

CHAPTER 2

AN ANALYSIS OF AGRA'S MUGHAL MONUMENTS

Out of the most extravagant and ingenious contribution of Mughal architecture in India, the extremely distinctive and incredible are the monuments of Agra; designed and created in 16th and 17th century with the composition of Islamic, Persian, Turkish and Indian styles, with the wide spread brilliance and class. Mughal's construction style flourished in the northern and central parts of the country. Creation of each Mughal building surpassed its predecessor's style in expression of design, quality and ornamental details. All through the Mughal period there had been continuous experimentation in art and architectural design, resulting in highly refined structures (Rehman & Akhtar, 2012a).

The Mughal reign presented an outstanding revival of Islamic architecture in northern parts of India, transporting an exceptional quality of sophistication in Indian architecture.

As described (Sarkar, 1953) the combination of Indian and Islamic architectural cultures has rationally been defined as a kind of natural conception giving way to the advent of novel institution of Islamic architecture, accurately called Indo-Muslim or Indo-Islamic (Figure 17).

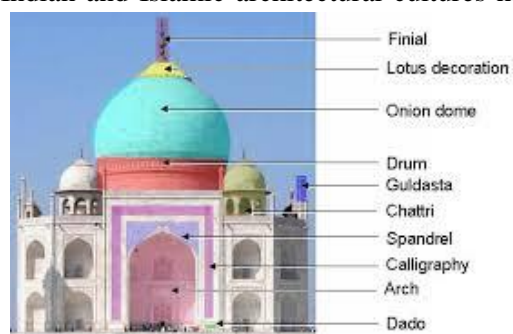


Figure 17 Indo Islamic Architectural Elements Source (Iasmania)

The Mughal architectural decoration exemplifies the state of the art form of Indo-Muslim architecture along with its magnificent and most wonderful manifestation.

2.1 HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The most prominent feature of Mughal architecture was the curiosity of Mughal rulers in arts and crafts and this particular interest flourished under their patronage extensively.

The characteristic features of Mughal Architecture in Agra are; outstanding symmetrical and decorative blend of Turkish, Persian and Indian architecture, excessive use of red sand stone in

construction, extensive use of white marble inlay patterns with a substantial use of tile work, enormous construction of tombs, mausoleums, domes and utmost important the accustomed use of Jali work also called Lattice- The Screens (Figure 18).

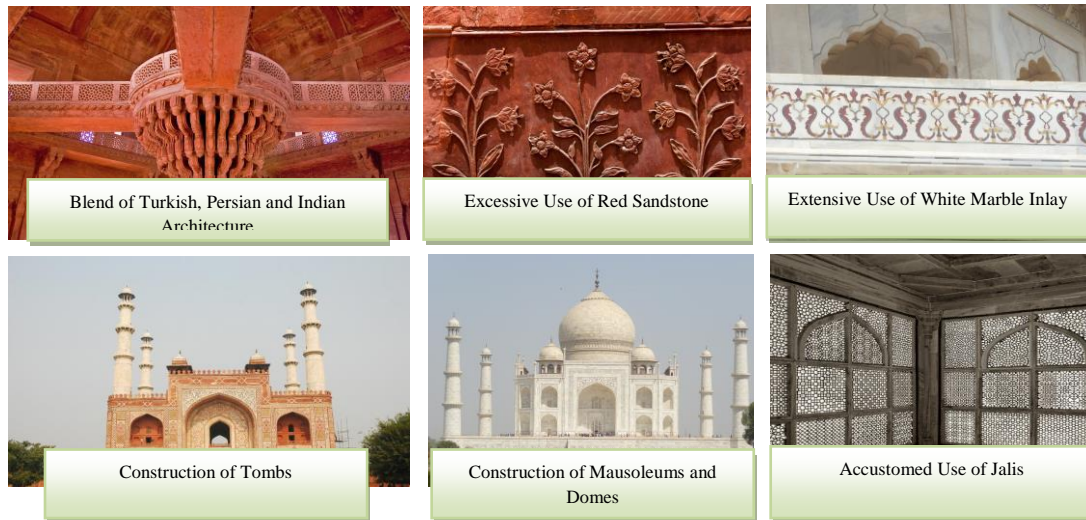


Figure 18 Characteristic Features of Mughal Monuments of Agra

Rehman & Akhtar (2012b) highlighted that, Saleh Combo, a court historian of Shah Jehan (1628-58) while discussing the buildings, frequently used the phrases such as. “makan dilnasheen hai az nasheman hai nuzhat afreen”, which means “heart pleasing buildings and praiseworthy mansions.”

The expansion of Mughal Monumental structures of Agra took place under the patronage and rule of Mughal rulers. The entire period of Mughal realm witnessed diverse shades in the arena of art and architecture. The wide spread Mughal architecture is a brilliant arrangement of varied native and foreign characteristics, which link it comprehensively with many different forms of architectural style.

These structures also act as a cause of motivation to numerous other forms of architecture with different cultural backgrounds. Most of the structures in this architectural type of pattern have the features of uniform arrangement of structure and character that consists of huge spherical domes, sleek minarets at the corners, massive halls, huge domed gateways and delicate adornment (Figure 19).

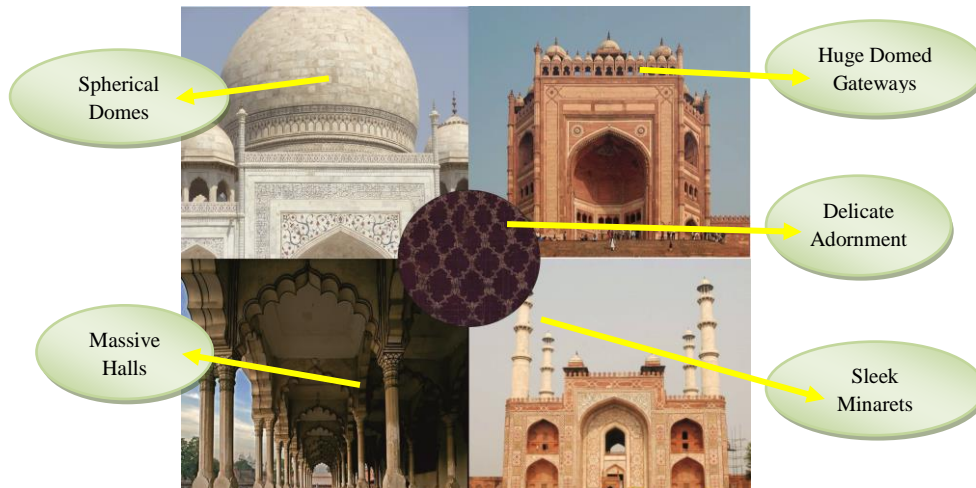


Figure 19 Common Architectural Elements in Mughal Buildings of Agra

The Mughal rule was initiated after the conquest of Babur at Panipat in 1526. Throughout his reign of 5 years Babur took considerable concern in structuring monuments but very few of them persist now. Babur's grandson Akbar built expansively and this style of architecture progressed dynamically during his realm. Amongst his accomplishments the prominently constructed buildings are the Agra Fort, the Fort City of Fatehpur Sikri, Salim Chishti's Dargah and Buland Darwaza. Krishnan (2012) pointed out that the pursuit of beauty was a favoured occupation with the Mughals; nubile nymphs or majestic mausoleums, all things beautiful found patronage in the courts of these devoted aesthetes.

