



Representation of Kashmir in Persian Poetry during the Mughal Rule

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Abstract

This paper examines the Persian poetry composed about Kashmir during the Mughal era. Kashmir emerged as a poetic genre during the reign of Jehangir and Shahjahan among the Mughal Persian poets. Kashmir acquired a reputation as a pleasure garden during the reign of the Mughals and was visited and celebrated by Mughal emperors. This paper also attempts at antecedents of celebration of this sacred geography of Kashmir. Throughout the ages, the presentation of Kashmir presented some sort of enigma and fascination by the people who saw it, mentioned it, or merely just heard about it. The Valley of Kashmir still maintains this reputation in the hearts and minds of people all across the globe and continues to gravitate and fascinate them. Be it Mughal court poets like Talib and Urfi or orientalist take of famous Irish poets like Thomas Moore, Kashmir has been an enchanting and mystic setting for poets worldwide. Kashmir became a setting for Persian poets and scholars to be celebrated as an earthly paradise. Mughal Persian poets created a separate genre of poetry where the beauty and enchanting landscape of Kashmir was praised. Most of these poems were exaggerated accounts, and some of the poets writing in this particular genre had not even visited Kashmir once in their lifetime. This poetic genre reached its Zenith during the reign of Jehangir and Shahjahan, who used to visit Kashmir regularly and were great patrons of Persian poetry.

Keywords: *Kashmir Valley, Persian Poetry, Mughals, Jehangir.*

History of the Persian Language in Kashmir

Throughout the ages, the presentation of Kashmir presented some sort of enigma and fascination by the people who saw it, mentioned it, or merely just heard about it. The Valley of Kashmir still maintains this reputation in the hearts and minds of people all across the globe and continues to gravitate and fascinate them. Be it Mughal court poets like *Talib* and *Urfi* or orientalist take of famous Irish poets like *Thomas Moore*, Kashmir has been an

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enchanting and mystic setting for poets worldwide. In the present time famous rock music band “Led Zeppelin” added to this mystical aura by composing the song named “Kashmir.” What is perhaps more interesting is that many of these poets never set foot in the valley. Thus, Kashmir has always held its place as a Shangri-La[†] (a place having a mystic and romantic aura) for many writers and poets. A place whose natural beauty is unparalleled and is protected and nestled amidst the mighty Himalayan mountains, which makes it very inaccessible but also adds to its enchanting and mystic aura.

The history of the Persian language in Kashmir begins with the influx of Islam in Kashmir with the coming of a Central Asian saint known in popular parlance as “*Bulbul Shah*” during the reign of *Rinchan Shah* in 1325 AD. But the most radical transformation in the cultural landscape of Kashmir took place with the advent of the famous saint and Islamic scholar *Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani* during the reign of *Sultan Qutub Din* in 1379 AD. *Hamdani* was not alone in his endeavor but was accompanied by a large no of *Sayyids*[‡] who were escaping the ravages of *Tamerlane* in Persia and Central Asia. *Hamdani* and his accomplices came from Persia, Khurasan or Persian-speaking parts of Central Asia. With time these emigrants formed the religious-Political elite of Kashmiri society[§]. Thus, the discourses and literature they produced were thoroughly Persianised^{**}. It was with the coming of *Budshah* (Zain Ul Abidin) who made the Persian, language of court and statecraft and even persuaded Kashmiri Pandits to learn this language^{††}. The Kashmiri language itself started to borrow heavily from the Persian language but its usage got restricted among the Quotidian masses^{‡‡}. Thus, Kashmir was thoroughly initiated into the Persianate cultural sphere by the early decades of the fifteenth century^{§§}.

[†] Shangri-la emerged as a romantic and utopian, fictional metaphor among literary works of some western writers. It was particularly popularized in “*Lost Horizon*”, the James Hilton’s novel. Shangri-La now means a paradise on earth, more particularly a mythical utopia in the Himalayas, isolated from the outside but an eternal happy land. It indicates also a certain exoticization.

[‡] *ibid*, 116-118. Syeds claim themselves to be descendants of Prophet Muhammad and are spread across the Islamic world.

[§] Zutshi, Chitralekha. *Kashmir’s Contested Pasts: Narratives, Geographies, and the Historical Imagination*. India: OUP India, 2014, 30-31.

