

Danger of falling “Minaret of Jam” in Ghur Province of Afghanistan and Overview of Jam-Minaret

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ABSTRACT: Ghur is one of the most important parts of the historically places in Afghanistan, the Minaret of Jam is absolutely increased to the significant and magnificence of this province, the Harirud-River flows from east to west, the Jam-River flows from south to north, at the confluence of these Rivers being an incredible adobe of minaret, its remarkable! How can this minaret stand against to erosion of Rivers and spring floods around more than 8th century without any fundamental protection?

The main aim of this research paper is focused on “danger of falling Minaret of Jam”, here are many threats being for destroying of Jam-Minaret. antiquities of these historically places trafficked by smugglers, but these threats also being against to Jam-Minaret, the Minaret of Jam almost falling by floods in spring of 2019, but fortunately this threat just temporarily resolved by local people. One of the goals of this research topic is to call to government of Afghanistan and organizations of responsible to rescue the minaret of Jam from destruction, therefore if they don’t pay attention, this historical minaret will demolish like other historical heritage in Afghanistan and we will be missing one of the “Seven Wonders of the World”.

Keywords: Ghurids dynasty, Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad, Jam village, Minaret, Threats of Minaret.

1. Introduction

Ghur Province is one of the historic provinces of Afghanistan and located in the central of Afghanistan that connect center part of the country to west part (Herat province). Ghur is a historical places in Afghanistan but some historical places and monuments remain unknown in this province, introducing and knowing historically places in is not enough just according to written references because it’s extremely need to visit them, especially Jam-Minaret of Ghur Province.

Jam-Minaret is almost 70 km far from Firouz Kuh city (central of Ghur Province), 62 km far from “central Shahrak district” one of districts of Ghur province and 215 km to east of Herat (8-10 hours by car), its located to deep valley -1900 meters high from level of sea and situated between the high mountains-3000 meters high from level of sea. This place has been cool winter, hot and tropical dry summer, around this area there is not enough land for agriculture, the pasturages were scattered and just used for domestic animals. Jam was “summer capital” for Ghurids dynasty and forty Farsakhs (almost 200km) has distance from “winter capital” of southeastern.

Jam minaret is 206 feet, the second tallest ancient minaret in the world, coming behind only the Qutb Minar in Delhi. The tower is covered in elaborate designs: patterns of pentagons, hexagons, and diamonds, and a Kufic inscription in turquoise tiles. The minaret, a feature of Islamic architecture used to provide a vantage point for the call to prayer, is located in the Ghur province of central Afghanistan, at the confluence of the Jam Rud and Hari Rud rivers. It was built in 1194 by the Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad and is composed of four cylindrical shafts made of fired bricks.

Jam-Minaret located between the intersection point of Harirud River and Jam River. Harirud River continued from east to west and from Afghanistan to Iran. It’s remarkable! The Jam-Minaret how can stand though earthquakes and gradually fraction. Another important geographically threat is erosion by Rivers and spring floods flows around the minaret. According to UNESCO reports this Minaret erosion by Herirud River and Jam River, especially floods is a big threat for Jam-Minaret in the spring season. According to last reports and spokesperson of local government in Ghur Province; said that, there are two kinds of threats for Minaret-Jam: the first threat is natural threat for instance; Harirud River, Jam River and spring floods. The second threat is security, Taliban threat because this place control by Taliban Regime therefore the government of Afghanistan and UNESCO are unable to protect it, so the cultural activists through social media expressed their

anxiety; if the government of Afghanistan and world cultural organizations don't attention to Jam Minaret it may overthrow in near future. however, it is temporarily constructed some gabion wall for its protection but it will not be protective in long term and needs fundamental steady construction. Between (1960-1970) there were few tourists had visited and political instability and civil war in Afghanistan after Soviet Union invaded caused that tourists cannot visit the area due to insecurity so in recent year the local and international tourist number increased to visit Jam minaret.