Mughal architecture reached its peak during the rule of Shah Jahan, who built the most famous monument of all- The *Taj Mahal*. Besides Taj Mahal, he constructed many more fine examples of the style. Although Shah Jahan's son Aurangzeb also followed the culture and built some more buildings, but his realm witness the deterioration of the Mughal architecture and the kingdom itself.

The Mughal rulers took ardent concern in the art of architecture. The Mughal emperors had immense wealth and they built numerous remarkable buildings. Khandelvala & Doshi (1983) described, the evolutionary process had already been set in motion and important monuments existed when the Mughals took over the country. They did not begin on a clean state but gave

the medieval architecture of India a new orientation, outlook and spirit, in fact a new mizaz or temperament. They were free from bigotry and had an inherent taste for beauty, without any taboos or inhibitions.

2.2 CULTURAL ANALYSIS

Monuments epitomize an imperative part of cultural heritage, where distinct characteristics, traditions, influences and ideas are constructed as well. Looking at the past we can observe that art had always been deeply influenced by political and social factors.

The Mughal reign experienced an upsurge of cultural activities in the field of architecture, that later influenced the succeeding generations. The creation and designs of Mughal monuments of Agra is a result of multifaceted yet resourceful combination of cultural effects.

Amidst many other resources the architecture of Mughal Empire is extraordinary and is appreciated worldwide for its imaginative designs. All the proficiencies that lead to an inordinate work of art and architecture of the Mughal era, that is exceptional and considered as an asset in the history of architecture and civilization. Ideologies, notions and disciplines in the form of culture used by Mughals should be acknowledged in larger aspect and archived for future references.

Rehman & Akhtar (2012c) claimed that Indians had handed over Mughals a wealth full of Hindu philosophy cultured with modern Indian values, but it cannot be denied that Mughals brought many changes to Indian culture and society amalgamated with Indian art and culture and a novel style of architecture. Cultural integration kept continuing all through the Mughal rule in India. Rulers like Akbar took great interest in encouragement of progress of assimilated culture. Chatterji (1957) described it was here, as nowhere else in India, that the Hindu mind responded to the impact of Islamic thought. This mutual interaction led to a study of each other's religion and exercises a potent influence on the cultural life of India as a whole.

The kind of fusion in art and culture opened up the new horizons for the development of artistic ventures imbued with the multicultural elements. Such type of artistic genius gave rise to the

architecture came to be known as- *Indo-Islamic* Architecture. Taj Mahal in Agra is one of the finest examples of Indo-Islamic architecture with the synthesis of various artistic traditions (Figure 20).

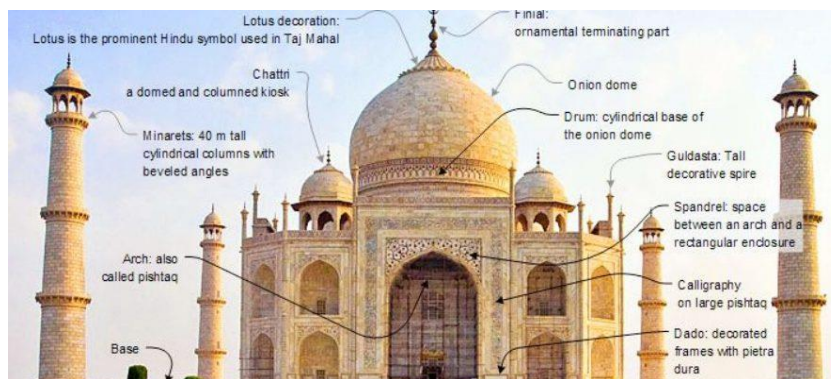


Figure 20 Taj Mahal- the Finest Example of Synthesis of Various Cultures Source: Ultadin, 2016

The buildings that Mughals made in Agra were combined with wonderful vigor and liveliness of the creative art with the vivacity and drive of the fresh inspiration. Nath (1976a) proclaimed, Mughals introduced into medieval India a spirit of cultural eclecticism, almost against a thoratic conception of Islam.

Mughal architecture in Agra initiated with Persian influence mixed up with native traditional architecture and gradually advanced into a typical Mughal style that has persisted over periods. Mughal architecture was influenced by many cultures due to the tastes and interests of the different rulers of Mughal Empire, all through their reign. It all started up with Babur who brought two Persian artists to India after defeating the last Afghan King Ibrahim Lodhi. Babur's period of architecture was without much ornamentation and very simple supported by geometrical designs. Later his son Humayun followed the same tradition and was much influenced by Persian manifestation (Figure 21).



Figure 21 Influence of Persian Design Elements

The actual prominence of Mughal architecture started with the reign of Akbar in a true sense. Akbar had his own ideas of architecture and he built massive structures in exceptional forms. He made deliberate efforts to integrate different cultures and styles to establish the basis of Indian National Architecture. One can witness a unique blend of Hindu and Muslim architecture in Akbar's style of buildings (Figure 22).

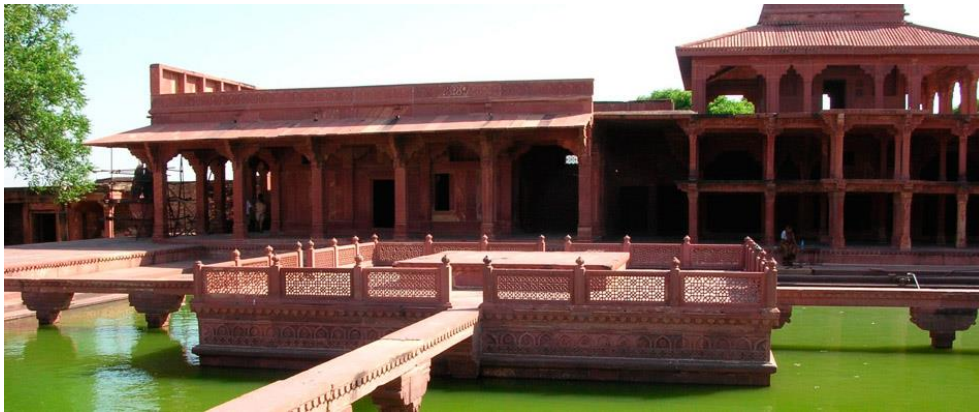


Figure 22 Akbar Style Buildings in Red Sandstone with Unique Blend of Different Cultures

After Akbar, his successor Jahangir had a great artistic sense. His interest of art was more towards gardens and miniature paintings. Architectural works during Jahangir's rule were known to be completely transformational. Two major unique features came out to be the novelties of his time- *Pietra Dura* (Inlay Art), started extensively to be used as ornamental designs and Red Sandstone which was a remarkable feature used by earlier rulers beautifully and extensively replaced by *White Marble* (Figure 23). *Pietra Dura* was taken from Italian decorative background where as White Marble was a local choice from the neighbouring state of Rajasthan.