^{**} Religious literature composed during this period was mostly in form of Sufi Tazkiras. Tazkiras were mostly hagiographical accounts of Sufi saints written by their Mureeds or followers from the similar Sufi orders. or popular religious recitations like Aurad fathiyaa of Mir Syed Hamdani which is still popular in Kashmir.

^{††} Muhammad Din Fauq, *Tarikh I Badshahi*, Shiekh Muhammad Usman and Sons, Srinagar, 2015, 238-245. Fauq rejects the popular perception that Budshah (Zain Ul Abidin) was Persianised due to his growing up in the Timurid court of Samarqand. Since Kashmir was already Persianised to a central extent by the Persian and Central Asian emigres and the wider Islamic world from Turkey to Bengal was transformed into a Persianate sphere, thus it was no wonder that Budshah was responding to these Persianate Cosmopolitanism processes by conducting statecraft into the Persian language.

^{‡‡} Hājñī, Muḥiuddīn. *Kashmir: Glimpses of History, Culture and Literary Traditions*. India: JK Books, 2021.

^{§§} I have used Marshall Hodgson’s understanding of the term “Persianate”. The term “Persianate” was coined by Marshall Hodgson in 1960 in his seminal multi-voluminous work “*Venture of Islam*”. He defined Persianate cultures as those cultures which have been dominated by Persian literary and cultural traditions for a significant period of time. These influences were multifaceted and manifested themselves in diverse fields like art,

Depiction of Kashmir in Persian Literature during the Mughal Period

The Persian language had also become an integral part of South Asia much before the advent of the Mughals. Persian attained a distinctly Indian style also known as *Sabk-I-Hindi* in the Persianate world^{***}. Right from the Ghaznavid times in the middle of the eleventh century, Lahore was emerging as a Centre of the Persian cultural sphere^{†††}. Poets like *Masud Salman* (1121), *Abu Faraj Runi*, were in fact some of the pioneers in Persian poetry and their mastery was acknowledged by celebrated Persian poets like *Anvari* and *Nizami*. The growth of Turkic power with the coming of Ghori and other subsequent Turkish dynasties further gave impetus to the growth of Persian in the Indian context^{‡‡‡}. Cities like Agra, Delhi, Lahore and even outlying regions like Bengal came to rival the Persian heartlands of Shiraz, Isfahan, Herat, Samarkand.

Kashmir valley remained a separate kingdom in recorded history except for a brief hiatus until Mughals emerged as a paramount political and military force in the Indian subcontinent. Mughals were the first power from the Indian mainland to break Kashmir's political insularity and merge it with the rest of the Subcontinent. It was *Akbar the Great* who conquered the region in 1586 AD thus ending the rule of the *Chak* dynasty^{§§§}. However, Akbar wasn't the first Mughal scion to invade and annex the valley. That credit goes to the Mughal adventurer *Mirza Haider Dughlat* who was the maternal cousin of Babur the founder of the Mughal empire in India. Mirza Haider entered the service of *Abu Said Mirza* who was the ruler of Kashgar. It was while serving under him that he made his first foray into the valley in 1531 AD. However, this was not a permanent stay and he had to leave the valley after a brief stay for *Kashgar*^{****}. After the death of *Abu Said Mirza* in 1533 AD, he entered the service of reigning the Mughal emperor *Humayun*. Meanwhile, he had not forgotten about Kashmir. In 1540 he made another attempt and even tried to persuade Humayun to conquer the valley as he was being driven out of the Indian plains by Sher Shah Suri. Apart from his militaristic adventurism, Mirza Haider is well known in the literary field for his historical

architecture, literature, administration and other spheres of social and political life. Hodgson himself described the term Persianate as "the rise of Persian had more than purely literary consequences: it served to carry a new overall cultural orientation within Islamdom... Most of the more local languages of high culture that later emerged among Muslims likewise depended upon Persian wholly or in part for their prime literary inspiration. We may call all these cultural traditions, carried in Persian or reflecting Persian inspiration, Persianate by extension". For further reading refer to *Hodgson, Marshall G. S. The Venture of Islam, Volume 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods. United Kingdom, University of Chicago Press, 2009.*

*** Sabk-i-Hindi was a distinctive style of Persian that emerged in India. For extensive information about Sabk-i-Hindi, see Shams Rehman Faruqi's Brilliant paper, A Stranger In The City: The Poetics of Sabk-i Hindi, depth of languages and cultures of Asia, Univ of Wisconsin, 2004.

