

# MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

*Hafiz Abbadullah Faruqi*

AMONG the many striking characteristics of the Mughals was their interest in things artistic. They made great use of their imperial influence in encouraging art and architecture in India. Before them, the architectural style of India had already passed through many stages. This is a brief survey of its development.

During the early Turkish period (Slave Kings and the Khaljis, 1190-1320) only Hindu workmen were employed, who followed Hindu architectural methods. Consequently we find no true arches with keystones in this period, even the domes are few. Archways are very high. Extensive flat surfaces are found, usually of red sand-stone richly adorned with shallow carving of writing scroll-work and foliage. There are few geometrical patterns. True arches with key-stones were, however, gradually introduced and Hindu methods and features tended to disappear from the art and architecture of India. Flat roofs gave way to domes and geometrical designs replaced the portrayal of foliage. These characteristics are to be seen in Quwwat al-Islam mosque, Alai Darwazah, Jammat Khana mosque at Nizam-ud-Din. During later Turkish period (Tughlaq, 1320-1414) we find that masonry is usually rough, and often faced with stucco plaster. Walls are very thick, often with sloping sides. There is little ornamentation or colour. Roofs and doors have square pillars. Mosques are often low and square, with a multiplicity of shallow plastered domes. These characteristic features of Mughal art are manifest in Tughlaqabad, Adilabad and the tomb of Ghiath-ud-Din, Begumpur and Kirkhi Mosque, Hauz-i Khas with the tomb of Feroz Shah.

In the reign of the Sayyids and the Lodhis (1414-1526) there is a marked aesthetic and structural progress. Domes are supported on octagonal necks and surmounted by lotus, finials; sometimes they are surrounded by a cluster of cupolas. Marble tiles and coloured stone are used to enhance the effect. Sloping sides and square pillars continue in this period. Mosques have round towers, with sloping sides but without minarets. The tomb of Mubarak Shah in the village of Mubarakpur and of Sikandar Shah Lodhi in Lodhi Garden along with "Bara Gumbad" and adjoining mosques present the best examples of architectural monuments of this period.

*Mughal Period (1526 c.-1750).* The magnificent taste of the Mughal Emperors is manifest from the various buildings they erected in almost all parts of India. The buildings of this period are larger and more splendid, though lighter and more graceful in composition. Wide use is made of white and coloured marble, mosaic, lattice-work, and intricate carvings and inlays, and, above all, of buff and red sand-stone. The mosques have minarets. Tombs are square. Domes are first semi-circular, then increasingly bulbous or onion-shaped and are often mounted on a high drum. Rows of small cupolas are found over gateways and frontages. The chief examples of Mughal architecture are the Tomb of Humayun, Red Fort and the Moti Masjid and palaces within Jamia Masjid, Tomb of Safdar Jang, Wazir Khan's Mosque of Lahore, Shalimar Gardens, Chauburji Garden, etc.

*The Tile Mosaics.* While the Mughals were busy constructing stone and marble buildings on a grand scale in the principalities of their Empire, a new architectural style was becoming manifest in the Punjab. This new phase took the form of brick-masonry profusely decorated with brilliantly coloured tiles. The factors responsible for this development are the difficulties in getting stone from Central India and the irresistible Persian influence, which at this particular time was unusually strong.<sup>409</sup> The Lahore tile-work belongs mostly to the seventeenth century and especially to Shah Jahan's reign. The finest example of this phase of Mughal architecture is Wazir Khan's mosque (1634) --embellished with gorgeously coloured tiles of geometrical and flower designs, executed in lustrous glaze and exhibiting great uniformity. Its facade and minarets are decorated with faience-mosaics arranged in rectangular and square sunk panels. Enclosed within simple geometrical or scrolled borders, the tiled panels display foliated and floral patterns. There are other buildings in Lahore such as the Gateway (Chauburji) of the garden of Zebun Nisa (1646), the two gates of Shalimar Gardens (1637) etc. The Lahore Fort outshines these buildings. A wall is decorated with panels of tile mosaics. What makes this work different from the rest is the fact that, instead of the

---

<sup>409</sup> The art of mosaic inlaid work started in the Safawid period (sixteenth century). After the overthrow of the Safawid dynasty Nadir Shah and other Iranian Kings patronised this art. During the Qajar period, the art of mosaics started to decline as the influence of European art began to be felt among the younger artists. It was during the reign of the late Raza Shah that efforts were made to restore this ancient art.

usual geometrical or foliated designs, a great number of panels exhibit figures of living beings.