Figure 23 Transformation from Red Sandstone to White Marble & Inlay during Jahangir's Rule

Known to be as the Golden Age of Mughal dynasty, Shah Jahan was very much influenced by



Islamic faith and its powers. His constructions would carry an extravagance which was richly decorative in white marbles (Figure 24). Finally Aurangzeb's reign brought a decline in Mughal architecture with complete ban on representational artworks.

Figure 24 Rich Decorative Architecture of Shahjahan's Period

2.2.1 MOTIFS INSPIRED BY HINDU CULTURE

Bhatnagar (2005) described the Indian arts and design of unimaginable antiquity, have over the millennia and up till the present day, evinced a continuity that has survived every historical, socio-economic and political development to produce an art that is specifically Indian. In this process the history and characteristic features of design will be seen to have played a singularly important role.

Although Hindu motifs have always been represented through the language of symbols depicting certain meaning but at the same time these have been used as ornamentation by all kind of followers in various religions. Nath (1976b) revealed on these symbolic motifs that these art motifs are the vehicles of valuable ideas, a study of which gives an insight into the cultural trends of the people who employed them. The appearance of a motif in any phase of Indian art, is not accident or a miracle.

Apart from a visual appeal, iconic symbols too had taken a special place in the architectural embellishments of Mughal monuments of Agra. Hindu art motifs such as Kalasha, Srivatsa, Swastika, Padma and Chakra can be reasonably found on the monuments of Akbar especially at Fatehpur Sikri.

Various Hindu symbolic motifs found in the Mughal buildings of Agra:

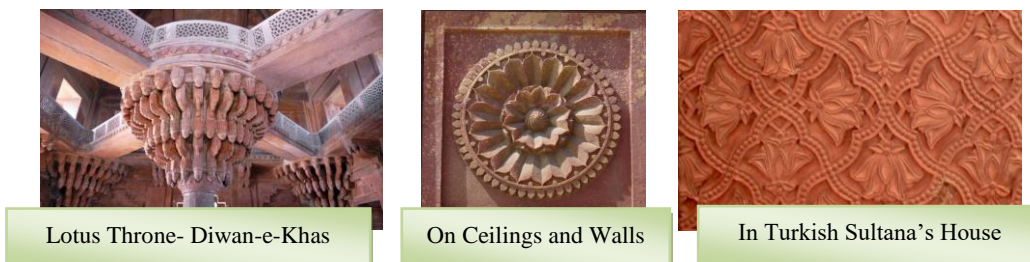
- i. **Purna-Kalasha:** This motif can be spotted on the buildings of Shah Jahan. Most significantly this motif has been depicted in its finest form on dados of the Cenotaph hall of the Taj Mahal (Figure 25). The **Purna-Kalasha** is known to be an icon of wealth and cause of life in the Vedas.



Figure 25 Purna-Kalasha Motif in Taj Mahal

Nath (1976c) accurately described the use of these motifs, “there arises from its mouth a spray of slender twigs bearing beautiful flowers and buds which hang over symmetrically on all sides covering the central space of the dado between the inlaid borders. This is the best example of the Purnakalasa in Mughal art”.

- ii. **Padma (Lotus):** Another ancient symbol of Hindu origin is the Lotus which can be found in varied form in plenty of Mughal buildings of Agra. The symbol of Padma in Hindu culture represents life and principle of growth. This motif can be found sitting on the pillars of archways in circular ornamental placement at Fatehpur Sikri. Several other places where the lotus symbol is used are- Salim Chishti’s Tomb, Sultana’s Palace, Panch Mahal, Khwabgah and rest of the opulent mansions in Fatehpur Sikri (Figure 26). Nath (1976d) described the representation of Lotus symbol as more of an aesthetic impression. He indicated that Lotus was without doubt considered to be an auspicious motif but it would not have been acceptable in Mughal decorative art without substantial merit.



Lotus Throne- Diwan-e-Khas

On Ceilings and Walls

In Turkish Sultana’s House

Figure 26 Padma Motif Represented in Different Styles in Fatehpur Sikri

- iii. **Swastika**: The symbol of the Hindu origin which depicts four dimensions of the universe. It actually is an auspicious motif in Hindu mythology. It can be seen in Fatehpur Sikri as a pure ornamental motif forming a base for geometrical design. It is beautifully projected in Akbar's Tomb at Sikandra with the combination of other geometrical composition (Figure 27).



Figure 27 Swastika Motif used Decoratively in Sikandra

- iv. **Srivatsa**: A rhombus shaped four petal flower also represented by an equilateral triangle. Symbolically this motif devotes the eight auspicious signs of Indian classical art. The motif is used as an establishment in Fatehpur Sikri (Figure 28).



Figure 28 Srivatsa Motif in Jodhabai's Palace Fatehpur Sikri

- v. **Chakra**: Chakra is also known as the spinning wheel of a time. It represents the cyclic movement of the universe. Mostly this motif is used in circular ornamental pattern on the pillars and the arches of Mughal monuments of Agra (Figure 29).



Figure 29 Motifs used in Circular Pattern in Taj Mahal

- vi. **Shatkona**: This symbol represents the union of both male and female form. But again can be seen in lot of Mughal buildings of Agra as a decorative motif (Figure 30).



Figure 30 Shatkona at Jahangiri Mahal-Agra Fort

- vii. **Kalpavriksha**: This motif represents the tree in symbolic language which fulfills the wishes. But in Mughal buildings this motif is characterized in truly embellished form in

spiral and scroll representation on the pillars, panels on the walls, corners, arches, domes and especially on borders (Figure 31).

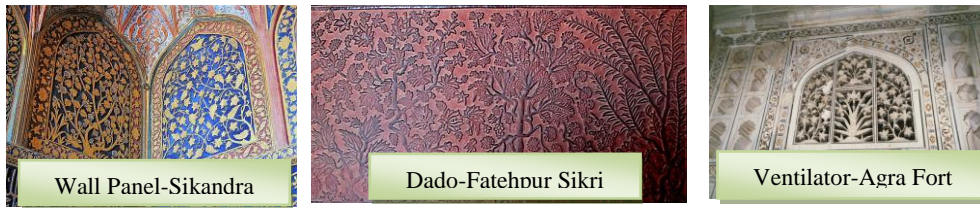


Figure 31 Kalpavriksha in Mughal Buildings of Agra

2.2.2 MOTIFS INSPIRED BY PERSIAN CULTURE

Resourcefully enough, Indian artisans during Mughal Empire created variety of spring flowers of Persian origin to bring out the required effect of ornamentation in accordance with Indian characteristics. Bhavnani (1978) revealing the characteristic representation of these floral patterns described that for the first time flowers like Lily, Rose, Narcissus, Dahlia, Iris and Almond carved in raised patterns and poised with their leaves and buds on delicate stem to decorate both panels and borders of the walls in most elegant manner (Figure 32).

