



### Gardens, Tombs and Forts

**The Sultanate Period:** Qutbuddin Aibak, in his short rule of for years built Quwwat ul Islam Mosque in Delhi and Dhaj Dargah in Ajmer. Aibak Started the Qutb Minar but Iltutmish completed it. The Qutb Minar may have been a victory tower modeled after the one built at Ghazni by Mahmud of Ghazni. Iltutmish and later Alauddin Khalji made many additions to the Quwwat Ul Islam complex. To the west of the mosque is the tomb of Iltutmish, which was built by Iltutmish himself in CE. The concept of building huge mausoleums or tombs was new in India. By the time Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316<sup>CE</sup>) came to rule, the treasury of the Sultanate was richer, which is reflected in his buildings- some of the best in Islamic architecture. He built the Alai Darwaza and the Alai Minar near the Qutb Minar. The Alai Darwaza is a magnificent gateway to the Quwwat ul Islam mosque. It is made of red sandstone with inlaid marble decorations that display the skill of the Turkish artisans who worked on it. Alauddin Khalji also built the city of Siri. Architecture continued to flourish under the Tughlaqs. Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq built the great fortress of Tughlaqabad, the third city of Delhi. He also built a tomb for himself on an island in an artificial lake here. Mohammad bin Tughlaq built the fourth city of Delhi, Jahanpanah. But the city was destroyed later when he tried to move his capital to Daulatabad. His Successor, Firoz Shah, built at least four cities, one of which was the fifth city of Delhi- Firozabad or Firoz Shah Kotla.

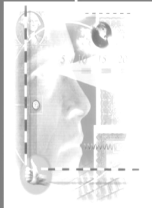
Under the Mughal, architecture became more complex. Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, and especially Shah Jahan were personally interested in literature, art and architecture. In his autobiography, these gardens were called Chahar bagh, four gardens, because of their symmetrical division into quarters. Beginning with Akbar some of the most beautiful Chahar baghs were constructed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan in Kashmir, Agra and Delhi.

**Provincial Architecture:** The imperial style of the Delhi sultans influenced the architecture of the provinces. But the influence decreased with distance so that the more remote parts reveal more local influences. However, the architecture of Bengal reveals marked Hindu influences. The massive walls and convex roofs and domes typical of Islamic architecture are combined with fine, delicate designs. In Gujarat, many of the structures showed a combination of Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture. Architecture in the Deccan had a definite Persian influence, as many of the rules of the Bahamani Kingdom came from Persia.

**The Mughal Period:** The Mughal Period (1526-1707<sup>CE</sup>) is justifiably called the Golden Age of Muslim architecture in India. The Mughal style of building was distinctive compared to earlier Islamic styles. Most of the Mughals buildings were concentrated in North and north-west India-----in Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Allahabad.

The first of the Mughal rulers, Babur, introduced the concept of **baghs** or ornamental gardens into India, for example, the Ram bagh in Agra.

Sher shah suri built the Purana Qila, which became the sixty city of Delhi. Sher Shah's tomb at Sasaram in Bihar is an elegantly proportioned building surrounded by water. Humayun's building were mainly built around Delhi, like the **Jamati Masjid** and the **Mosque of Isa Khan**. He introduced the Persian element in Indo-Islamic architecture when he returned to power after 15 years of Sher Shas's



rule. **Humayun's Tomb** was built by his widow during the rule of his son Akbar. It is a fine blend of Hindu and Islamic architecture. It has a large central dome of white marble with four octagonal towers and kiosks of red sand stone. The front is made of red sand stone with white marble inlay work. There is a garden in front of the tomb. An interesting feature of this tomb is the slightly bulbous shape of the central dome. This shape was more common in Persia, and was introduced in India for the first time.