This picture gallery extends from the Elephant Gate to the eastern tower of Jahangir's quadrangle.

Thus throughout the whole work there is firmness of lines and perfect understanding of colour. The geometrical and floral parts are exceptionally done; horses, camels and elephants are treated with a vigour. According to S M. Latif, "the chief characteristics of the early Mughal period is the ornamentation consisting of tessellated or mosaic pattern, in various coloured stones or in glazed tile. The finest specimen of this is to be found in the Mausoleum of Jahangir at Shandarah, Lahore."<sup>410</sup> He further maintains that the late Mughal period (by which term he means the period of Shah Jahan and his successors) is known for distinctive features of painting and the process of decorating the tiles with a glittering plaster in lively and vivid colours. Thus, according to him, "the embellishment of this period consists of colouring employed especially in stucco-medallation and arabesque traceries."<sup>411</sup> In addition to this the overlapping arches, the high Persian domes, the tall minarets and the vaulted roofs are the chief peculiarities of the Mughal architecture of all periods.

There is a conflict of opinion with regard to the originality of the style of painting and architecture under the Mughals. Furguson is of the opinion that the Mughal style of architecture is essentially local (i.e. Indian) in character, while Marshall and Havell vigorously maintain that the Mughal style of art and architecture is a blend of the local and foreign style.<sup>412</sup> The plausibility of the latter view is evident, as it is established beyond any shadow of doubt that art and culture of foreign countries did influence the art of India, with the result that there was a good deal of fusion of cultures under the Mughals. Thus, the architects followed the taste of the Mughal Emperors, who had imbibed Persian culture. But at the same time they never ignored the local art of painting and decoration; the Mughal style of art and architecture never conforms to a single type. It is right, therefore, to conclude that the style of

---

<sup>410</sup> S. M. Latif, *History of Lahore*, p. 63.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>412</sup> Furguson, *History of Indian Architecture*, Bombay, 1924, p. 23.

the Mughal art and architecture is neither foreign nor purely Indian; it is a blend of the two.

Babar, who had seen the natural beauty of the valley of Farghanah (where he was born) — a place abounding in natural scenery, hills and green meadows — looked upon the barren plains of the Punjab with the feelings of disgust and dismay. In his Memoirs he expresses his disgust at the ugly sight of the Indian towns and the repugnant look of the people. As he had seen the sumptuous buildings of Samarqand and Bukhara, he did not feel satisfied with the buildings at Delhi and Agra on account of their irregular and unsymmetrical structures, though he had nothing but praise for the dexterity of Indian stone-masons and painters. Being dissatisfied with the Indian style of architecture, he invited some of the architects from Constantinople, but none accepted his invitation.<sup>413</sup> Consequently he was obliged to carry out his designs with the help of the Indian architects and stone-masons. Under the guidance of Babar, the Persian style of architecture became dominant and was followed by almost all the architects. The two styles could easily be distinguished: the Persians erected their splendid buildings with bricks, decorated with "terra cotta" and glaze, while the Indian masons were accustomed to chiselled marble and stone. The profound love of the Mughals for walled gardens found expression in the construction of many such extensive gardens. They also placed some buildings in the centre of a park — a style peculiarly Mughal. Three mosques were built by the order of Babar at Agra, Samlibar and Panipat. But they are not the specimens of pure Persian style.