2. Literature Review

Ghur Province is one of the historically places of Afghanistan and located in the central of Afghanistan (THOMAS, 2005) Jam-Minaret is almost 70 km far from Firouz Kuh city (central of Ghur Province), 62 km far from "central Shahrak" one of districts of Ghor province and 215 km to east of Herat (8-10 hours by car). (Thomas D. , January 2006) Anonymous author of Sistan history Said: Ghur is a historically place and Jam was one of the capitals of Ghurids dynasty. (Haidary, 2014) Minaret of Jam is one of the historical memorials of the Ghurid Magnates dynasty in the highland region, situated between the skyrocketed mountains, beside the Harirud River. The other side of Minaret, Jam-River flows from south to north and crossed from small village of Jam. Jam-Minaret is located in the south-western crossovers of Harirud-River and Jam-River, in the north of this Minaret is small River of Bedan flowed to Harirud River. (Ghory, 2009)

The capital of Ghurid was Firuz Kuh, it's located between currently Chaghcharan and Taiwara, the upper part of Harirud-River and Farah-River, current Shahrak areas, eventually we can conclude it's near to Jam. (Nadim, 2013) In the 62km northeast of Shahrak district called Jam-village, there is Jam-River flow from south to north and Harirud-River continued from east to west. At the confluence of two rivers (Harirud-River and Jam-River) being a remarkable and a beautiful minaret with 63.3 meters high. (Hamraz, 2019) Minaret of Jam is one of the civilization and cultural features of Afghanistan and this Minaret reflects the art of Ghurids architecture in the 12th century the skyscraper of Jam-Minaret tells us the symbol of the glory and magnificent of the Ghurian era. (Habiby N. A., 2011) Also it is importance in the history of Islamic civilization. (Ghury, 2017) The Ghur people were "highland people" those are why they called Ghurid. (Habiby A. H., 2007) Jam was "summer capital" for Ghurids dynasty and the weather so cold there. (Ansary, 2011)

For more scientific description of Minaret-Jam should considering the Delhi-Minaret; the minaret of Delhi Maybe effected to decorate on the surface of the Jam-Minaret Pole but if we compare between the Delhi-Minaret and Jam-Minaret, the Minaret-pole of Delhi more advanced than Jam of Minaret. Jam-Minaret as from architectural grandeur, excellent decoration and Kufic writings after Minaret-pole of Delhi with 73 meters high, one of the "Seven Wonders of the World" (both Minarets are among the masterpieces of the Ghurids.) considered the largest and most magnificent minarets in the world. Founder of this historically minaret was Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad the son of the Mohammad the son of the Abulfath and the son of the Sury Ghury. (Hamraz, 2019) But some of historians say; Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad was from Zohak generation. (Pagwak, 1996) This Sultan built it in (1193-1202). The Minaret of Jam is superior to Delhi-Minaret in terms of the architectural history. (Hamraz, 2019) Ghaznavids dynasty collapsed by Ghurid dynasty basically they used from spear and sword in all fighting. (Ghubar, 1967) And then used from Ghazna's soil for built of Jam-Minaret. (Mahmud, 2010) Minaret of Jam is the second tallest minaret after New Delhi Minaret in the world and registered by UNESCO as one of the "World Heritage Site" in 2002. (UNESCO, 29th June 2002) The Jam-Minaret of Ghur province is one of the treasures of humanity's world. (Labib, 2010)

The Minaret of Jam discovered by Abdullh Malikiar the governor of Herat Province in 20th century, Charles Kiefer is a French scholar, talked; Mr Malikiar travelled to Ghor, implicitly discovered this Minaret and then said to Ahmad Ali Kuhzad, Mr Kiefer wrote a research paper about Jam-Minaret in (1960), called Minaret of Sultan Ghiasuddin and then his paper published in Firuz Kuh. Again discovered of Jam-Minaret title that written by Belgian Andrew Marek on August 17, 1957, published in (1959) and it publicised which is welcomed by many writers, event some of the England scholars noted it's a big discovered in the world. (Hamraz, 2019) According to remains of archaeological from Jam region in Ghur Province, Afghanistan is as the first nominated world heritage in 2002. (Thomas, 12 December 2012)

Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad was surrogate of Alawudin, he built Minaret in Jam-area because he wants to keep the memory of the local treasure alive and then the Pole-Minaret built it by Hebrew under the same situations. (Mahmud, 2010) The Minaret of Jam is the strongest adobe tower in the world. (Margottini, January 2011) Andrew Marek wrote about minaret of Jam: "that place the water of Jam-River mixed with Harirud-River, between the mountains of dark colour, being a splendiferous of minaret, the upper belts of the minaret made from tile sky-blue attracts the view, it's built from three floors and gradually narrow from down to up, that is why strongly this minaret stand, when I saw it, it remembered the Delhi-minaret and I visited that a few months ago, the cover of the first floor absolutely decorated and the around of this belt's cover wrote by Kufic alphabet and quite complicated, this decoration are arranged to make it simple, the four belts of Kufic Alphabet broken the vertical of minaret. The base of the tower is eight corners, and it carries three buttocks and

that are stacked together in a conical shape and the size of the eight-cornered rule is 3.5 meters, we can go the inside of minaret through of small valve and this valve located in the north of minaret (Hamraz, 2019)

The Lineage of Ghurid dynasty lived in Ghur, many centuries before Islam. (Jwozjany, 2012) And they were Buddhist. (Abry, 2002) They embraced Islam in the late of eight century. (Abady, 2002) But eventually this dynasty collapsed by armies of Genghis Khan at the first half of the 13th century, the historically place of Jam-Minaret with other monuments of Jam region were disappearance from world view. Until Thomas Holdich reported about Minaret of Jam in 1886 while working for Afghanistan in boundary mission after that, it again appearance by Abdullah Malikiar in 1943, after that research conducted like; Cambridge university conducted some researches about Minaret-Jam in 1959, Lie ber in (1960), Oxford University in (1964), some scholars of archaeologist had been mission about Minaret of Jam in (1970) and the last one was Sourdell Thomine, J don some research about it in 2004. Minaret of Jam almost falling by extremely floods at April of 2019, the prevention of this Minaret most important than other things right now, the main object of this research paper are protecting from Minaret of Jam by relevant organizations, it's the real gap because no researchers none do any research about danger of falling Minaret of Jam and don't any paper published about this yet.

Danger of falling “Jam-Minaret”

Here are two kinds of threats for Jam-Minaret; the first threat is natural threats (erosion by Harirud-River and Jam-River, spring floods and extremely rainfall), the second threat is Talibanism threats and extremist Islamists because the local government of Ghor Province couldn't provide security for this historical place yet. (NEWS, May 25, 2019) Generally many ancient sites in Afghanistan including the Jam's monuments destroyed or some excavation done by Taliban and antiquities of these places trafficked by smugglers. (Kesar, 2010) However the below project implemented in order to protect it, but it is cannot for a long term:

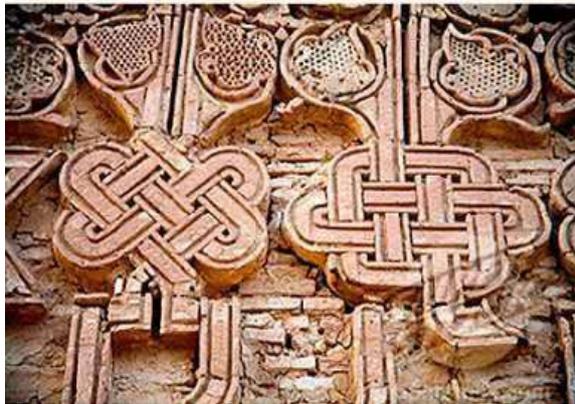
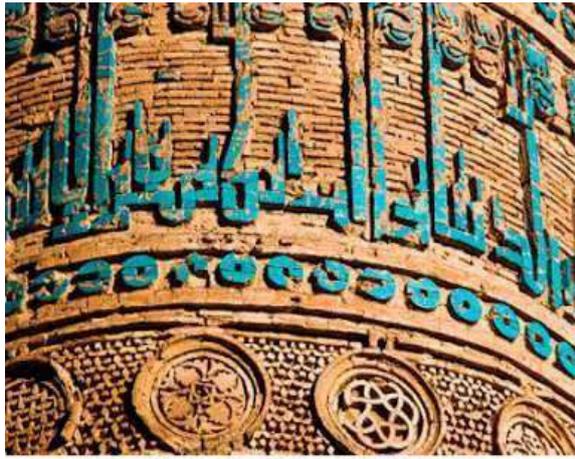
- 1- In (1999) in the path of Jam-River built a wooden wall with the base of stone in the form of a citation wall by UNESCO. (UNESCO, 2015)
- 2- In (2000) in the path of Harirud-River wired was built.
- 3- In (2006) all safeguards destroyed by rainfall and special spring floods, but “Ghur Department of Information and Culture” suggested some projects in the paths of Harirud-River and Jam-River to “Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan” for Protect of Jam-Minaret (Hamraz, 2019) but it just stayed a suggestion, unfortunately don't has any practical projects yet.
- 4- In (2019) the Minaret of Jam almost falling by floods, but fortunately this threat temporarily resolved by local people, so, if the government of Afghanistan and global heritage cultural organizations not take plan about protect of this Minaret, it will be destroy the same fate of Buddhas of Bamyan Province in Afghanistan. (NEWS, May 25, 2019)
- 5- The presidency of Afghanistan noted; the Minaret of Jam will be rebuilt in two stages but unfortunately they don't do anything about protect of Minaret-Jam yet, it's just talked and a paper. (Pazhwak, 2020)