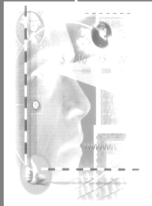
Akbar, during his long tenure (1556-1605 CE), added many buildings to the Mughal legacy. He built fortresses at Agra, Lahore and Allahabad. All were made of red sandstone with marble inlay work. The use of red sandstone became signature style of Akbar's architecture. Akbar's main achievement however was construction of Fatehpur Sikri, his new capital near Agra. The city of red sandstone very Persian. Jahangir (1605-1627<sub>CE</sub>) built Akbar's mausoleum in Sikandra, near Agra. It is a huge structure raised on a podium. Jahangir loved gardens. He laid down gardens that looked like Persian carpets. The gardens at Udaipur, Srinagar and Fatehpur Sikri are among the well. Known ones. Aurangzeb (1658-1707<sub>CE</sub>), the last of the Great Mughals, was not a prolific builder. The Moto Masjid in Delhi and the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore are his main contributions to architecture. After Aurangzeb, the quality of Mughal architecture deteriorated.

There were several important architectural innovations during Akbar's reign. Akbar's architects turned to the tombs of his central Asian ancestor, Timur. The central towering dome and the tall gateway became important aspects of Mughal architecture, first visible in Humayun's tomb. The tomb was placed in the centre of a huge formal Chahar bagh and built in the tradition known as "eight paradises" or hasht bihisht—a central hall surrounded by eight rooms. The building was constructed with red sandstone, edged with white marble. It was during Shah Jahan's reign that the different elements of Mughal architecture were fused together in a grand harmonious synthesis. The ceremonial halls of public and private audience were carefully planned. Placed within a large courtyard, these courts were also described as chihil sutun or forty-pillared halls. Shah Jahan's audience halls were specially constructed to resemble a mosque. The pedestal on which his throne was placed was frequently described as the qibla, the direction faced by Muslims at prayer, since everybody faced that direction when court was in session.

The connection between royal justice and the imperial court was emphasized by Shah Jahan in his newly constructed court in the Red Fort at Delhi. Behind the emperor's throne were a series of Pietra dura inlays that depicted the legendary Greek god Orpheus playing the lute? It was believed that Orpheus's music could calm ferocious beasts until they coexisted together peaceably.

In the early years of his reign, Shah Jahan's capital was at Agra, a city where the nobility had constructed their homes on the banks of the river Yamuna. These were set in the midst of formal gardens constructed in the Chahar bagh format. The Chahar bagh garden also had a variation that historians describe as the "river front garden".

Shah Jahan adapted the river-front garden in the layout of the Taj Mahal, the grandest architectural accomplishment of his reign. Here the white marble mausoleum was placed on a terrace by the edge of the river and the garden was



to its south. Shah Jahan develop this architecture from as a means to control the access that nobles had to the river in the new city of Shahjahanabad that he constructed in Delhi, the imperial place commanded the river-front. Only Shukoh- was given access to the river. All others had to construct their homes in the city away from the River Yamuna.

**Region and Empire:** As construction activity increased between the eighth and eighteenth centuries there was also a considerable sharing of ideas across regions. In Vrindavan, near Mathura, temples were constructed in architectural styles that were very similar to the Mughal palaces in Fatehpur Sikri. Were particularly skilled in adapting regional architectural style in the construction of their own buildings. In Bengal, for example, the local rulers had developed a roof that was designed to resemble a thatched hut. The Mughal liked this “Bangla dome” in so much that they used it in their architecture. In the Akbar’s capital a fatehppur sikri many of the buildings show the influence of the architectural style of Gujarat and Malwa. Even though the authority of the Mughal rulers waned in the eighteenth century, the architectural style developed under their patronage were constantly used and adapted by other rulers whenever they tried to establish their own kingdom.

**Why Were Temples Destroyed:** Because kings built temples to demonstrate their devotion to god and their power and wealth, it is not surprising that when they attacked one another’s kingdoms they often targeted these buildings. In the early eleventh century, when the Chola king Rajendra I built a Shiva temple in his capital he filled it with prized statues seized from defeated rulers. Sultan Mahmud o Ghazni was a contemporary of Rajendra I. During his campaigns in the subcontinent he also attacked the temples of defeated kings and looted their wealth and idols. But by destroying temples-especially the one at somnath- he tried to win credit as a great hero of Islam.

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