Humayun, his successor, had little time to pay attention to artistic fancy on account of his own anxieties and miseries. According to Mukherjee, "his troubled reign left him little opportunity to indulge his artistic taste. Only one mosque of his time still stands at Fatchabad in the Punjab."<sup>414</sup> Unlike the buildings of Babar, it is decorated in the pure Persian style with enamelled tiles.

The Suri Kings loved art and architecture and have left some of the finest specimens of medieval architecture which represents the Afghan style of buildings. The Old Fort near Delhi and Sher Shah's own tomb at Sasram

---

<sup>413</sup> K.M. Munshi and R. R. Diwakar, *Indian Inheritance*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1959, pp. 61-62.

<sup>414</sup> Mukherjee, *History of India*, Vol. II, p. 312.

are his most remarkable buildings. The mosque built by Sher Shah in the Old Fort reflects the Persian influence and shows a refined taste. Sher Shah was able to introduce a more refined and dignified style than what prevailed before. According to Mukherjee, "His noble mausoleum at Sasram in one of the best designed and most beautiful buildings in India. It stands in the middle of an artificial lake, grey and brooding, and suggests eternal repose."<sup>415</sup> Thus in the huge buildings built by Sher Shah we may discern a harmonious combination of Hindu and Muslim architecture which gives at the same time the impression of a Hindu temple and a Muslim tomb. Akbar further united both the Hindu and Muslim styles and harmonised them in such an exquisite form that it presents a magnificent pattern of the buildings. There is no doubt that in the early days of Akbar, the dominant influence of the Persian style on Mughal art and architecture is easily discernible. Most of the buildings of Akbar's time were built with red sand-stone, a very hard material, but Akbar worked wonders with it. One of his earliest buildings is the tomb of Humayun at Delhi, which bears not only evident traces of Persian influence, but also of the Indian art tradition. The dominant Persian style of this tomb is perhaps due to the fact that it was constructed at the instance of Haji Begum, who had been in Persia and had imbibed Persian culture. Moreover, Mirza Ghiath, a Persian architect, planned the structure of the tomb. It is on account of these reasons that the tomb is more Persian than Indian in design. Its Indian features are evident from the free use of marble and the absence of coloured tiles, so frequently used by the Persian builders. The later buildings of Akbar show greater influence of Hindu art. His palace at Fatehpur Sikri and the tomb at Sikandarrah are chief specimens of the blended style of architecture. The tomb of Humayun is surrounded by a beautiful garden, "with its paved pathways, flower trees, avenues of cyprus trees, ornamental water courses, tanks and fountains considered by them an essential complement to mausoleum building in its centre."<sup>416</sup> The construction of dome and its design is similar to that of the buildings of Samarqand and Bukhara. The use of the double dome was made for the first time in India. Similarly, recessed archway was introduced by Ghiath, the Persian architect, but he could not follow the Indian method of inlaying in place of the coloured tiles of the Persians. Besides the tomb of Humayun,

---

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., p. 314.

<sup>416</sup> Percy Brown, *History of Indian Painting*, Bombay, 1924, p. 55.

Akbar built one fortress at Lahore and another at Agra. The Agra Fort is situated on the bank of the river Jamuna and is a massive structure of red sand-stone. It is justly celebrated for its excellent workmanship, carving of stone, marble and inlaid mosaic. It is without exception one of the most important monuments of Agra.

Its vigorous and exuberant style of decorative architecture as well as delicate inlay work and the low reliefs in white marble are extremely beautiful. The fort as it stands to-day is the combined effort of successive sovereigns. Its design was made by Akbar. It was added to by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, while the white-marble edifices in particular belong to Shah Jahan's period. Of the four gateways of the Fort, the Delhi Gate is the most imposing, with a massive tower on either side, ornamented with inlaid marble work of excellent pattern. The Fort of Lahore is surrounded by a high brick-wall of considerable strength with musketry loopholes and was built by Akbar on the site of an old citadel. The entrance to the fort is by an outer gate on the west. On the left in a space between the outer walls and the palace front are exceedingly curious and interesting decorations in a kind of enamel, representing processions and combats of men and animals depicted on the front wall of the palace. In the days of Shah Jahan, a number of beautiful buildings of white marble were added to the fort, such as Diwan-i 'Am, Diwan-i Khas, Shish Mahal, Muthamman Burj and Moti Masjid. In the fort at Agra we find figures of elephants, lions and peacocks, which go to prove the predominance of Hindu influence in the art of building in the last days of Akbar.