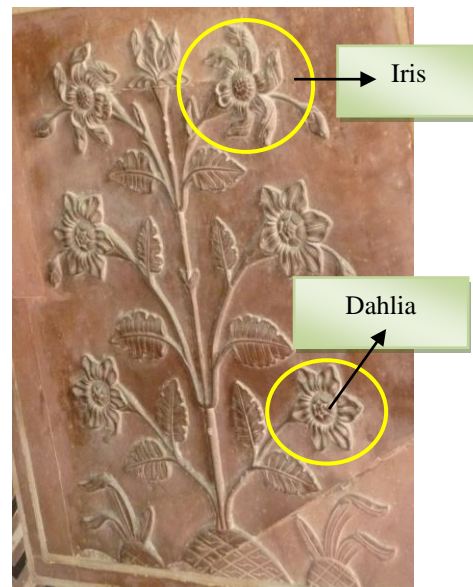


Figure 32 Carved Flowers in Mughal Buildings

Actually the Persian influence initially came to India through Mongols. Their influence was very strong in Persia during 13th century. Persian culture was rebuilt by the Mongols who converted themselves into Islam. A group of Muslims known as Timur invaded Persia during that time and from Turkey they reached India during 16th century through the emperor whom we know as Babur, the first emperor of Mughal Empire in India. The name 'Mughal' is derived from the original homelands of Timurids of the central Asian stopes, an area once conquered by Ghengis Khan which was named 'Moghulistan' or 'land of Mongols'. These people became Persianized and transferred Persian culture to India (Kensington & Today, 2013).

The influences of art form which can be found of Persian origin in Mughal Monuments of Agra are:

1. **The use of Iwans:** Iwans are rectangular halls, generally vaulted (domed or arched), walled from three sides with one side open. The Iwans were structured to give the feeling of the gateway. Such structures can be witnessed in all the buildings of Mughal architecture in Agra (Figure).



Figure 33 Iwans in Various Monuments of Agra

2. **Extensive usage of Arches:** The Arches are the highlight of Mughal buildings. Specifically Taj Mahal carries greater resemblance towards Persian kinds of Arches (Figure 34). The arches were generally made for aesthetic reasons for topping window structures and to reduce the harshness of sunlight to seep into the building.

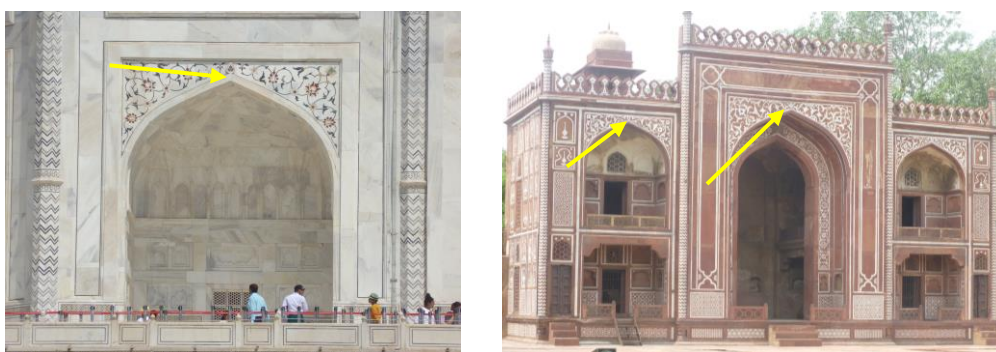


Figure 34 Arches influenced by Persian Architecture in Mughal Buildings

3. **Use of Domes:** Most of the domes constructed for the Mughal buildings have a complete resemblance in structure. They are placed on the assembly of a cylindrical drum, narrowing down in upwards direction to a point and finally ornamented at the top (Figure 35). This feature is very much inspired by Persian Buildings.

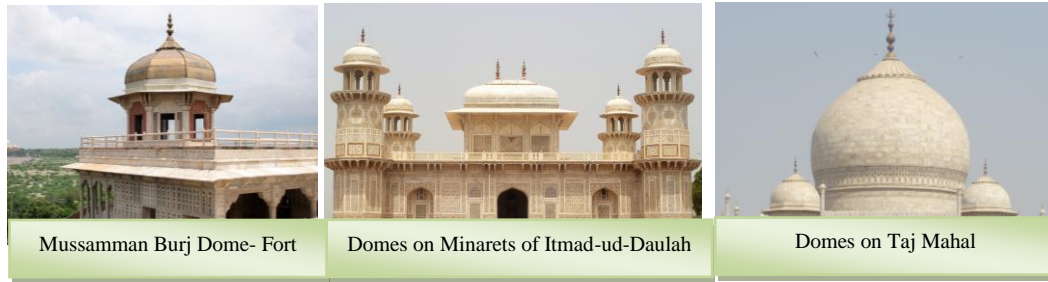


Figure 35 Use of Domes in Mughal Monuments

4. **Use of Symmetry:** As seen in Persian architecture, Mughal buildings too have the same kind of arches, pillars and minarets. Minarets are usually placed to each corner of the monument (Figure 36).



Figure 36 Symmetry in Structures of Mughal Buildings in Agra

5. **Use of Muqaranas:** Muqaranas are the kind of decorating vaulting with three dimensional versions of geometrical designs. Similar to Persian styles of Muqaranas, Agra's Mughal monuments have the horizontal layers created and then connected with the segments which connect the tiers together (Figure 37).

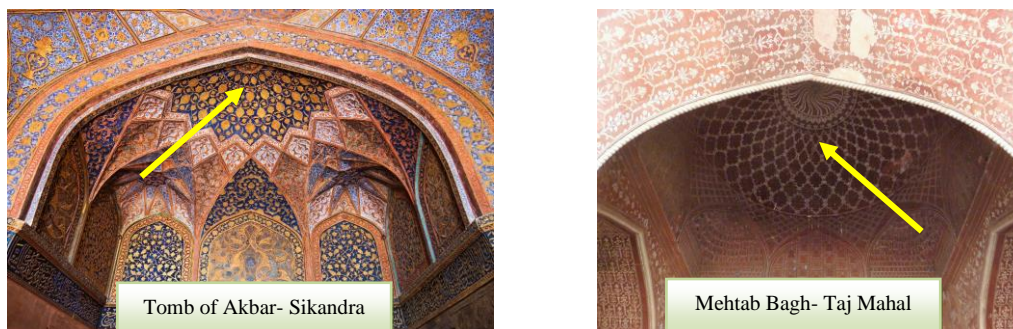


Figure 37 Decorative Muqaranas in Mughal Buildings of Agra

6. **Use of Mashrabiyas:** Mashrabiyas are the lattice work pierced windows which are used throughout the monuments (Figure 38). But this kind of structure carries some difference than that of Persian Mashrabiyas.



Figure 38 Mashrabiya Window Screens in Mughal Monuments of Agra

Various types of decorative designs and motifs influenced the Persian origin and are used in these monuments as a part of exterior as well as the interior decorations of the building. Different types of wall decorations inspired by the Persian designs have been applied to these buildings such as Inlay art, Glazed tiles, Mosaic and Painting (Figure 39). Usually Mughals executed Persian art in their monuments in the form of geometrical shapes and floral inscriptions. The floral decoration included the subjects like Lily, Rose, Pansy, Daffodils, Hibiscus, Sunflower, Jasmine and Juhi.