††† Muzaffar Alam, The Culture and Politics of Persian in Precolonial Hindustan, in, Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia, ed., Sheldon Pollock, United Kingdom: University of California Press, 2003, 130-149.

‡‡‡ Eaton, Richard M. India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765. United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited, 2019, 40-45.

§§§ G. M. D. Sufi, *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir from the Earliest Times to Our Own*. University of Punjab press, Lahore, 1948.

**** Kashgar is a city in present-day Xinjiang province of China.

work called *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*^{††††}. The *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* presents a general and vivid portrayal of Kashmir. Sometimes the author is awestruck by the magnificent architecture of the valley and sometimes by the majesty of its temples. In his picturesque depiction of the Kashmir valley, he goes on to mention:

“Kashmir is among the famous countries of the world. It is known in the world for its various charms, even though no one knows it accurately and precisely, and in older books not even a cursory report of its conditions is found”^{††††}

Further, he praises the natural landscape, its lakes and the trees:

“The greenery of its fields and trees resemble the Garden of Iram in its beauty, for the delightfulness and charm of its gardens, meadows, and mountains, it has four distinguished seasons with each season having its own charm, and for perfect moderation of the weather, no place like Kashmir has ever been seen or heard of.”^{§§§§}

Mirza Haider uses here the same literary tropes that were prevalent in Persian literature during the contemporary age. A particularly common literary device used was “*Sannat-i-Talmiah*”. It was a literary device that referred to some historical or mythological event e.g., Alexander’s victory over Darius or Moses’s migration to the promised land. Here exaggeration was used like a literary device, too and it was fairly common for poets and writers to do so.

The Mughals annexed Kashmir in 1586 in a rapid military operation against the *Chak* dynasty. After the conquest, several factors contributed to the propagation of the idea of ‘*Mughal Arcadia*’. In the *Ain-Akbari*, *Abul Fazl* informs about the geography and culture of Kashmir:

“The country is captivating in its beauty and might be fittingly called the garden of everlasting spring (Bagh-i- hamisha- bahar) surrounding a citadel terraced to the skies, and deservedly appropriate to be either the delight of the wording or the abode of the dervish. Its streams are sweet to taste, its waterfalls are music to hear, and the climate is invigorating. The rain and snowfall are similar to Turkistan and Iran. the lands are artificially watered. The enchanting flowers fill the heart with delight. Violets, the red rose and wild narcissus cover the plain. To enumerate its flora would be impossible. Its spring and autumn are extremely beautiful.”^{*****}

Abul Fazl also gives a quasi-mythical ethnographic description of the people of the vale who he mentions as “true worshippers of God”. he describes them as jolly and God-fearing people who plant fruit trees for the benefit of passersby. *Abul-Fazl*’s admiration and elevation

†††† G.M.D. Sufi in his work “*Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir from the Earliest Times to Our Own*” has given a detailed description of *Mirza Haider*’s rule in Kashmir. He also describes the historical importance of this work as it fills some crucial gaps that are present in the historiography of Kashmir.

†††† Ibid, 324-325.

§§§§ Ibid, 326-328.

***** *Abul-Fazl*. The *Ain-i-Akbari*. 3 vols. Translated by H.S. Jarett. Delhi: Taj, 1989.

of the qualities of natives (sometimes exaggerated denigration) is a central characteristic of pastoral literature that would later feature in the court's poetry about Kashmir^{†††††}.

Transformation of Kashmir into a Poetic Arcadia

From the very early conquest of Kashmir by the Mughals, it emerged as Kashmir was going to become a "pleasure garden" a health resort of some sort that provided a respite to weary Mughal immigrants from the scorching heat and dust of North Indian plains. Mughals themselves came from relatively cooler temperate places where it snowed in winter and had four distinct seasons. Babur often complains about the scorching heat and humidity of Indian plains as well as the absence of gardens and natural streams in his autobiographical literary masterpiece "*Tuzuk-i-Baburi*". The climate was terrible. "We suffered," he writes, "from three things in Hindustan"^{‡‡‡‡‡}. The three things that hurt him most were Heat, Fire, and Dust.^{§§§§§} This aversion towards the heat of Indian plains was shared by the emigre elite of Iran and Turan. The oppressive heat and humidity were a constant trope that was often echoed by the Iranian and Turanian emigre poets and writers. Famous seventeenth-century Persian poet "Ashraf Mazandarani" echoes the oft-repeated sentiment in these verses:^{*****}

