

## **THE UNFADING WHISPERS: UNRAVELING THE MYSTIC OF EUNUCHS IN MUGHAL HAREM**

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**ABSTRACT:** The Mughals came to India in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and remained it's rulers for more than 250 years to come. The period marked the intermingling of the Indian and Islamic cultures which gave rise to a fusion of the two, we know today as the Indo-Islamic culture which flourished and reached its zenith under the Mughals. The symbols of this happy union can be found in all walks of life, even today -in arts and architecture, literature, philosophy, cuisine, clothing and even religion. The Mughals, being polygamous took many women in their harem and believed in their total seclusion. This gave rise to the need of a novel, planned and structured system that could ensure their safety and security, thus, naturally there had arisen the need for procuring men who were not only castrated, thus rendering them safe in the context of harem women but at the same time, were physically strong enough to guard the seraglio. These very people were a strong pillar of the Mughal mahal. Though they were a part of such important Mughal institution still we do not know much about them, much like the female residents of the harem, the lives of these eunuchs, have been shrouded in mystery, through this paper it is attempted to rediscover their legacy and to reflect upon their life and times.

**KEYWORDS:** Seraglio, Eunuch, *Purdah*, Khwaja Sara, Emperor, Medieval Age, Mughals, *Mahal*, Travelogues.

### **INTRODUCTION**

We have hundreds of books written on the Mughal period of our history, yet a major flaw is in their being essentially male centric, with all the attention being reserved for the emperors and princes. Women largely remain either absent or at the sidelines of these works. In fact most of the Persian historians of the Mughal period were court chroniclers; hence their chief subject of study was naturally the sovereign and not the ladies of his harem, who were by and large considered as his personal property. Hence these chroniclers do not throw much light on either the working of the Harem on a day-to-day basis or of the sentiments of its residents.

As a matter of fact these obvious gaps are somewhat filled by the royal hands like Babur, Gulbadan Begum and Jahangir in their respective memoirs and biographies. Out of these Gulbadan Begum's Humayunama gives us a detailed account of the Harem and the life therein besides recording the sentiments and feelings of its occupants. Last but not the least we have foreign travelers accounts from this period, who have written exhaustively on this topic but these are marred by linguistic and socio-cultural limitations. Being foreigners and from an alien land they have largely misunderstood and misinterpreted the Mughal way of life, relying heavily on bazaar gossip for information, thus their narratives are a strange mix of fact and fiction. Unfortunately modern historian, writing on the subject i.e. Mughal Harem has to chiefly rely on these travelogues. The end result hitherto being a highly and unduly romanticized version of the harem.

The present work attempts to put forward a more real and humane side of the harem, that housed not just beautiful women but a large variety of other elements including the *eunuchs* (castrated males) and. This work is a study of these ill-fated people who have been often caricatured for their histrionics in popular imagination, thus overlooking their key role in the evolution of harem as an institution since and after Akbar, thus making them a prominent part of Mughal social history. Since eunuchs were stationed inside the harem

primarily to guard and watch emperor's women, their lives had deep imprints of their masters and mistresses. Through this work it is purported to highlight the role and place of eunuchs in the world they inhabited by venturing through the alleys of the time gone by.

### MUGHAL HAREM: WHAT IT REALLY MEANT?

*Agar Firdas Bar Rue Zameen Ast*

*Hameen Ast, Hameen Ast wa Hameen Ast.*

The above Persian couplet written on the walls of Delhi's Red Fort seem to bear testimony to the grandeur and splendor of the Mughal world. In public imagination, the word *harem* invokes the image of a place specifically designed for sexual enjoyment of a single male (king) surrounded by many females, where no pleasure on earth was wanting. Women inhabiting it were mere tools of that man's (Emperor) satisfaction, whose lust for them was insatiable (Mukhia, 2004). The women who came there in *doli* (bridal palanquin) could go out of it once they were dead, in *arthi* or *janaza* (funeral bier), thus it was nothing more than a luxurious pleasure-house for its inmates who had all the luxuries of the world at their feet except one—that was the true and undivided love of their husband. But was it just that? The answer is a half yes and a half no, for we cannot deny that Mughal emperor was the only male with unhindered access to the harem and he was the 'only' master of all the women lodged inside its precincts but it is generally misbelieved that every woman in the harem served a sexual purpose. For only five percent of female inmates were queens, concubines or slave-girls, there were a host of other elements that resided within the seraglio.