Figure 39 Wall Decorations Inspired by Persian Art in Mughal Buildings of Agra

Nath (1976e) described the depiction of Egyptian Water Lily (*Nymphia*) to be seen on a few capitals of the pillars of the Panch-Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri (Figure 40). He explained that it was a common art motif of ancient Persia and must have travelled to India with Persian artists who seemed to have introduced it here as an isolated formula without affinity with the traditional ornaments of the country or any idea behind it.



Figure 40 Depiction of Egyptian Water Lily on a Capital at Fatehpur Sikri

Another remarkable construction achieved in Mughal monuments were the paradise gardens developed under Persian inspiration. As Mughals considered the nature as a part of interior decoration, they adapted this culture into their gardens which would be done and divided into square shapes. Further inspired by this practice Mughals made flowers and floral motifs in the buildings look like a garden. So they used a lot of compositions and designs inspired by garden in their wall decoration (Figure 41).



Figure 41 Wall Decoration Inspired by Persian Gardens

2.2.3 MOTIFS INSPIRED BY ISLAMIC CULTURE

The Mughal architecture observed massive developments during their construction. Arrivals of Muslims to India introduced many new techniques and features to these buildings. So architecture of this period was also known as the Indo-Islamic style as the characteristics of the architecture were neither strictly Indian nor strictly Islamic.

Islamic patterns can be considered in three forms- Islamic decoration, Arabesque and Calligraphy. In view of designing patterns the geometric forms and arabesque have been beautifully interlaced and presented in Mughal buildings of Agra (Figure 42).

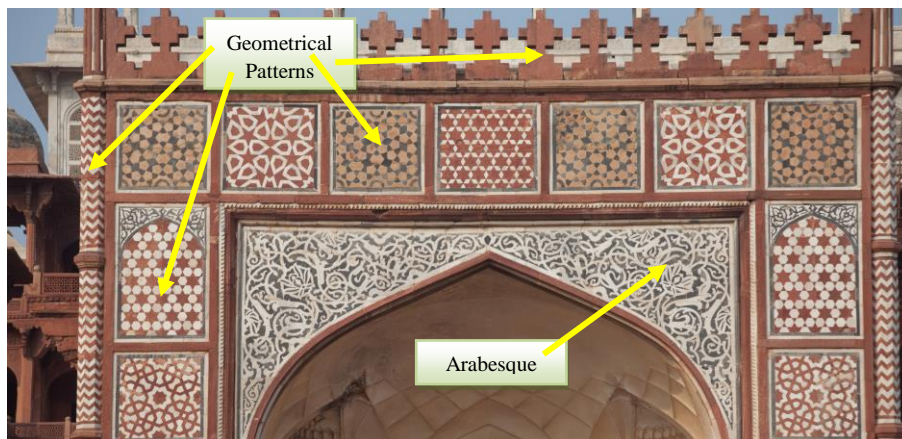


Figure 42 Islamic patterns in Mughal Monuments of Agra

Nath (1976f) revealed that the most exquisite representation of the arabesque is brought about in the Jali-art which is one of the most popular themes in Mughal architecture. Nath further explained arabesque is essentially a geometrical design so worked out as to allow infinite convolutions in a reciprocal order; repetitions are as a matter of course based on geometrical principles. He described the use of arabesque is a tendency not only toward stylization but also towards floralization becomes perceptible about the same time. Nath suggested convolutions are retained as fundamentals of the design but the details are formed of leaves and flowers which are painted in beautiful colour combination.

2.2.4 MOTIFS INSPIRED BY TURKISH CULTURE

Turkish influence in Mughal architecture can be seen in the form of ceramic decoration also with the extensive use of fine stone carving. The patterns made by both mediums took the art of Mughal architecture to the new levels of delicacy and refinement. Another feature of Turkish origin can be seen in multifaceted geometrical patterns. One more aspect of Turk style of decoration included depiction of no human or animal figures as it was meant to be unislamic. This feature can be evidently observed in Agra's Mughal buildings. As inspired by Turkish decoration, flowers were entwined in scrolly form very artistically (Figure 43). Some more decorative structures like bells were beautifully depicted in some of the Mughal monuments.



Figure 43 Influence of Turkish Style in Designs

Apart from the floral patterns, geometrical patterns like Chevron, Palmette, and Honey Suckle also made a way into the world of Mughal architecture (Figure 44). R.Nath (1976g) discovered, the chevron, honey suckle and palmette (knop & flowers), spiral, bead and reel and severe other motifs sometime employed in Mughal art for architectural ornamentation,

originally belonged to the west Asiatic stock to which they are as cognate as medieval times as they were in ancient times, as they were in ancient ages, thus leading us to conviction that art of inspiration travelled to far off regions and no amount of anarchy, fanaticism or taboos could restrict their area of development.



Figure 44 Inspirational Patterns from Far Off Regions

Other than the major contributions received from various cultures described above some influential work can be noticed from Chinese inspiration too in the Mughal buildings of Agra. This kind of influence can be acknowledged in cloud form patterns found on dados of these buildings (Figure 45). It was used exclusively and autonomously on the upper part of the dados. Initial example of such structure can be found in Sultana's Palace beautifully carved in red sandstone depicting forest scenes in natural background. Chinese cloud forms very interestingly surmount the upper portions of the dados which could may have left blank. But such forms amazingly complement the whole vegetal composition with their vital presence.



Figure 45 Chinese Cloud Pattern Itmad-ud- Daulah

So it can be stated that the Mughal empire was not only an era of invention and experimentation but was of the continence and peak of the process of culmination of various

cultural influences moulded in spectrum of Mughal ideas and notions which finally came to be known as ‘Mughal Architecture’.

2.3 GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

Mughal monuments in Agra relate to the Indo-Persian, Islamic styles that was nurtured in Indian subcontinent during Mughal kingdom between 1526 and 1857. The Mughals built and established exceptional structures in the form of mosques, tombs, forts mausoleums, cities and gardens in the northern province of the country. Agra occupies the most significant place in the history of Mughal architecture as it was reined by Mughal Empire for quite a long span of time and it was under this rule, the land of Agra was bestowed with marvelous monuments and buildings in abundance.

Spread along the banks of Yamuna River in Uttar Pradesh, Agra is a place engulfed with vast history and opulent cultural heritage. A small town in Uttar Pradesh, Agra is established on western bank of river Yamuna, located around 200 kilometers from Delhi and is one of the influential historical cities of the nation. The city was brought into persistence by Raja Badal Singh in 1475. Agra had become an important place after Sikandar Lodhi had set up his capital in this heritage city. Later, the Mughal emperor Babur took over the reign and with him the establishment of Mughal rule started in the city of Agra. During Mughal Empire, exclusive under the patron ship of Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jehangir and Shahjahan, Agra transmitted in a lavish place of art, culture and architecture (Figure 46).