*Akbar's Tomb at Sikandarab.* Being pyramidal in form and unique in style, it has no parallel among Persian or other Saracenic monuments.<sup>417</sup> Architects agree that the design was evolved from a Buddhist Vihara and in its arabesque tracery, Hindu carving and Buddhist form both were employed. The building is a witness to the composite faith of the ruler, who sleeps within. The mausoleum stands in a spacious garden of rare beauty.

Entrance to the tomb is from the south by an arched porch decorated with marble mosaic. The hall, rather the ante-chamber, was once decorated with flowers raised in gold, silver and enamel, which were scraped off by the Jats during 1761-1774, but were partially restored at a great cost by Lord

---

<sup>417</sup> Saeed Ahmad, *Fatehpur Sikri Guide*, p. 3.

Curzon, before the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1905, just to convey an idea of the original.

The second, third and fourth storeys above the ground floor have the same design and the same kind of ornamental arches and domes of white marble. Thirty-nine steps in the flight lead up to the second storey. Minarets of red stone and marble are erected on all the four sides. There is a flight of fifteen steps leading to the third storey and one of fourteen to the fourth.

Perhaps the topmost storey is most interesting. It was built by the Emperor Jahangir and is entirely of marble. The fretted marble trellised walls, tessellated marble pavements and the cenotaph hewn out of a solid block of white marble make the cloistered enclosure of surpassing beauty and interest.

There are thirty-six Persian rhymes carved on the arches of small compartments, nine on each side. The whole go to make a poem which tells us about Akbar's greatness.

There is an inscription at the head of the cenotaph, "Allah-o Akbar" (God is great), and at the foot, "Jalla Jalalahu" (Magnificent is His Glory) and round about the cenotaph, the ninety-nine names of the Creator are carved in a remarkably fine Arabic tracery. Over the main gate some Persian inscriptions in the Tughra character are

written which, when translated, mean: "O ! what a pleasant air it is, better than that of the garden of heaven. O! what a better foundation it is, better than that of the heaven. There are thousands of slaves for him in the heaven. There are thousands of gardens for him and the earth is a stationary heaven. The pen of the mason of death wrote on his shrine. It is the heaven for you, rest for ever," and so on. Some rhymes are carved on the arches of the four walls of the portal of the main gate, a few of which are given below: "By the order of God, who is high and glorious, his kingdom is unchangeable, he [Akbar] became king in the world by the grace of God ; the shadow of God was upon him. Time changes in every moment, never remains in the one way with anybody. When he ascended the throne, he controlled the whole world; he was generous, merciful and fortunate. He controlled the world and left; his soul was like the sun and the moon; may it be enlightened by the illumination of the light of the Almighty power," and so on.

The mausoleum was designed by Akbar himself and its construction began in 1603. Akbar died in 1605. In the third year of his reign, Jahangir made a pilgrimage on foot to his father's tomb and was so much dissatisfied with the place that he caused the greater part of it to be demolished. It was reconstructed at a cost of fifteen lakhs of rupees. The tomb was completed in 1613. The topmost storey and the gate of the tomb are two praiseworthy specimens of the buildings of Jahangir's reign.