The lesser known but real *harem* was quite different from how it was showcased by the foreign travelers. As a term, it was derived from the Arabic word *harem* which literally meant a place forbidden or sacred. The word *harem* is strictly applicable to Muslim households only, but the system was common, more or less, to most ancient Oriental communities, especially where polygamy was permitted. "It denoted seraglio, or the secluded part of the palace or residence reserved for the ladies of the Muslim household. It was also called *zenanah*; *harem-sara*; *harem-gah*; *mahal-sara*; and *raniwas*." (Nath, 2005) The harem had among its inhabitants—relatives of the emperor besides wives, concubines and slave-girls, not to forget women officials, guards and eunuchs who formed an invariable part of it.

Since great value was attached to the chastity and purity of the female body in the Mughal society, it had to be protected at all costs; the primary condition for this was the perfect seclusion of the women from the outside world.

It is worth mentioning that even boys older than five years were not allowed to live inside the harem. Even the nearest male relations like brother and father did not have easy access to their women relatives in the Mughal mahal except on special occasions and that too with permission. (Dass, 1972). Another important thing about the harem was the large number of its occupants; it was not an easy task to manage the affairs of what was a town in itself? It needed to be run on definite administrative lines; we can gauge this fact through the following statement given in terms of Rajput zenana by James Tod. He writes "The government of the kingdom is but an amusement compared with such a task, for it is within the Rawala (Antapur or Rajput harem) that intrigue is enthroned." (Tod, 1920)

Out of all the Mughal Emperors Akbar had the largest number of women in his harem. While Abul Fazal puts it at more than five thousand, Blochmann brings it down to seven and Beveridge thinks there were 300. Anyways Akbar did not have 5000 wives, though he did have many women in his seraglio. Jahangir too seems to have maintained a large body of women. All other Mughals too had vast harems, the size varied as per the king's taste and resources. One thing to remember in this context is that Mughals were *sunni* Muslims and as per the doctrines of Muslim religion they could have only four wives but they could take any number of wives through *muta* or temporary marriage. Not to mention the female relatives of the king ranging from mother to aunts and step mothers to sisters and daughters, numerous secondary wives, concubines, *kanchanis* (dancing girls), slave girls, lady officers, wives of nobles and of course eunuchs who formed a part of harem life. (Mukherjee, 2001)

We have on record the fact that the royal Mughal women did not remain stationed in the *mahal* itself, in fact they were often on the move. They not only accompanied their husbands in military expeditions, in exiles, or in hunting expeditions besides going for pilgrimages and change of weather among other reasons. While maintaining purdah, these women had various modes of travel available to them, like *palkis*, *dolis* and *chandols* carried by foot-servants, *haudas* placed on elephant backs, carriages, on horses, camels, boats and ships etc as per the need of the hour. Whatever had been the mode of travel one thing is certain that there safety and comfort was ensured (Mundy, 1907). It is quite interesting to note that in the world of the royal Mughals where the king was the proverbial 'sun', the women in his life were like stars vying for his love and attention and to this end they were all prepared to go to any extent. This often aroused jealousy and rivalries in the harem. Giving the Emperor his first male child definitely raised the status and position of wives; this led to many abortions, many of which were masterminded by the harem ladies themselves. However, outwardly the women would have remained courteous and friendly towards each other for the fear of losing their master's affection.

Marriage in the royal Mughal household however did not follow any set pattern, women from different races, nationality, linguistic groups; religion formed a part of the Mughal seraglio. While many times political motives led to marriage alliances, love and personal choice too had a share in choosing a life partner but whatever be the case the deciding authority always lay with the men, women being treated as prized possessions only. Though in general women were treated well, with fidelity being a strict pre-condition, if anyone went astray, as they sometimes did, harsh punishment was meted out to them, Under such conditions, Mughal harem was highly guarded, under strict surveillance all the time, slightest negligence in this regard on part of the staff was inexcusable. Women officers played a vital role in the smooth running of the seraglio, excellently supported by Rajputs, Ahadis and other troopers who were stationed outside the zenana to ensure its safety. Last but not the least in this line of attendants and officers were the chief subject of the present study-the eunuchs, who were an indispensable part of the harem. Though they were stationed outside the enclosure or *haremsara*, it does not undermine their importance in any way, we will exclusively devote the succeeding passages to them, but to summarize their role and position it can be said with certainty that they were the good guards of the harem-vigilant, loyal and perhaps unharmed too.