*"Dar Hind kih khak u gard migardad garm
Ta gumbad-i lajavard migardad garm
Chun tab kih natijah-yi hava khurdagist
abash zi nasim-i sard migardad garm"*

*"In the lands of India, the surface and dust become so hot,
"Due to its heat even the heaven becomes hot,
Like a fever that breeze arrives
And heats even the cool waters"*

The artistic capability of the Persian language has always found its expression and mark in the literature. There is always a constant struggle between the "Desert and the garden" in Persian literature. The desert is always signified by a sense of horror, whereas nature with its greenery, meadows, water, and streams always evokes a sense of pleasure and admiration. However, both Horror and admiration find their regular place in Persian poetry. For Persian

^{†††††} Ebba Koch, *The influence of the Jesuit Missions on Symbolic representation of the Mughal emperors*, Mughal art and imperial ideology (New Delhi: OUP, 2001)

^{‡‡‡‡‡} Beveridge, Annette Susannah. *The Baburnama in English* (Memoirs of Babur): Translated from the Original Turki Text of Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi (Volume I). India: Alpha Editions, 2019.

^{§§§§§} Babur and his accomplices hated the oppressive heat and humidity of Indian plains. Many of his close friends couldn't cope up with Indian climate and left during the very first year of the Indian conquest for the cooler climes of Kabul. Babur bitterly laments in his letters to his friends that they have abandoned his company and have left him alone in this land. For the brilliant account about Babur, his sensibilities and his ideology see: Dale, Stephen Frederic. *The garden of the eight paradises: Babur and the culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India* (1483-1530). Boston, Brill, 2004.

^{*****} Stephen Frederic Dale. *A Safavid Poet in the Heart of Darkness: The Indian Poems of Ashraf Mazandarani*. Iranian Studies, Jun., 2003, Vol. 36. Taylor & Francis, Ltd.

poets, Kashmir was an idyllic setting for the composition of such poetry since it had almost all elements like Rivers, Streams, Rivulets, Meadows, Grasslands, Lakes, Snow clad mountains in abundance.

This celebration and creation of literary culture around Kashmir were taken to its zenith by Jehangir and his entourage of poets. Jehangir was personally interested in Persian poetry^{†††††}. He understood and appreciated the literary qualities of Persian poetry and literature. For Akbar and Shahjahan however, poetry held more of a symbolic value as they added to Royal prestige^{‡‡‡‡‡}. It was due to Jehangir's initiative that Kashmir became the Mughal's imperial retreat. It was in his reign and continuing into the reign of Shahjahan that Kashmir became a fashionable habitat of the court and visiting it developed it into an "imperial pursuit". The tradition of The Mughal emperors developing the natural landscape of Kashmir by making ordered gardens and landscapes continued for several decades. Jehangir's Kashmir trips were accompanied by an entourage of poets, Painters, and musicians^{§§§§§}.

Jehangir himself was a poet and he did compose numerous verses about the beauty and attraction of Kashmir. Some of his verses regarding the beauty of Kashmir are as follows:

*“Shudah jalwahgar nazaniyan baagh Rukh aarasta har yeki choon chiragh
 Ghazalkhawai Bulbul Subah khaiz Tamana mi khwargan kardah tez
 Bisat I gul wa sabzah Gulshan Shadah Chirag I Gul Az badah raushan Shudah”
 Binafsha sar I zulfra Khum Zada Girah I Dil Guncha Muhkam Zada*

*Every natural object in this garden (here pointing towards Kashmir) was looking like a fairy
 Everyone's face was looking like an illuminated lamp
 The morning singing of Bulbul made my longing for (Kashmir) even more intense
 The greenery and flowers made it look like a flower garden (Kashmir) and the countless
 flowers looked like illuminated lamps.
 The violet flowers on your head make me go tipsy and make my heart your perpetual
 slave^{*****}.*

Jehangir's reign witnessed an influx of a huge number of Persian poets from Safavid Iran to India. Even though Iranian and Central Asian poets had always steadily made India their home, one of the court poets of Jehangir "Talib Amuli" accompanied him on one or more of his trips from Lahore to Kashmir. Talib was not just another court poet but was the

^{†††††} Nomani, Shibli, Shair ul Ajam, vol 3, Maarif Press, Azamgarh, 1921, 10-11. Shibli mentions that Jehangir had a critical bent of mind regarding the Persian poetry. He critically analysed the various facets of Persian poets.

