imperial level is discussed in the following paragraphs.

### INTERIM CAPITAL OF THE EMPIRE

Emperor Aurangzeb stayed at the garden of Hasan Abdal for almost a year and a half from 26 June 1674 to 23 December 1673. During this period the garden served as the capital, from where all the affairs of the Mughal Empire were handled from the garden.

## PLACES FOR RITUAL EVENTS

Emperors celebrated their birthdays in gardens where their weight was measured in gold and silver, and the money was distributed among poor and needy people. Promotions were given to the officers and nobles and members of the royal family.

Jashan-e-Nauroz was an important ritual for the Mughals that was initiated during the reign of Jahangir and celebrated in line with Persian practices.

## PLACES FOR HOLDING FEASTS

On important occasions feasts were arranged in gardens. Jahangir described how Nur Jahan arranged a feast in her own garden. On Thursday, August 26, 1617, corresponding with the 14th Shaban, the day of Shab-i-barat, Nur Jahan hosted a feast on the bank of a large tank. The invitees, Amirs (Lords) and courtiers were served with all kinds of intoxicating drinks according to the desire of each. According to Jahangir, in the beginning of the evening they lit lanterns and lamps all around the tanks and buildings, creating a garden lighting the like of which has perhaps never been arranged in any place. The lanterns and lamps cast their reflection on the water, and it appeared as if the whole surface of the tank was a plain of fire. (Jahangir 1974, 1:385–86)

## ABODES OF SUFI SAINTS

Scholarly discussions were held in gardens including poetry reading. In addition sufi saints frequently visited these gardens. Dara Shikoh (1615–1659) has discussed at length the various gardens where Hazrat Mian Mir (1550–1635) and his disciples used to go and meditate. These were least disturbed during the day time and one could concentrate in prayer. This helps understand that there is a number of sufi

saints' graves around princely gardens. Especially the sufi khanqah's (a convent/abode of holy men) had gardens too.

Hazrat Mian Mir especially visited the gardens of Baghica Swafi Ajal near the garden of Prince Pervaiz, Naulakha Bagh, Garden of Mirza Kamran, Garden of Kalij Khan, Bagh Qasim Khan, garden of Sheikh Johar, Raja Bagh, garden of Mir Taqi diwan, Garden of Mir Ali Kotowal, Garden of mir Abdur Rahim Khan and Mirza Momin Garden. Dara Shikoh has mentioned the specific locations where he used to sit most open under the pavilions and under the trees.

## PLACES FOR CORONATION

A garden was chosen for a coronation ceremony. After the fall of Shah Jahan, astrologers were asked to fix the appropriate time for coronation. Since the time until the date they designated was not sufficient for preparing a grand celebration in the palaces of Shahjahanabad fort, a much curtailed coronation ceremony was held in the Azizabad garden outside the metropolis, when the prince ascended the throne of Hindustan under the title of 'Alamgir' or seizer of the universe. (Khan 1990, 555)

## PLACE FOR HOLDING PUBLIC AUDIENCES

Gardens were extensively used to hold public audiences. Jahangir and Shah Jahan held public audiences in gardens. On 8th of Ramazan (25 January 1638), after returning from a hunting excursion, the emperor reached the Nur Manzil garden where a royal audience was held. After spending a day in the garden the emperor proceeded to Akbarabad. (Khan 1990, 219). Similarly Shah Jahan stayed at the Garden of Sirhind on his way to Lahore on Jamadi II 1048 AH (late October 1638). The emperor presented robe of honor, a horse and 5000 rupees to Mulla Abdul

Ghafur, the envoy from Balkh. In addition Safdar Khan, who had proceeded on an embassy to Iran produced a nazar offering to the Emperor. (Khan 1990, 249)

#### RESTING PLACE DURING LONG JOURNEYS

The Mughal emperors used to stay in gardens during their long journey. Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb always used to stay in the garden of Hasan Abdal. Shah Jahan stayed twice in the Bagh Farah Bakhsh and Faiz Bakhsh at Lahore twice on 2nd of Safar 1055 (30 March 1645) (Khan 1990, 323) and 15 Zil Qada 1062 AH (18 October 1652) (Khan, 1990, 475.) He halted a few days and did not enter into the city. The emperor Shah Jahan while proceeding to Shahjahanabad on 15th Rajab 1067 (29 April 1657) stayed in the Azizabad garden outside the metropolis for his enjoyment. (Khan 1990, 541)

#### PLACE TO PERFORM RITE OF ABLUTION

On the 19th of Muharram 1055 AH (17 March 1645), Shah Jahan arrived at the Garden of Sihind. Princess Jahan Ara performed the rite of ablution a second time on the occasion of her total recovery from illness. At this occasion, the emperor lavished 1000 gold mohrs and 5000 rupees in alms on the destitute.

#### PLACE OF BATTLE

During the Mughal period a number of battles took place near gardens, whenever garden were used as hiding places as well as launching pads for offensive attacks. Inayat Khan while describing the account of Shayista Khan Exaction of tribute from Partab,

the Zamindar of Palamau in Bihar provides a good example.

The battle of Qandahar fought by prince Aurangzeb and his forces provides another one. They commenced the siege of the town on 14th of Jamadi I (26 May 1649). At this point it was decided to post Allami in the garden of Ganj Ali commonly called Ganj Abad, Mirza Raja Jai Sing in another garden of the aforesaid Khan generally known as Abbasabad; and Qalij Khan in the Bagh-e-Nazar which Amir ul Umara Ali Mardan Khan had constructed beside his fathers garden. (Khan 1990, 428).

Finally gardens were used as places for conversation and enjoyment by the rebellious sons of Shah Jahan. According to Anayat Khan after the battle of Samugarh, the victorious troops of Prince Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh spent the entire night in joyous celebrations. Two days later, the armies proceeded to the metropolis, where prince Aurangzeb halted in the garden of Nur Manzil called Dehra Bagh for the next ten days. Prince Aurangzeb seized the red fort Agra and dialogue took place between the emperor and his rebellious son. Left with no other recourse, on the 17th of Ramzan 1068 AH (18 June 1658) the gates were opened and the prince's eldest son Muhammad Sultan entered with other officers to take possessions of the fort and to hold the now powerless emperor in confinement in the palace.

### *A Last Word*

Gardens were extensively used by the Emperors for hosting many different kinds of activities. Private gardens built at subimperial level were used for a number of functions such as picnic parties, marriage functions, and feasts, meetings with friends or just for the pursuit of pleasure. From functional point of view the gardens varied from residential, funerary, pleasure as well as manzil garden or hunting gardens. They were built within the residential areas,

the British. After independence, garden construction was carried out by the government agencies, but the patronage of private gardens and parks vanished out of existence. With the increase in land values and commercialization all surviving private gardens were encroached upon, leading to their total extinction. When comparing land uses in the Mughal period and our times it stands clear that Mughal garden cities produced fruits and vegetables and were healthier then than in modern times.

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on the river fronts, near the natural source of water such as spring or waterfalls or in places where water was specially brought from the river. Garden making trickled down to popular level and a number of walled gardens were built in all historic towns particularly those located along the Grand Trunk Road. Gardens became an integral part of public life and therefore they contributed much to the urban expansion. Garden activities were also continued by the general public during the British period when company baghs were built in all mandi (market) towns. This name company bagh was first started at the time when East India Company constructed Company Bagh in early colonial towns planned by