### WHO WERE EUNUCHS?

The word eunuch is derived from the Greek word *eunoukhos* which means bed chamber attendant, eunuchs were castrated men, who were employed to guard and serve the Mughal harem. It is well known that in Sylhet which formed part of Bengal province, the male children were converted into eunuchs. Emperor Jahangir vividly mentions in *Tuzuk*, that he had to issue strict orders to prohibit this 'abominable' practice that not only ruined their lives but severed any chances of procreation. (Tuzuk, 1989). Though the practice continued till the very end of the Mughal dynasty. Thus eunuchs were emasculated men, who were chosen for the job of guarding harem because of their deformity.

As the women in the harem were kept secluded from the outside world and no man except the king had unrestricted entry into the female apartments, these unfortunate souls came to occupy a very important place in the closely guarded world of imperial *zenana*. Thus catapulting them into a sought after commodity in the medieval Muslim society. Another noticeable fact about these eunuchs is that since there is no mention of their family life in our annals, it seems that they were incapable of marriage; this further reinforces the belief that they were castrated men, perhaps sexually impotent. In medieval Muslim societies of the east it was both customary and feasible to maintain a fleet of eunuchs to guard the female apartments, though *hadith* forbids the practice of becoming or making eunuchs. It is difficult to tell that what would have been the impact of forced emasculation on them, how much they would have suffered emotionally and psychologically because of their physical disability, the senior ones among them were called *Nazirs* while in general nomenclature they were known as *Khwaja Saras*.

Wording the general opinion about them, Francois Bernier wrote that most of eunuchs were faithful, generous and brave. All in all we can say that being physically enfeebled neither these people could nurse any dreams, even the most basic ones like marriage and children were anathema to them, they were sure to die heirless someday, so of what use was wealth to them? Though we have examples of some eunuchs who rose to high offices and gathered much wealth in the realms of the Mughals, some of them even became *mansabdars* and governors, the junior ones worked as either messengers or door-keepers. Foreign travelers like Manucci bear testimony to the fact that how meticulously and perfectly they performed their duty (Manucci, 1981). Fryer observed that harem doors were locked from outside, thus eunuchs' role became all the more important as the honor of Emperor lay invested in the harem and safeguarding the chastity of its inmates was of paramount interest to him. Even during later Mughals, we see some influential eunuchs rising to prominence; still the general condition of these people was far from satisfactory. (Fryer, 1992)

### ROLE PLAYED BY EUNUCHS

In the medieval period there were many slave markets in the Muslim world, India too did not remain untouched from this practice and eunuchs and slaves were openly bought and sold in these markets. Sylhet in Bengal *Subah* was notoriously famous for castrating and selling young boys. The Mughals practiced polygamy, thus they could keep many women outside the religiously granted figure of 'four', hence their harems swelled with women, who were drawn from diverse linguistic, national and religious backgrounds. Though all the Mughal rulers from Babur to the later ones in the line maintained their harem but with the advent of Akbar, the royal seraglio became a formally structured, administered and guarded world. In fact it became an institution in itself.

Since Akbar directly equated honor with female chastity, by all means it was to be ensured that *his* women observed seclusion in the strictest sense, they were not only to be cut off from the outside world, no man was to be allowed inside the harem except the king himself, even the nearest of male relations like brothers and father had to seek permission to go inside, we have on record the fact that in the entire Mughal history only Nurjahan's father Itimad- ud- Daulah and prince Karna of Mewar had the privilege of entering the female apartments, unhindered. In such circumstances the eunuch found himself in a highly profitable position. The eunuchs were not just the harem guards, they were responsible for the safety of the Emperor's person, who slept, ate and spent considerable time in the harem, thus Khwaja Sara must have been a man of great ability and integrity as in the middle ages, king was the source of all power, his life was to be saved and protected at all costs. (Smith, 1962)