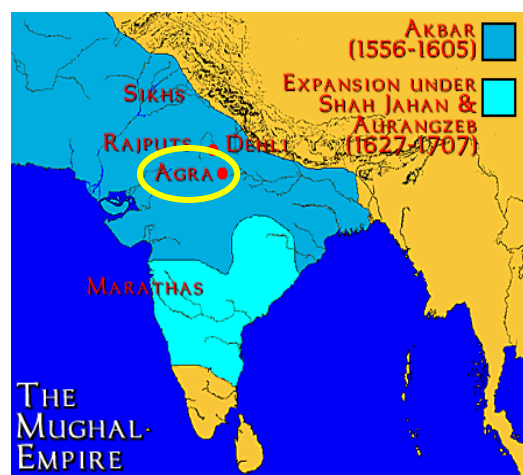


Figure 46 Expansion of Mughal Empire in Agra Source: (Education Point)

Chatterji, (1957b) pointed out, indeed Uttar Pradesh has from time immemorial been the seat of culture which is one of the most precious legacies of Indian civilization. The pride of place

among the various regions belongs to Uttar Pradesh which has the most historical ancient sites. Chatterjee further defined that one of the richest legacies of ancient Uttar Pradesh has been liberal and enlightened patronage of art, literature and of culture in the widest sense of the term.

Gifted with monuments in almost all parts of the city, Agra is infested with several wonderful building structures and grand monumental sites which are privileged to be presented in the world heritage. One can observe a range of architectural details in their world of class of art work. The finest pieces of such marvelous work are the majestic Red Fort, the spectacular Taj Mahal, Akbar's mausoleum in Sikandra, fabulous Itmad-ud-daulah and the finest of all with the variety of cultures and creations is Fatehpur Sikri (Figure 47).



Figure 47 The Magnificent Mughal Structures of Agra

A Glimpse into the Geographical Analysis of Agra's Mughal Monuments

2.3.1 THE RED FORT- A WORLD HERITAGE SITE



Figure 48 Red Fort of Agra

Also known as Lal Quila, locally Agra's fort is one of the most dynamic forts of the nation. Completely built in Red Sandstone the fort is designed like a walled castle positioned towards 2.5 kilometers to the northern west side of Taj Mahal. This architectural work of a genius is spread on around 94 acres of land (Figure 48). The primary construction of the fort was started by Emperor Akbar but there afterwards every successor subsequently structured some new palace or building with in premises. Ultimately now one can see variety of buildings constructed at single place. The successors of Akbar were Jahangir, Shahjahan and even Aurangzeb who had contributed to this unique site of construction. The fort can be identified as the grand museum of royal buildings.

There are four tall entrances to the fort. Southwards direction of the gate is known as Amar Singh Gate (Figure 49). All the major buildings in the fort are located just behind this gate. The front gate is known as Delhi Gate. These two gates are supposed to be known as two main gates to the fort. Remaining two gates are closed now. The outer structure of the fort is semicircular (Figure 50).

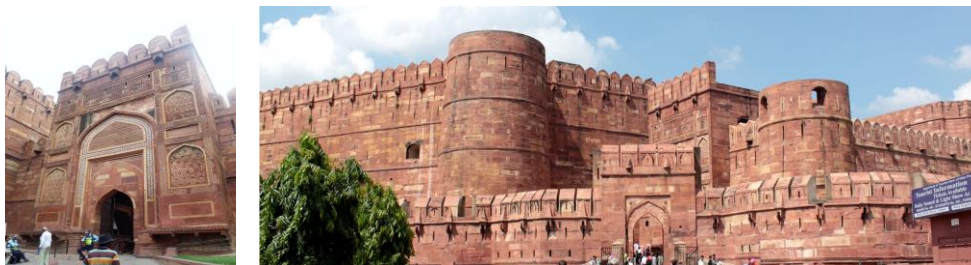


Figure 49 Amar Singh Gate Red Fort

Figure 50 Semi-Circular Shape of Fort

A major portion of the fort is now occupied by Indian Army and not accessible to general public. Some of the significant constructions in the fort are- Moti Masjid, Mina Masjid, Sheesh Mahal, Musamman Burj, Diwan-e-Khas, Diwan-e-Aam and Khas Mahal (Figure 51).

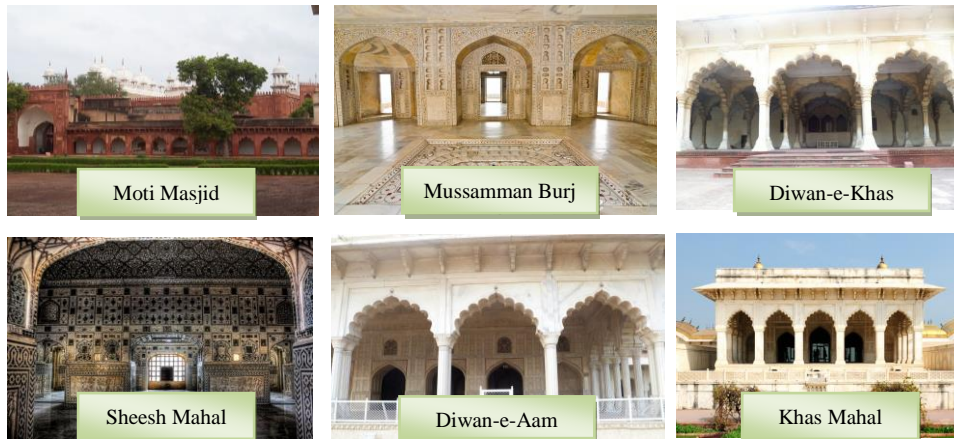


Figure 51 Variety of Buildings in Agra Fort

One of the common elements amongst these buildings is the lattice screens represented in two new originalities i.e. the ornamental designs articulating the figures such as birds, dragons and elephants, in spite of the prohibitions on such elements in Islamic art and the other is exclusive usage of marble in buildings of Moti masjid and Khas Mahal. Handa (2013) acclaimed, most of the marble structures with in the fort are like the best specimens of the Indo-Muslim art with influences of the Timurid art of Persia.

2.3.2 SIKANDRA- THE TOMB OF AKBAR

Sikandra was constructed as a mausoleum of the great Mughal- Akbar. The building is constructed in red ochre sandstone, 5 miles from Agra city on Delhi road (Figure 52).

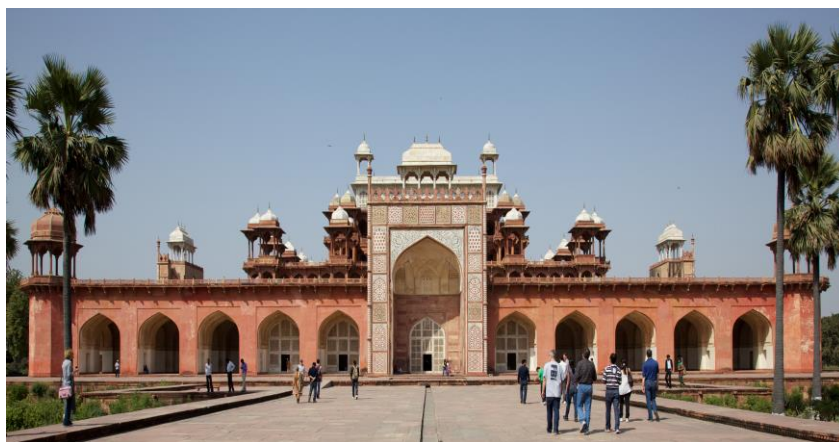


Figure 52 Akbar's Tomb at Sikandra

Initially the tomb was built by Akbar himself but the monument as is finally stands today was accomplished by his son Jahangir who had completed the top most portion of the building in white marble. The complete structure stands in the perfect blend of Islamic, Hindu, Christian and Persian themes.