In gratitude for the divine favour accorded to him, Akbar decided to make his capital at Sikri where his prayers had met with ready response. The red sand-stone city of Fatehpur Sikri is situated within a few miles of Agra. It was at Sikri that the famous saint, Shaikh Salim Chishti, dwelt in a cave. In those days Sikri consisted of a few huts of stone-cutters working in a neighbouring place. The chief architectural project of Akbar was the construction of a royal palace and a Jami'ah Masjid. As red sand-stone was available in plenty in these hills, the artisans used it in the construction of buildings with the highest architectural skill. In the Jami'ah Masjid inlaid marble and plaster relief in colour were freely used instead of carving. To this mosque the tomb of Salim Chishti was added later on. It is no doubt a gem of craftsmanship. Like other buildings in this locality, it was made of red sand-stone. But later on a veneer of thin white marble was given over it. This tomb is a specimen of early Mughal architecture. The portico is considered without rival in India as a specimen of white-marble carving. Its pillars are a reproduction of Dravidian columns. The mausoleum is a square building of pure white marble. The platform on which the tomb stands and the floor inside are inlaid with marble mosaic. The screen which encloses the verandahs is beautifully perforated in ornamental designs. The pillars supporting the beams of the porch in front are singularly made of S-shaped marble. An inscription on the doorway of the shrine gives the date of death of the saint as 1571. The date of the erection of the tomb is not known but it was probably erected by Akbar a few years after the death of Shaikh Salim. On the tomb rhymes in Persian are carved, which when translated mean: "The helper of religion, the leader of the way, Shaikh Salim Chishti; in spiritual power and proximity, he is like Junaid and Tafur. Do not remain two. Self is non. entity and is eternal with the Truth (God)," and so on.

The Buland Darwazah is another splendid structure which is in keeping with the spirit of Mughal architecture. It was erected by Akbar in 1601 in



commemoration of his victory over Khandesh and Ahmadnagar in Southern India. The gateway is surmounted by innumerable domes, both large and small, after the fashion characteristic of Mughal architecture. The gate is the largest, loftiest and most stately of all gates in the whole of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. It is one of the greatest in the world. Here marble and sandstone have been used in effective combination in its decoration. The inlaid marble-work in the arches and the Hindu style of architecture in the gallery above the entrance are extremely beautiful.

The construction of the new fort was completed in 1574. It is remarkable to note that the buildings of Fatehpur Sikri built by Akbar even to this day bear signs of Hindu architecture. The carvings of lotus, parrots, etc., are indications of the Hindu style. This carries the conception of Akbar's cosmopolitan taste in matters of religion. The arches of the northern and southern gates of Naubat Khanah (Musician Gallery) are, however, built in the Muslim style, while those on the east and the west in the Hindu style. The architecture of the Diwan-i Khas is pre-eminently Hindu.

*The Astrologer's Seat.* It is a beautiful pavilion with fine artistic pillars in proximity to the Diwan-i Khas. The style is usual to Jain architecture of the eleventh century. But the bed-room of the Emperor Akbar was originally embellished with artistic frescoes in the Persian style and beautiful inscriptions. The whole chamber was highly ornamented with paintings, principally of flowers, of which traces are still visible. A huge figure, probably of an angel with an infant in his arms, is cleverly painted on the northern side of the eastern doorway and refers to the birth of prince Salim.

Another important building is Panch Mahal. It is built in the style of a Buddhist Vihara and the architecture is essentially Hindu. The palace of Jodha Bai is remarkable for its skilful carvings. The Hindu influence is noticeable both in architecture and ornamental carvings. Other important structures are Diwan-i Khas where religious discussions were held. Thus it is more true to say that the architectural career of the Mughals started with Akbar, as it was in his reign that the buildings began to be erected after a new and modern style.

In the days of Jahangir there was a lull in the building activities of Mughals, as he was interested more in constructing gardens and miniature paintings than in buildings. Under him the art of gardening reached its,

climax. But the building activity did not altogether cease. The two most important buildings of his reign are the tomb of Akbar at Sikandarah and the tomb of I'timad-ud-Daulah. The latter was built by Nur Jahan over the grave of her father (Mirza Ghiath). It was built in white marble and is one of the earliest buildings to be decorated with pietra-dura or inlaying of semi-precious stones of different colours. According to Mukherjee, this feature was not altogether a novelty, for it is found in the Gol Mandal temple of Udaipur, which was an earlier structure. The Tomb of Ptimad-ud-Daulah at Agra possesses rare beauty and grace and marks the transition from the sandstone edifices of Akbar's time to the white-marble structure of Shah Jahan. This exquisite mausoleum has a perfect system of mosaic and inlay work. It presents the final example in the sub-continent of inlay work in a style derived from Persian mosaic. The building is entirely built in white marble and inlay work with coloured stone similar to that exhibited in the Taj. It is the first building of the Mughals in which only white marble was used and the decoration in the form of pietra-dura or inlay work was made for the first time.