Besides their official duty as the guards of the harem, eunuchs acted as spies also and kept a watch on the movements of the harem women; on king's direction. Hence it became obligatory for the ladies to keep these people in good humor lest any discrepancy on their part would get immediately reported to the emperor. This provided a win-win situation for the eunuchs, who enjoyed the confidence and sympathy of both their royal master and mistresses but at the same time it put their lives at greater risk. For in a complex set-up like the Mughal harem where innumerable women were housed just for the pleasure of the king, illicit and extra marital affairs were not uncommon, under such conditions it would not have been easy for the eunuchs to remain impartial, while falling in the eyes of the master meant severe punishment and sometimes even death, the displeased mistresses had their own ways of settling scores. Pelsaert notes, "Two or three eunuchs or more, who are faithful to their master, are appointed for each wife, to ensure that she is seen by no man except her husband and if any eunuch fails in this duty, he with everyone else to blame for the stranger's presence is in danger of losing his life. They are thus held in high esteem by their master, but the women pay them still greater regard for the whole management of the *mahal* is in their hands, and they can give or refuse whatever is wanted". (Pelsaert, 1925) But this privilege of being in good books of both the king and queens often fuelled the tendency of double crossing.

It is also heard (primarily from foreign travelers) that these eunuchs did not only guard and gave company to the *mahal* inmates but were involved in love affairs with them, we cannot say with confidence



that whether these tales are mere fruits of scandal-loving travelers over-imaginative minds or they did have some truth in them? But going by the contemporary sources and social conditions of those times, we can deduce that undoubtedly most of eunuchs were castrated men, in spite of their disability they were both mentally and physically still strong, this might have led to emotional love and physical intimacy between them and the females residing in the *mahal*, given the close proximity they had with the eunuchs as also the near absence of emperor in their lives in most of the cases. But frankly speaking, in the closely guarded world of the Mughal family it would not have been very easy to hide such escapades and the fear of Emperor was something not to be taken very lightly, in a world where so much sanctity was reposed in the female chastity, such behavior on part of the eunuchs, going undetected and unpunished by the Sovereign is highly questionable?

### WERE THEY HAPPY OR UNHAPPY?

Though we do not have any historical accounts of the imperial eunuchs to corroborate, If they were happy or unhappy with their lot but with whatever information that we have in the form of foreign traveler's accounts and stray mentions in other contemporary sources, we can safely say that they (eunuchs) performed the duty of guarding the royal seraglio loyally and devotedly, as we have already seen in the preceding passages. Happiness for that matter is a highly subjective issue; it differs from person to person, what is happiness for one person could mean nothing to some other person. Hence in absence of any personal records, it's not easy to tell that how the eunuchs would have felt about themselves, their condition, their surroundings and so on, still this can be said with certainty that they must have accepted their fate and owing to factors like the emperor's fear, healthy salary, sense of responsibility etc they would have carried forward with their stipulated responsibilities. (Bernier, 1791)

A careful perusal of the contemporary sources strengthens our view that medieval age was indeed a turbulent one. In those days wine, women and wars were the defining terms and king was the source of all power on earth, he was to be kept pleased and for this end no enterprise could be left wanting. As women in those days were treated as the emperor's property, they were to be protected, cast away from the public eye, under strict observation of *purdah*. Hence it would have become obligatory upon the emperor to device ways to enforce the best kind of security measures for the women in imperial mahal. The practice of castrating boys was prevalent in the Muslim world of the east, the real purpose behind it was to procure such strong but harmless breed (in the context of harem) of people who could guard the seraglio faithfully.

Under such conditions these people's emotions or sentiments would have mattered to the imperial throne, is highly questionable. In a society where one man was to be pleased at the cost of all others, these eunuchs living on the fringes of society would have hardly mattered. Though the Mughal king was a benevolent despot, he was a despot after all, the fear of his authority was such that any public display of grievances, if any was neither practical nor practicable, and inwardly whatever they would have felt, the eunuchs were not so positioned to have made it publicly known to the world. Being in the good books of both their master and mistresses would have brought some instant favors like horses, money, gems and jewelry but it was not sufficient to efface the pain of forced disability, at the maximum it could have reduced their trauma. Even the eunuchs at the helm, could not evade their sense of inferiority completely; they had to learn to live their scarred lives amidst all the glitz and glory. We have on record case of Aitbar Khan, who was a trusted Khwaja Sara under Aurangzeb, who placed his father Shahjahan under Aitbar's charge, who in turn treated the former emperor very cruelly and disrespectfully (Covert, 1971), same is the case of one Ghulam Qadir during the later Mughals.

Hence some of the eunuchs harboring feelings of hatred and revenge were possible in all likeness. Thus, happy or unhappy these unfortunate souls lived their lives as per the set societal norms for this practice was not just limited to the Indian subcontinent, it was practiced in ancient Middle East, Greece, Rome and Byzantium also.