^{‡‡‡‡‡} For more knowledge and detailed information about the dynamics of Persian poetry at the Mughal court see the seminal work done by Mohammad Abdul Ghani: Ghani, Muhammad Abdul. A History of Persian Language & Literature at the Mughal Court. India, Gregg International Publishers, 1972.

^{§§§§§} Sharma, Sunil. Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court. United Kingdom: Harvard University Press, 2017, 125-134.

^{*****} Jahangir. The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Or, Memoirs of Jahangir. India: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors (P) Limited, 2015, 302-303. Translation from Persian to English is my own.

most celebrated poet or Poet Laureate of Jehangir's court⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺. He was inspired to compose two poems eulogizing the emperor which mention the journey's difficulties and praise the land. Talib hailed from *Mazandaran*, a province in the Caspian region of Persia, whose mountainous and watery landscape is somehow akin to Kashmir. Before his arrival at the Mughal court, *Talib* was also a court poet in *Isfahan* and *Merv*⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺. In his poetic stint in Iran also he wrote *Qasidas* on natural settings in his home province.

Talib wrote two *Qasidas* on Kashmir. He celebrates the Jehangir's reign in a courtly manner. *Talib* boasts that even though the journey to Kashmir was very difficult due to the high treacherous mountain paths, the path towards paradise is only rewarded to pious hardworking people. He further mentions:

"The mountainous region is a garden made by God that is renovated by the architect of its spring"

The picturesque quality of the place overwhelms the viewer and one's vision (*manzar*) cannot get enough of this sight. *Talib's* poetic talents are insufficient to describe this "divine garden" to the point that the limits of speech are stretched. After having set the appropriate scene, more than half of the poem is then devoted to praising Jahangir. In the second, more hyperbolic, poem, *Talib* makes a case for Kashmir as a special locale and invites his readers to enjoy the pleasures of the place. Writing and celebrating a particular place in verse was not something new or innovative. Persian poets used to celebrate cities and countries in their poetry. Take the example of a famous émigré poet *Talib Amuli* who emigrated to India during the reign of Jehangir and became a disciple of a Sufi saint *Shah Abul Ma'ali* in Lahore. He composed a panegyric in the praise and virtues of Lahore^{§§§§§§}.

After *Talib* an Iranian poet named *Ali Quli Salim* arrived in Mughal capital Agra. When he was presented to the Court, *Salim* was reading a poem before Emperor *Shah Jahan* praising Kashmir's natural beauty, which *Jehangir* considered the Crown Jewel among all his territories. Another poet *Kalim*, whose origins were also from Iran^{*****}, went up to

+++++ Poet Laureates of Mughals were referred as "*Malik ul Shuura*" in Persian. For the detailed account about *Talib Amuli* and the position and dynamics of Poet Laureate during Mughal period see the detailed account by *Nabi Hadi: Hadi, Nabi. Mughloo kay Malik ul Shuura, Shabistan, Allahabad, 1972.*

+++++ *Merv* and *Isfahan* are some of the foremost cultural centers of Iranian civilization. *Merv* was the greatest cultural centre of Persian civilization during the 12th and 13th centuries before getting destroyed by Mongols. *Isfahan* became the capital city of Safavids under the rule of *Shah Abbas the great* and thus earning the sobriquet "*Isfahan nisf jahan ast*" or *Isfahan* is half the world. For more knowledge about Islamic cities in general and *Isfahan* and *Merv* in particular see: *Bosworth, Edmund. Historic Cities of the Islamic World. Netherlands, Brill, 2007.*

§§§§§ *Sharma, Sunil. Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court. United Kingdom: Harvard University Press, 2017*

***** *Mughal India* had become a magnet for the poets and men of Pen from faraway lands and Iran in particular. Iranians came for the prospects of fame, money, patronage and sometimes even to escape tumultuous times in their own homelands. For this migratory phenomenon of Iranians during the Safavid times, *Aziz Ahmad* has done invaluable work. For further reading see: *Ahmad, Aziz. "Safavid Poets and India." Iran, vol. 14, 1976, pp. 117–32.*

the emperor and informed him that Salim had previously presented the exact poem about *Lahijan*, a city in northern Iran where he was employed at the Safavid court. He had merely replaced *Lahijan* with Kashmir and thus the poem was not an original but a mere copy of his original work. Shah Jahan was thus alerted to this forgery and rejected the poet. Salim had to seek his patronage somewhere else.

