

Art And Aesthetics Of Tajmahal

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*'The builders could not have been of this earth.
This is evident that design was given him by heaven'*

Fergusson



Abstract:

Taj Mahal is the finest example of Mughal architecture. It has its place among the seven Wonders of the age. A dream in marble, A noble tribute to Indian womanhood, built by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. In Taj Mahal, fusion of Persian, Indian and Islamic art and architectural elements can be seen in excellent form. World's best architects, Masson, workers and inlay workers approximately 20,000 in number, worked for twenty years regularly and finally, in 1653, it was ready for the public. Its architecture, garden,

pitradura work, red sandstone buildings of MehmanKhana, mosque are eternal testament of the aesthetic and scientific accomplishment of Shahjahan's golden age. Taj Mahal was conceptualized not only as a mausoleum but also a dream of Mumtaz Mahal and Shahjahan which came true in the form of marble on the earth. It's an evidence of the aesthetic sense and taste of Shahjahan.

In the present paper Researcher has tried to show not only the beauty of the Taj Mahal's architecture but also it's aesthetic aspects. Historical background of site, its gardens, fountains, elements, the cost of the precious stones used in the Taj Mahal are all detailed after thorough research. Views of great personalities about the intricacies of Mausoleum also find place in the paper.

Key words: Iwan ,pishtaq Mehman Khana, Munbatkar (carvers of miniature style) designs ,Burj. pitrdura,

Research Methodology:

The paper has been prepared after studying many books on Mughal miniatures, journals and manuscripts, and translations of emperors' biography and contemporary chronicles or history.

Introduction:

Taj Mahal is one of the most beautiful architecture of the world and first among the seven wonders of the present era. It is a mixture of Indian, Persian, and Islamic architectural styles. *According to Professor R .Nath --- "A dream in marble, a great tribute to Indian femininity, a monument of love and a resplendent immortal tear on the cheek of time." It is the finest example of Mughal architecture.*¹

It was built by the fifth Mughal emperor Shahjahan who ruled Delhi from 1628 to 1658 AD. Son of Jahangir and grandson of Akbar, Shah Jahan's childhood name was Khurram. He was born on 5 January 1592 in Lahore. His mother Manbai was a Hindu princess. Jahangir had given her the title of JagatGosait that means Jagat Guru. She belonged to Jodhpur; hence she was called JodhaBai. This name was also used incorrectly for Jahangir's mother. Whereas Jahangir's mother's name was **HirnayBai**. Jahangir describes the birth of Khurram as follows in his autobiography ---

*Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri--'Sultan Khurram was born in the thirty-six years of my father's rule by JagatGosain, daughter of Mota Raja Udai Singh. His arrival made world blissful'. His birth made the world happy. It was also noted that Prince Khurram was born in the first millennium and, like his father, was born in the same month and also in the same month as Prophet Mohammed. Khurram was a loving child. Emperor Akbar gave the charge of his grandson to Ruqqiya begum and it is believed that she loved Khurram more than her own child. Undoubtedly he was a very special favorite for Akbar.*²

His childhood was dominated by the influence of Sufism. Hakim Ali Gilani taught him science and medicine. From other Sufis, he learned grammar, logic, mathematics, astronomy, and geology. Learned Arabic language of the Quran and the Persian language of his court. Developed skills as a rider and swordsman. According to his teacher "He has a sharp wit, a wonderful memory, a love for detail and the ability to master them".

According to Pratap Ditya pal---Gradually as his age increased, his excellence also increased. He was more attentive to my father than all my children. There is no comparison between him and other children. The truth is written by Jahangir, he is my real child. Khurram is said to have spent as much time as possible with Akbar, who humiliated himself and gave him no direction in matters such as military and otherwise.

When Akbar the Great was dying, Khurram refused to leave the edge of his bed. "Unless Shah Baba has the breath of life, no one can persuade me to leave him,"³

In 1612, Prince Khurram married ArjumandBano begum, daughter of Asaf Khan (brother of Noor Jahan). Arjumand was 19 years old at that time. Although before this Shah Jahan had two marriages with Akbarabadi Begum and Kandhari Begum and Shahjahan was entirely dedicated to Arjumand who is recorded extremely beautiful and accomplished ladyafter marriage shahjahan gave her the title of Mumtaz Mahal which means jewel of the palace.