In the time of Jahangir, the Nishat Bagh in Kashmir was built by Asaf Khan. Jahangir constructed the Shalimar Gardens of Kashmir. The tomb of Khan Khanan was constructed at Delhi in the Persian style during the reign of Jahangir. The tomb of Ptimad-ud-Daulah at Agra was built in pure white marble inlaid with precious stones. Its system of mosaic and inlay work is a perfect specimen of the style derived from Persian mosaics.

The reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658) marks a turning point in the growth of art and architecture. Before him red sand-stone was used in the construction of buildings but he made use of pure white marble for the purpose. He not only discarded the use of sand-stone, but also pulled down and demolished a large number of sand-stone buildings in the forts of Agra, Lahore and other places and replaced them by white-marble edifices.

He found sufficient quantity of white marble in Rajputana for his projects, but where it was not available, he used to plaster the surface with white stucco, to make it look like marble. Along with the change of material there also occurred a change in the style of the buildings. In place of the rectangular structure, curved lines and a flowing rhythm of a different style are noticeable. Besides the use of colours, the setting of the precious stones made the buildings ornamental and look more beautiful. There was change

also in the shape of the arch, which now was foliated and cusped in its outline. Thus Shah Jahan was the most magnificent builder among the Mughals and with him began the golden age of architecture. In his time the arts of the jeweller and the painter were successfully blended into a unity.

At Agra Shah Jahan built the following buildings of exquisite beauty with white marble: the Moti Masjid, the Hall of Diwan-i Khas and the Muthamman Burj. These represent the best style of Mughal architecture.

At Lahore, he built Diwan-i 'Am, Muthamman Burj, Shish Mahal, the Naulakha and the Khwabgah. In these structures we find the complete assimilation of the principle of balance and rhythm.

At Delhi, he built Diwan-i 'Am and Diwan-i Khas in the Red Fort. These buildings are extremely charming and magnificent. The following is the inscription on the hall connected with Diwan-i Khas at Delhi:

اگر فردوس بر روئے زمین است

ہمیں است و ہمیں است ہمیں است

["If there is paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this."]

Shah Jahan also built several mosques at Delhi and Agra, but the masterpiece of Mughal architecture is the Taj Mahal. Its structural portion was done by the Muslims and the decoration was completed by Hindu craftsmen.

The Rang Mahal or Shah Jahani Mahal consists of a purely sandstone edifice. As a matter of fact, Rang Mahal is a part of the Jahangiri Mahal built by Akbar, and Shah Jahan made necessary alterations and additions (the brick-work, coating with plaster, etc.) in order to adopt it to his particular taste and requirements. The entire building is excellent to look at, the rooms behind the arches are lavishly gilt and coloured.

The Khas Mahal is a charming block of buildings of very fine white marble elaborately carved and richly ornamented. It consists of three white-marble pavilions and stands just in front of the Anguri Bagh on an elevated platform by the side of Jamuna. The pillars and arches are elaborately carved.

The entire hall and walls are beautifully adorned but the golden plating on the ceiling has disappeared.

The Shish Mahal was so called because of the innumerable small fragments of looking glass in the entire walls and ceilings, set into gorgeously gilt and coloured Moorish stucco reliefs. It was a Turkish bath attached to the Khas Mahal for the use of ladies. Originally the stucco reliefs were painted in golden and silvery colour ; the chambers were paved with marble, floors carved and inlaid with beautiful designs of fishes. The Muthamman (octagonal) tower is a marble work inlaid with elaborate designs in jasper, agate, jade, lapis lazuli, blood-stone, etc. Very fine artistic scenes of marble surround the Burj and the tower above is delicately inlaid with patterns of jasmine flowers and the top is beautifully adorned with a fine cupola.