### ACCOUNT OF FOREIGN TRAVELERS

Foreign travelers who visited India during the Mughal rule have left pools of information on the Harem life, unlike the Persian court chroniclers, who under the prevailing norms, could not and did not write freely on subjects which were considered anathema to the Mughal sensibilities. However, the approach towards women and their description underwent many changes during the Mughal age itself. While Babur in his Baburnama made emotional mention of his female relatives, his daughter Gulbadan, (Begum, 1988) being a woman and a resident of harem herself, was in a better position to describe the lives of harem ladies. Thus she vividly records not just their daily routine but also their sentiments and emotions. The tone and tenor of history writing changed with the coming to throne of Akbar, the great. Since he reposed great value in female chastity, the harem life became a closely guarded secret henceforth. It is not that the historians of his period didn't write about imperial seraglio, it's just that the narratives become more somber and brief. The credit for giving the most detailed account of the seraglio however, goes to the third Mughal sovereign Jahangir, as he not only had an eye for detail but being intimately involved with the harem dwellers he could give more authentic information on the life of the mahal. During the reign of Shahjahan harem was dealt by the chroniclers at length. Even under the rule of puritan Aurangzeb the harem was frankly discussed. In fact the restrictions imposed during Akbar's rule were greatly diluted later and the chroniclers have shed light on the miserable condition of the harem and its inmates during the declining phase of the empire.

### SOME ANECDOTES

European traveler Thomas Roe informs us that once a maid was found kissing a eunuch which led to confiscation of her property. (Roe, 1899). Aurangzeb's trusted Khwaja Sara Itibar Khan, who was in charge of Shahjahan's custody is said to have nursed bitterness for his disadvantaged condition. It is told that once his parents came to meet him from Bengal, he not only refused to meet them but chastised them for his loss. This was perhaps the reason of his wanton cruelty and disrespect towards Shahjahan.

We have another instance of Didar Khan, an influential eunuch during Aurangzeb, who became in love with a woman in the neighborhood, the affair continued for sometime in secrecy but one day the brother of the lady in question, came to discover the truth, he killed the couple in a fit of rage, this excited the anger of eunuchs and they were joined by the ladies of the imperial harem to avenge the death of Didar Khan. Though the matter was drawn to a close through Aurangzeb's timely intervention, this instance not only shows us the close intimacy shared by the harem women and eunuchs but also testifies the fact that eunuchs were not just weaklings, they were so important for the empire and the emperors that a hardnosed person like Aurangzeb had to interfere in harem matters to end the impasse in the seraglio. (Terry, 1655)

During the days of Muhammad Shah, Jawed Khan, the chief eunuch was very intimate with one of his concubines; he along with this lady became the *de facto* ruler and out rightly flouted all rules, where no male servants were allowed at night he remained in the harem even at night. The harem was decidedly meant to provide joy to the mighty Mughals, once their might was gone the harem was rendered weak, we know that during the reign of Alamgir II (1757), no food was cooked for three consecutive days in the seraglio, being unable to bear the pang of hunger, the women of harem ran to the city, but the fort gates being closed, they sat in the men's dwellings and went into the harem after much persuasion. Thus we can imagine the pitiable condition of the Harem and its inmates. In such hard times it was but a matter of time before the harem dwellers made their exit. (Khan, 1860)

But this exit was just meant from the harem, life was still to be pulled on, now the question confronting these women was of survival. With no vocational training many women of the harem took to dancing to fend for themselves, it in fact became a status symbol among elite class to have a courtesan as keep while their faithful servants-the eunuchs took to singing and dancing known as *bhands*.

By the early nineteenth century the royal harem lay depleted of its wealth and beauty. Bishop Heber described it as, "dull, desolate and forlorn..." With the degradation of the Mughal empire, the former symbols of its power and glory started crumbling-harem too on its part remained a dying shadow of its erstwhile

splendor. One English lady who visited the female apartments in this period, Mrs. Fanny Parks later recorded thus, "never was any place as full of intrigue, scandal and chit-chat as a zenana." (Parks, 1850).