Thus, the question arises that whether the topography of the Valley of Kashmir, a place he probably had never seen since he had recently arrived in India, really remind Salim of *Lahijan*, or were these poems so generic that they could be applied to any place indiscriminately? This anecdote, recorded in several early modern Persian historical sources, can be dismissed as literary gossip, and many such factual and fictitious vignettes filled the pages of *tazkiras* (popular anthologies-cum-biographical dictionaries) which were becoming increasingly popular among the educated elite to provide entertainment and gratification for readers. But it raises some pertinent questions that were vital to the Mughal literary culture: the role of Iranians as arbiters of the Persian language and the commodification of a poem that poets could use the poems and even the recycled verses for their social and hierarchical upliftment. The only reason that Kalim choose such a plagiarised poem was that such poems had become some sort of fashion in the Shahjahan's court. After the advent of *Aurangzeb* to the throne, importance of Kashmir as a pleasure garden declined for the Mughals. *Aurangzeb* was himself of a puritanical strain and did not entertain and patronize the poets in the same vein as his predecessors had done⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺.

But the representation of Kashmir as a sacred geography did not die down entirely. Take the example of one of the most famous Urdu and Persian poet of twentieth century *Iqbal* who wrote (*tanam guli zi khiyaban-i jannat-i Kashmir / dil az harim-i Hijaz u nava zi Shiraz ast*) My body comes from the avenues of earthly paradise that is Kashmir, My heart resides in Hijaz and my song belongs to Shiraz. *Iqbal* is thus trying to connect the locale i.e. Kashmir (Since *Iqbal* was ethnically Kashmiri) and blessed by God with Paradise-like features to the Cosmopolitan Islamic world of Shiraz renowned for its Persian poetry and Hijaz which is the site of the most famous Islamic shrines⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺.

Conclusion

Kashmir emerged as the chief pleasure-seeking destination for the Mughals. The Mughals along with their entourage were enamored with the beauty of Kashmir valley which was manifested in their literature and paintings. Thus, Kashmir emerged as a distinct literary trope for the Mughal Persian poets. It was a literary metric over which the worthiness of the poet was tested and determined. It became a fashion of the age to compose these overtly

⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺ Aurangzeb visited Kashmir only once in 1665. After releasing that it was rather a costly affair, he abandoned this regular Mughal excursion altogether. Accompanying him on his sole journey to Kashmir was famous French traveler and writer Francois Bernier. For further information see: Bernier, François. *Travels in the Mogul Empire*. United Kingdom, W. Pickering, 1826, 131-146. Bernier was also quite enamored with Kashmir. He called it a welcome respite after hell like experience of India Summers.

⁺⁺⁺⁺⁺ Sharma, Sunil. *Mughal Arcadia: Persian Literature in an Indian Court*. United Kingdom: Harvard University Press, 2017,1-13.

exaggerated poems about the beauty and climate of Kashmir without even visiting Kashmir. Most of these Nature poems composed about Kashmir had similar monotonic accounts about the beauty of Kashmir valley.

Glossary of Some Terms

Shangrila: Imaginary Utopian setting akin to Eldorado

Sabk-i-Hindi: Distinctive style of Persian poetry that emerged in India.

Iram: Earthly Paradise mentioned in Quranic and Biblical tales

Sanat-i-Talmiah: A literary device that invokes some historical or mythological event into the poetic tradition of Islamicate and Persianate poetry.

Dervish: Sufi mendicants who choose to renounce the world.

Turan: abode of the Turks as opposed to Iranshahr which was considered as abode of Iranians.

Qasidas: Form of a poetry which is often written as a panegyric i.e. in praise of kings and nobles but also used in praise of some particular place or city.

Tazkiras: Biographical literary genre which is essentially a collection of life stories or biographies put together on a particular theme or person.