

Origin of Hari Parbat Hill and its Religious Importance

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Abstract: The hill of Hari Parbat stands in the middle of Srinagar city on the banks of one of the famous Dal Lake. The city of Srinagar is the largest city of Kashmir valley lies on the banks of river Jehlum. The hill of Hari Parbat can be seen possibly from all sides of Srinagar city as its height is raised to about 300 hundred feet from the plans, so it is easily overlooked from almost every side of the city. This paper will explore the origin of hill and its religious importance.

Keywords: Hari (bird), Parbat (hill), divine stone, Durga (Hindu Goddess), Jalodbhava (Demon), shrines.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- [1] To study the origin of Hari Parbat Hill.
- [2] To explore its religious importance.
- [3] To study about the existence of shrines around it.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research work both primary as well as secondary sources has been used.

ORIGIN OF HARI PARBAT HILL AND ITS RELIGIOUS IMPORTANCE

Legends confirmed by modern science that the valley of Kashmir was once a vast lake hundreds of feet deep. This lake according to the tradition was called the Satisar, the Lake of Sati (Durga). The water demon named as 'Jalodbhava' survived in this lake, which used to bother and terrorize the inhabitants of Satisar (valley of Kashmir). According to some myths, it is stated that the Hari parbat hill is originated after the crushing of Jalodbhava (demon), by Hindu Goddess Durga. The Hindu Goddess Durga, who had taken a shape of Sharika (a kind of bird- commonly called Mynaa) and took a divine pebble or stone in her beak and dropped it on the water demon Jalodbhava, resulted the death of demon. The divine stone which Goddess Durga took in her beak transformed into a hill that has been called the Hill of Hari parbat ever since. The word 'Hari' is borrowed from Kashmiri word 'Heer' (Myna), 'Parbat' means Hill. So the hill got its name from a bird 'Heer' or 'Myna' as Goddess Durga took the shape of this bird to crush the demon.

Another myth is associated with the origin of Hari parbat hill which says that the two demons 'Tsand' and 'Mond' occupied the valley of Kashmir, Tsand hid in the water near the current site of hill, and Mond above the water. Because of their frightful activities nobody could live in the valley of Kashmir, in these circumstances the people turned to the Goddess Durga for benefaction. The other Hindu Gods wanted good people to employ the pious land called upon the aid of Goddess Durga through meditation and absolution. Satisfied with them, Durga took the shape of a bird Heer (Myna) and took a holy stone in her beak to crush those demons.

The temple in which Durga is worshipped as 'Jagdamba Sharika Bhagwati' and is portrayed as having 18 arms and sitting in shri Chakra (an emblem of cosmic energy pervading the universe, is residing at the middle part of western slope of Hari parbat hill. The Hindus of Kashmir valley considered that the Hill of Hari parbat is house of millions of God's of their belief.

High upon the southern side of Hari Parbat hill is the attractive shrine of a famous Muslim saint 'Hazrat Makhdoom Sahib'. He spent number of years at Hari parbat hill in meditation. This shrine is admired or cherished by Muslims and Hindus alike. Nawab Inayat Khan, the governor of Kashmir during Mughal rule built the shrine in 1713 A.D. The Sikh Gurudwara " Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi" is one of the valuable Sikh shrine placed towards the southern gate of Hari parbat. It is built in recognition of Shri Har Gobind Singh Sahab who came to Kashmir with Emperor Jehangir. Of historic and mythological importance, the hill of Hari Parbat is possibly one of the most charming spot in Srinagar city with a well built fort of masonry (stone work) on top of it constructed during Ata Muhammad Khan (an Afghan governor). The outer wall and a city called as 'Nagar Nagar' around the hill were constructed during Akbar's Time around between 1589 A.D. to 1598 A.D. The hill consists of a type of rock which is known as basaltic rock favorable to the growth of almond trees. The whole of Hari parbat hill, its every stone, even its dust particles are considered as holy or blessed to the Hindus, as it has such historical methodology behind its origin.

CONCLUSION

The Hill of Hari Parbat can be concluded as one of the most holy or spiritual place not only in Srinagar but all over the valley of Kashmir. The hill can be considered as a symbol of secularism as per its history, as it is lauded and admired not only by the people of one faith but also by other faiths as Muslims whether Muslims, Hindus , Sikhs.

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