3. Methodology

For this research paper using from analytical-descriptive methods, the methodological prospective of this research topic is using from both of resources in Languages; Persian and English, the secondary scientific sources of information about Ghurids dynasty and Minaret of Jam like; books, academic papers, reports of foreigner organizations, newspapers and primary sources like; informal conversations with the local people, individual interview with some educated generation of Afghanistan, special with relevant authorities, consultation with some scholars, discussing group with some historian and archaeological professors of Afghanistan's universities and argue with employees of “Department of Information and Cultural of Ghur Province” and visits many times of Jam-Minaret in the different seasons especially in the spring season because spring's floods is one of the extremely threat for Minaret of Jam).

Considering the archaeological research of Mr David Thomas about Minaret of Jam because Patterns are really important for research) (Winterbotham, October 2011). According to Shafiyee's research method for how to do research about monuments. (Shafiyee, 2016)

Actualize the researched stages and systematically gathering of data, because it's one of the most important pillars research about monuments until reach to real aims of research, choose scientific method is crucial for analyse. (Osmany, Summer 2016)



4. Conclusion

Ghur is one of the historical provinces of Afghanistan, Ghurids dynasty is one of the most important periods in history of Afghanistan and it is historically related to some other countries as well, but the Minaret of Jam is completely increased to the significance and magnificence of this province and it is architecture masterpiece in 12 century. the Minaret of Jam located to deep valley -1900 meters high from sea level and situated between high mountains-3000 meters high from sea level, Jam village located in the Ghur province of central of Afghanistan, this village is located 215 km east of Herat and 70 km west of Firouz Kuh (the current central of Ghur province) in the small village of Jam, also the Harirud-River which flows from east to west, the Jam-River flows from south to north and the confluence of these Rivers to be an amazing brick of minaret, it's remarkable! How can strength resist this minaret against to erosion of Rivers and severe spring floods without any habitual protect.

The minaret of Jam built by Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad Ghurid in (1193-1202), after offense of Genghis Khan in Afghanistan, around 7th century this minaret disappearance from world view but right now the danger of falling this historical minaret and danger of destroying the memorial of the local treasure alive, the second tallest tower in the world and one of the "Seven Wonders of the World". here are two kinds of threats for Jam-Minaret; the first threat is natural threats (erosion the around of minaret by Harirud-River and Jam-River, spring floods and extremely rainfall), the second threat is Talibanism threats and extremist Islamists, because the local government of Ghur Province couldn't control from this historically region, basically many ancient sites in Afghanistan including the Jam's monuments destroyed by Taliban and contrabandists the antiquities of these places trafficked by smugglers, the Minaret of Jam almost falling by floods, but fortunately this threat just temporarily resolved by local people.

So, if the government of Afghanistan and world heritage cultural organizations don't take any decisions about preserve of this Minaret, it will be destruct like the same fate of Buddhas of Bamyán Province in Afghanistan. If so, some projects have been implemented for contemporary protect of minaret in the path of Harirud and Jam-River by UNESCO, SPACH, the people of Jam-village and "Ghur Department of Information and Cultural". But these projects couldn't habitual protect from Jam-Minaret, unfortunately we will be miss as soon as this Minaret of prised.

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