The tomb has four red sandstone gates but nowadays only one entrance is used. These gateways represent a fascinating blend of different styles of architecture. Geometrical designs and patterns embedded in decorative tiles are the highlight of the building. The adornment on the gateways is relatively bold, with geometrical inlaid patterns in large mosaic (Figure 53).

The tomb has four minarets standing each at every corner. The minarets are built in red sandstone with white marble inlaid patterns. The tomb is pyramidal in shape and has five floors. The building is structured a level below the ground level. The entire monument is built in red sandstone except the top floor which is made up of white marble. The ground floor is surrounded by walkways from all the sides. These walkways are separated by huge arches.

The grand entrance of tomb is reflected in Islamic style with beautiful arabesque, Persian calligraphy, floral patterns and range of symmetrical Jalis. The influence of inherent architectural skills can be seen in the use of canopies (chhatris) and vivacious pavilions (Figure 54).

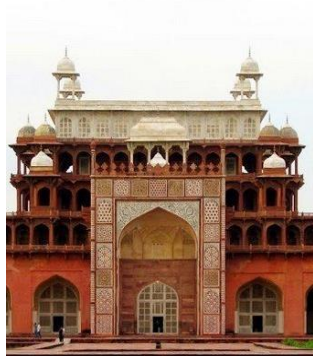


Figure 53 Geometrical Patterns on Gateway



Figure 54 Various Cultural Influences on Tomb

Sanwal (1968) described the monument as a 'Jewel Box' in the marble as the inlay work in has been finished with great delicacy and precision. He described the surface designs of monument

to be the replica of Persian Carpet designs which included both geometrical and floral and their execution in marble to near perfection. He further described minutely executed geometrical designs of the walls to be contrasted with the bold leaf scroll of the floor and claimed that the inlay work with coloured marble along with marble screen work on the supper pavilion make the monument one of the masterpieces of the builder's art in Agra.

2.3.3 FATEHPUR SIKRI- AKBAR'S CAPITAL CITY

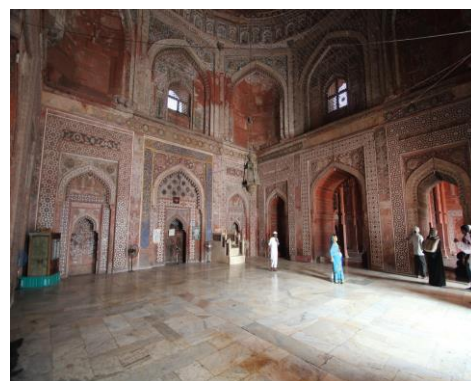
One of the most researched cities in India Fatehpur Sikri is located in the outskirts of Agra. It got its name from the village *Sikri*.



Figure 55 Fatehpur Sikri- Akbar's Capital City

The prefix 'Fatehpur' was added later to it in 1573 when Akbar won a battle in Gujrat. Fatehpur Sikri's construction started in 16th century in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh. It was instituted as the capital of Emperor Akbar in 1571 and remained its capital till 1585 (Figure 55). The city was declared World Heritage City in the year 1986. This great city restrains some of the best monuments and mosques.

Fatehpur Sikri is an exceptional example of the majestic Mughal architecture at its zenith. The mosque constructed at Fatehpur Sikri (Figure 56) is popular as Mecca's mosque and reveal some designs familiar to Persian and Hindu designs. King Akbar's

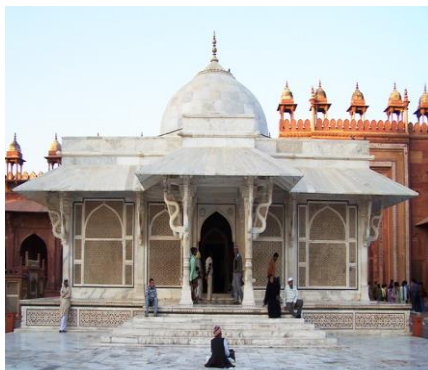


Picture 56 Jami Masjid Mosque at Fatehpur Sikri

grandeur approach towards his empire had further advanced to the wide spread variety of construction in Sikri.

The palaces built in Sikri are the unique models of Mughal rich lifestyle. Fatehpur Sikri is the matchless example of the culmination of Indo-Islamic architecture. There resides a tomb of famous Salim Chishti who was a well-known Sufi-saint of Akbar's time. The tomb is very famous for its suitable Jali carvings and is charm of hundreds of visitors every day (Picture 7).

The earliest and the most admired construction of Emperor Akbar's fantasy city is Buland Darwaza. It is structured amidst the noteworthy buildings of King Akbar all around. The massive gateway has a height of 54 meters and is the highest gateway in the domain (Figure 58). It was also built in 1575 to celebrate Akbar's victory in Gujrat. It proves to be an exemplified combination of Mughal and Persian culture.



Picture 57 Salim Chishti's Tomb with Jali Carvings



Figure 58 Buland Darwaza

The city of Fatehpur Sikri was originally planned by the Mughals. The structure of red sandstone primarily depicts architecture of Hindu customs and at the same time architectural elements also represent plentiful resemblance from the Islamic ornamentation and some of which are completely inspired from the miniature art of Persia.

Some of the chief construction in Sikri comprises of- Buland Darwaza built in 1576-77. Then there is Jama Masjid- a mausoleum built in remembrance of Salim Chishti, the Sufi saint. The memorial is amazingly structured in white marble embedded with mosaic. Another distinctive characteristic of this structure is that the entire construction of the mosque is done with Jalis made of distinctive geometrical designs. Some more buildings known as Diwan-e-Am, which

means the place meant to be for public; Diwan-e Khas, a hall made for private conversations with close and important persons; Panch Mahal- the court made for ladies (Figure 59); Naubat khana- made as a drum house; Birbal's House- the house made for the beloved minister of Akbar; Anup Talao- construction of a big water pool; Ankh Michauli- a pavilion to carry out all the important works of court; Daulat Khana- store house for huge treasury of gold and silver and Khwabgah- bedroom of a king personified as 'house of dreams'.