In 1628, when Shah Jahan was pursuing the rebel Khana-i-Jahanlodi in Burhanpur, MumtazMahal gave birth to a girl named GauharbanoatBurhanpur. Became seriously ill and died. According to Abdul Hamid Lahori, "(who wrote the history of the emperor), 'WhenMumtazMahal felt that her end is near, she called Princess JahanAra Begum and said to call Shahjahan in zanankhana. Shah Jahan sat at the bed of Mumtaz and took her head in his lap. Mumtaz looked at the king with despair and tears in her eyes and said to him,

PratapDity pal metion in his book that lahuri writes in padshnama that before death mumtataz Mahal said to shahjahan-"You have to fulfill my two wishes. First, after my death, you will not marry again because you already have four sons and four daughters. Second, build an extremely beautiful, wonderful, and unique tomb for her no building like this on earth.4'

She advised her elder daughter Jahanara to take good care of her children and her aging father when she was no more.

Shahjahan accepted her will.' Then looking at his soul mate and taking a deep look at her, she breathed her last at three o'clock before sunrise.

The whole court was plunged into mourning. This was a great shock for Shah Jahan. MumtazMahal was 39 years, four months, and four days old at the time of her death. MumtazMahal died in 1631. Her body was temporarily buried in a garden called Zainabad on the banks of the Traptiriver in Burhanpur. It was later transported to Agra where it was finally buried in a permanent grave on 15 Jamadi-ul-Sani(February) 1041/1632.

Havelldescribed in his text After the death of Mumtaz, Shah Jahan closed the door of the room for a week. At the request of his Amirs and his children after eight days he opened the door and looked like an old man. Qazi Ahmed wrote that before the death of his wife he hardly had 15 to 20 strands white,in his beard. But after this tragedy, almost entire beard was grey⁵".

His eyes were spoiled due to continuous crying.After the death of Mumtaz, Shah Jahan gave up listening to music, wearing jewelry or richly colored clothes and using perfumes. Seeing his condition his royal uncle explained that "if he does not relieve himself from this misery, Mumtaz will be deprived of all happiness of paradise and she will be left-back in the world which is absolutely a place of sorrow." He should focus on his children, whose care his wife had left upon him. Shahjahan's eldest daughter Ara Begum gradually helped him to free from his misery and gradually made him attend the court. Shahjahanused to engage himself in religious activities. Lahori writes that the emperor who had a vast empire could do whatever he wanted, started living in penury(extreme poverty). He was so hurt that death seemed very close to him. In these moments, Shahjahan decided to build a sacred, beautiful and unique mausoleum for his queen.

Several places were considered for the construction of TajMahalsuch as Lahore, Delhi, etc.Delhi's land being rocky was rejected. Lahore was far away from the capital so dropped. Finally, Agra was selected because of the beautiful view of the Yamuna River and proper arrangement of water. Also Agra was the capital; therefore Agra Fort's site was selected. On the bank of river Yamuna, such a bend was selected where the thrust of the water wasthe least. Safest place along the river, away from its center.It's indicating fairly and beautiful position was ideal for the project. It was a vast slope of alluvial soil mixed with kankar(small stones). The design of the Taj included the mosque as an integral part so that visitors could offer prayers and worship the saint and queen.

SITE& LAND OF TAJMAHAL :

According to Abdul Hamid Lahouri - "This land was originally the Jagir of Raja MansinghKachwaha of Amer(Jaipur). This area was probably known as Kachhapura (after the Kachwahas dynasty). The village on the other side of the river is still known by this name. At that time it was owned by his grandson Raja Jai Singh, who offered it free of cost. According to Islamic beliefs, no tomb or religious place canbe built on someone's acquired land. Therefore, in exchange of this land, plenty of other land was given to RajaMan Singh as compensation (muavza).