### FAMOUS EUNUCHS

The Mughal period of our history is filled with numerous such examples where eunuchs gained prominence and rose in stature besides amassing wealth, even before the advent of the Mughals, Eunuchs were employed by native rulers as servants and guards of the royal harem. Some of them attained exalted positions in society. An early example of such a high-ranking eunuch was Malik Kafur, a young Hindu boy captured during the Gujarat expedition of Alauddin Khilji. He was made a eunuch, and later became a favorite with Alauddin. Historian Ziauddin Barani testifies to the relations between Kafur and Khilji. Kafur was elevated to the post of *Malik Naib* (head of the army) and spearheaded Khilji's Southern conquest. (Srivastava, 1953)

With the Mughals coming to power in the Indian sub-continent and establishment of harem as an institution, there arose the question of providing complete and unbridled security to its residents. Thus demand for castrated men (eunuchs) reached an all-time high. Out of these many rose to high offices in the land and became governors and mansabdars. There was one Itibar Khan, who served under the first three Mughals- Babur, Humayun and Akbar. At the height of his career he was made into the governor of Delhi, the position he served till death. (Fazal, 1927)

In the reign of Akbar, eunuch named Itimad Khan (Phul Malik), who was initially in the service of Islam Shah was given a mansab of 1000 horses by Akbar on joining his service. He not only procured daughter of Mian Mubarak, ruler of Khandesh for Akbar, but served him well in Bengal expedition where he distinguished himself with his services to the empire (Fazal, 1948) later he was made the governor of Bhakkar. He founded the suburb of Itimadpur near Agra and lies buried in the tomb, situated in the middle of the tank that he had built for himself, in his lifetime. It is said that Emperor Akbar, for the wise statesman and administrator he was, understood their importance and treated his eunuchs empathetically and respectfully. Who in turn served him loyally, from top to the very bottom?

Jahangir is known to have disliked the practice of turning boys into eunuchs through emasculation and issued orders to abolish it, still there were eunuchs in his service. The most important Khwaja Sara of his reign was Itibar Khan, during prince Khusrau's arrest, Itibar Khan remained in charge of him (Khusrau), and this shows his close proximity to Jahangir who entrusted such important task to him. He was the governor of Agra with his own palaces where he lived lavishly. Jahangir mentions his name many times in his *Tuzuk*. Itibar khan built his tomb at Sikandara, near Agra, where he was finally laid to rest after death.

Jahangir's son and successor Shahjahan was efficiently served by Firuz Khan Khwaja Sara, who was previously in Jahangir's service. He is named as *Nazir-i-mahal* by the contemporary sources. The legacy of eunuchs continued unabated even during the rule of the sixth mughal sovereign-Aurangzeb. Bakhtawar Khan served him well, as the head of eunuchs; he was an accomplished writer and historian and went on to write *Mirat-ul-Alam* and *Mirat-i-Jahanuma*. (E & D, 1964). During the later Mughals, three eunuchs rose to great prominence so much so that they ruled the empire on behalf of Mughlani Begum. They were the three Mians – Khushfahan, Arjamand and Mahabat. (Sarkar, 2007).

Thus through such examples we see that eunuchs could rise in the imperial service through merit and because of their close proximity to the King and his women, they could exercise important place in the matters of power and politics.

### CONCLUSION

The practice of procuring eunuchs by castrating boys was a catastrophe of the middle ages. It not only made them physically disabled for the rest of their lives but took away the basic joys of life like marriage and progeny. These unfortunate souls still exist in our society as a vestige of the harem system, better known as *hijras* today. The system of emasculating boys for guarding the *mahal* was a necessity of the

medieval times, firstly because their physical disability made them safe in context of the harem women, but at the same time their physical strength rendered them capable of guarding the inmates and even the emperor who slept in the harem, judiciously. We have few instances of eunuchs rising to great prominence in the Mughal realm with some becoming mansabdars and governors of provinces but the majority of them served as messengers, guards and spies in the imperial seraglio.

The eunuchs did enjoy the advantage of being in the good books of both the master as well as mistresses- being informants of the former and secret-keepers of the latter. An advantageous position for sure that might have earned them the privilege of double-crossing both the parties at times and led to instant favors from horses to gems and money to female attendants outside the harem. But the question is-were these measures sufficient enough to wipe out the constant suffering owing to their forced disability? The practice reminds us of the tyranny of the middle ages, where all the power was disposed in one person- the king, all people around him were to serve him, including his women, in such times eunuchs made the best choice possible-resigned to their fate, taking advantage out of the disability, that was thrust upon them, to the best of their use.

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