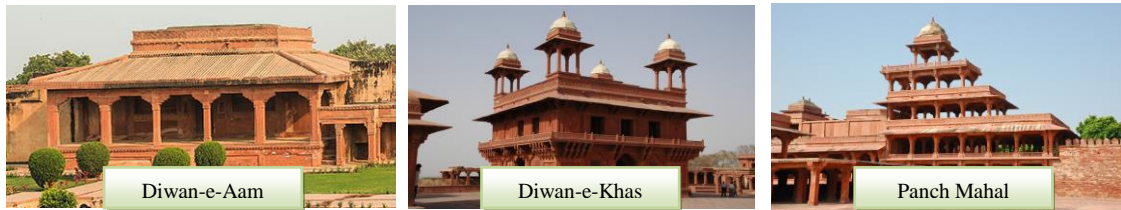


Figure 59 Buildings of Fatehpur Sikri

Jayapalan (1999) has declared Fatehpur Sikri to be the most ambitious architectural project and notable building achievement of Akbar's reign, is the new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri is so original and so experimental that every building in it is a variation on a theme and a novel invention. Never before, never since has anyone succeeded in blending so admirably structured and stylistic components of Hindu architecture with Islamic motifs.

2.3.4 TOMB OF ITMAD-UD-DAULAH

The monument of Itmad-ud-Daulah has created an extraordinary place in the chronicles of structural designs (Figure 60). This precisely holds place as Itmad-ud-Daulah is the principal tomb in India which is completely erected with white marble. Mausoleum of Itmad-ud-Daulah is most often called the *Baby Taj* as generally it is considered the draft of the Taj Mahal.



Figure 60 The Tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah

The tomb was constructed as a beautiful mausoleum of Mirza Ghiyas Beg, a Persian aristocratic person of a realm, grandfather of Mumtaz Mahal and emperor Jahangir's chief minister. The monument was constructed by the Mughal queen Nur Jahan in 1620 in commemoration of her father. The tomb was the inimitable specimen of Islamic structural design in India. The building is skillfully positioned at the left bank of river Yamuna.



Figure 61 Embellishment of Tomb with Semi-Precious Stones

While the marbles of Rajasthan were used to construct the walls of the tomb which were glazed and layered with semi-precious stones embellishments with the likes of Onyx, Lapis-Lazuli, Cornelian, Topaz, and Jasper (Figure 61).

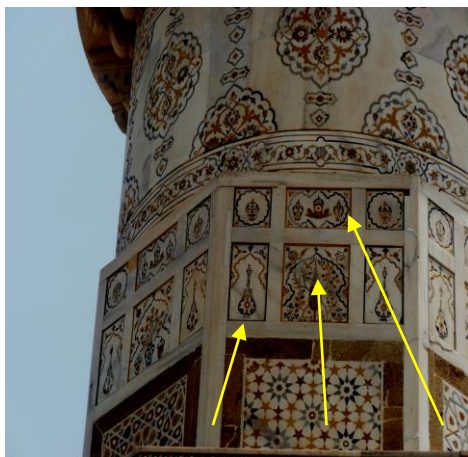


Figure 62 Compositions Inspired by Persian Themes

Lot of compositions inspired by Persian paradisaical gardens can be noticed in the inner walls decoration of the tomb like cypress trees, fruits in pots, wine bottles and floral bunches. The walls of the tomb also include inlaid patterns of birds, animals, flowers, trees fruits and wine jars (Figure 62).

The window Jali screens are also delicately carved in white marble. Construction of this tomb is quite different from other Mughal monuments of Agra of that era as it has many patterns carved in inlay, screens of Jalis and geometrical arabesque skillfully done with domed suspensions and looks marvelous. The building has four small minarets standing at the four angles of the small tomb. The entire creation brings the vision of an enlarged magnificent piece.



Due to the richness of decorative work done on white marble and the elegant marble screens, Itmad-ud-Daulah is absolutely a feather in a cap of architectural marvels of Agra (Figure 63).

Figure 63 White Jalis and Geometrical Arabesque

Islamic art org. team described Itmad-ud-Daulah's polychrome ornamentation as beautiful floral stylized arabesque and geometrical designs that have been depicted on the whole exterior inlay and mosaic techniques in various pleasing tints and tones. Wine vase, dish and cup, cypress honey comb suckle guldasta and such other Iranian motifs, typical of the art of Jahangir have been emphatically used. Some compositions have inspired by the plants. Some stylized designs have also been done in exquisite carving. Both engraved and relief, they appear like embroidery work done with ivory. Delicacy in their quality, stucco and painting has been done their interior where minute animal and human figures have also been shown. By far, it is the most gorgeously ornamented Mughal building. It testifies that the Mughals began like Titans and finished like Jewelers (Organization, 2013).

2.3.5 TAJ MAHAL- THE MONUMENT IN WHITE

Universally known as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the monument of Taj Mahal requires no formal introduction. The Taj (Figure 64) was created at the south banks of Yamuna River in the city of Agra, with shining white marble and fine adornment of inlaid patterns.



Figure 64 The Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal is undoubtedly one of the best examples of Mughal monuments of Agra. Rabindranath Tagore personified Taj Mahal as, “a tear on the face of eternity”.

The magnificent structure was built by the emperor Shahjahan in the remembrance of his beloved wife, Arjumand Banu Begum, also popularly known as Mumtaz Mahal, which literally means *Chosen of Place*.

The building of the tomb is as tall as a 20 storey building of modern times. The structure took around 16 years to complete with a work force of 20,000 people. The artisans who constructed the Taj Mahal were called from far off places like Turkey, to get the desired results of the



tomb's architecture. The marble was resourced from Makrana mines near Jodhpur in Rajasthan. Exquisite and precious stones were bought from far off places to create the inlay designs. The construction of the memorial started in 1632 AD and was functionally concluded in 1648 AD.

Figure 65 Ornamentation on Taj Mahal

Taj Mahal is a commendable example of a symmetrical and balanced structure which is erected on a raised surface surrounded by four minarets. The interior of the mausoleum is decorated with the mosaic art. White marble walls are embellished with gentle and subtle floral arrangements of wonderful inlaid stones. The distinctive ornamental feature of Taj Mahal is use Pietra Dura technique i.e. marble inlay which is repeated in the whole structure in varied patterns. Pietra Dura in Italian means hard stone encompassed with the inlay of semi-precious stones of different colours. The stones included- Jade, Crystal, Amethyst, Turquoise, Lapis-Lazuli (Figure 65). The stones were used in immensely variable forms interlaced with floral and geometrical designs. The coloured stones in this technique were used to efficiently redefine to glamorous effect of white Makrana marble.

Chandra (2004) described Taj as the monument that is entirely made up of marble and gems. He explained that the red sandstone of other Muhammadin buildings was completely replaced by

white marble in the Taj, especially the incorporation of inlaid precious stones arranged in lovely floral patterns. He exemplified that a looking at Taj, feeling of purity impresses itself on the eye and the mind, from the absence of the coarser material which forms so invariable a feature of Agra architecture.

To conclude the chapter, it can be stated that history of Mughal monuments in Agra is a record of advancement in the quantity of architecture. Stepping down the ages the Mughal architecture evolved, shaped and reformed to meet the changing needs of the cultures into their social, religious and native developments. A glimpse along the view point of earlier ages disclose Mughal monuments of Agra as a journey of architectural stones which developed and reformed transformationally in social, religious and political conditions of the entire Mughal empire and which will be always known as the landmarks in the history of architecture and design.