The Diwan-i Khas, the hall of private audience built in 1637, is an exquisite production of art. Its beautiful marble-work inlaid with precious stones displays artistic decoration of the Persian style which places it among the best architectural productions of the age.

The Diwan-i 'Am is an extensive hall built entirely of red sandstone with white polished stucco over the arches, pillars and ceilings which make them look like marble. A few feet above the ground towards the back of the hall is the imperial balcony which is the most beautiful piece of work in the whole of this building. Its walls are of white marble beautifully inlaid with mosaic flowers in semi-precious stones. The balcony is protected by a carved railing and triple arches of white marble.

The Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) is a splendid lofty building of white marble. It is one of the purest and most elegant buildings of its class to be found anywhere. The beautiful sculptured panels and marble lattice-work screens are extremely charming. The whole structure, except the Persian inscription on the arches, gives the impression of unbroken whiteness, in and out, above and below.

The priority of place must of necessity be given to the famous Taj Mahal, "the dream in marble," which for its exquisite symmetry, grace and marvellous richness and beauty of its materials is unequalled by any structure in the world. This peerless monument represents the most highly elaborate stage of ornamentation, the stage at which the architect ends and the jeweller begins. This celebrated monument is really the final achievement and

epitome of Mughal art and the pietra-dura adorning the mausoleum is the finest in the world. In colour and design, its interior may rank foremost in the world for purely decorative workmanship, while the perfect symmetry of its exterior and the serial grace of its domes and minarets impress the beholders in a manner never to be forgotten.

The notable features of the Persian architectural style, the beautiful floral designs and painting, the prominent features of the Egyptian mosque, the remarkable purity, the exuberant style, the beautiful design, the characteristic features of the romantic and palatial buildings of Spain, the brilliant colouring, the excellent polish and finish, the wonderful ornamentation and decoration and the charming mosaics, are all combined in this world-renowned monument. To the west of the Taj stands the magnificent building of the mosque. Its minarets are triple-storeyed, of red sand-stone, pierced with stone windows. The domes are of white marble and the pinnacles gilt. The pulpit and the recesses in the western wall are also of marble. The ceilings and walls are adorned with beautiful floral designs.

With Shah Jahan's death art declined, for his successor, Aurangzeb, could not extend patronage to the art of building due to his preoccupation with military campaigns as a result of the rising tide of Hindu aggression. The only notable building which is regarded as the latest specimen of the Mughal style of architecture is the Shahi Mosque at Lahore which was built in imitation of the mosque of al-Walid at Mecca.

According to S. M. Latif, "The materials of this mosque were originally collected by Dara Shukoh for the construction of a spacious mausoleum over the remains of Mian Mir, his spiritual guide. But before he could accomplish his desire, he met his death at the hands of his younger brother, Aurangzeb, who on ascending the throne confiscated the material and used it in building the mosque bearing his name. The outer face of the mosque has the following inscription in large letters.

مسجد ابو ظفر محی الدین محمد عالمگیر بادشاہ غازی ۱۰۸۴ھ با ہتمام کمترین

خانہ زادان فدائی خان کو کہ اتمام یافت۔

["The mosque of the victorious and valiant King Mohy-ud-Din Muhammad Alamgir constructed and completed under the

superintendence of the humblest servant of the royal household, Fida'i Khan Koka in 1084 A.H. " <sup>418]</sup>

Although the mosque represents the declining age of art and architecture, it is wrong to suggest that it absolutely lacks the artistic features of the earlier buildings. The facades of the mosque are excellent and perfect. While its domes of white marble, crowned with pinnacles, have surpassed the domes of all other constructions in beauty, splendour and perfection. Thus the domes and minarets of this mosque are a remarkable piece of architecture and there is nothing to compare with it in the entire range of Mughal architecture.

---

<sup>418</sup> S.M. Latif, *op. cit.*