According to Abdul Hameed Lahauri --Shahjahan personally took up the work of the building department. He called a meeting of eminent persons in Diwan-e-Khas in which the Superintendent (Darogha) was present along with the architects who showed the Nakash (Designs and Plans) maps of different royal buildings to the Emperor.⁶

It is also believed that Geronimo Veroneo, an Italian architect who was in Shah Jahan's court. He submitted the designs of Shah Taj Mahal and Jahan to inspect them.⁷

This fact has also been mistakenly written by many authors as the fact that the original design of the Taj Mahal was made by Shah Jahan himself, while the original design of the Taj Mahal was made by Ustad Isa. Qadir zaman has mentioned the a

R.Nath wrote in his book that Lahauri mentioned in Padshahnama that Shahjahan ordered his nobles to build a tomb which is "Nayab ho Kamaal ho, Lateef ho aurajeeb o Ghareeb ho."⁸

Many historians. Nath⁹, Pratapditya pal¹⁰ wrote -The emperor decided to build a magnificent tomb with a large and high dome that would last until the Day of Judgment, perpetuating the memory commensurate with her power and grandeur. He laid the foundation of such a great tomb and where Mumtaz Mahal's body was shifted. 'Strong armed laborers dug deep till the water level was reached. Expert builders were engaged in this work.⁹

They filled the foundation with lime mortar up to ground level. It was interconnected via highly efficient system of large arches, making it an almost monolithic, moving plinth on which the massive tomb could be securely based. According to the court historian – the plinth of the Tomb on which the main base of the tomb was built is called “chameli-e-farsh,” which was like a garden of heaven and represented a great place. Great artisans from across the empire, such as sang-tarash (stone-cutters), sada-kars (plain carvers), pacchi karigar (inlayers) and munbatkar (carvers of miniature style designs) were gathered to work on this project. The red stone was carved so neatly. Carving and other arts were wonderfully on display. These stones were so closely intertwined that their joints could not be seen even on fine observation.

According to Lahauri, contemporary historian and an eyewitness, skilled artisans were sought from all over the country and abroad. Artisans from Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujarat and Punjab, apart from the local areas of the Jamuna-Chambal region participated in this work. *According to Tavernier rough estimate, about 20000 skilled and unskilled workers were engaged for about 22 years. From 1631-53 AD they worked on this huge project.*

In Padshahnama we find details like the name of skilled craftsmen, their expertise, place of origin, and monthly salary. For example-Ata Muhammad Sang-tarash (stone cutter) from Bukhara The cutter), Shakir Muhammad Gul-tarash (Carver) from Multan to Bukhara Muhammad Sajjadam'imar (Mason) and Chiranji laI pachhikar (Inlayer) from Lahore were paid Rs 500,400,590 and Rs 800 per month respectively.¹⁰

The stone-cutters and carvers of Taj came from Bukhara which is famous for stonework. It is worth mentioning that they were paid such a high monthly salary to skilled craftsmen at a time when gold was sold at Rs 15 per tola, i.e. sometimes more than 50 tolas to artisans to skilled builders and artists. A specific type of work was assigned to the Mir-Imarat (manager of the project) to complete this exquisite task. The fixed amount was distributed to the artisans working under him.

Thus, Ata Muhammad and Shakir Muhammad were the only contractors who belonged to Bukhara. Stone-cutters and carvers from the Jamuna-Chambal region and Rajasthan worked under them. Ustad Isa Afandi was the head of the draftsman department came from Shiraz (Iran). The artists for preparing various ground plans and garden maps and for guiding the builders worked under him and received 1000 rupees per month. AbdulHaq, Amanat Khan Shirazi, (calligrapher) who was himself an expert artist and headed the department of calligraphers, wrote inscriptions in beautiful style on paper in real size. Which was later transferred onto stone slabs and dug up by inlay workers and they also got 1000 rupees per month for this work. Ran Mal was a garden designer from Kashmir. Peera, master carpenter from Delhi, dome-builders, masons, stone-cutters, carvers and inlayers worked under Ismail Khan Rumi. According to QadirZaman Khan Rumi – every worker working in the project was a master in his work.

Three types of stones were used in the TajMahal: semi-precious stones such as aqeeq (agate). Yemeni turquoise (turquoise).Lazward (lapis lazuli).Coral (Coral) Agate (Onyx).Lahusnia (cat's eye). Tamara (garnet), jasmine (jade) and petunia (blood stone) used for inlay; Rare and unusual stones like Tilai (Goldstone), Pai-Zahhar (Poison-Mohra), Ajooba (Wonder Stone). Abrikhattu (a type of agate), nakhod and makhnatis (magnet stones) used mainly in bold inlays and mosaics on floors, exterior shingles and bastions; and common stones: Sang-e-Gwaliari (grey and yellow sandstone), Sang-e-Surkh (red sandstone), Sang-e-Musa (black slate) and Sang-e-Rukham (Sang-e-Marmar, white marble) that were used for foundation, masonry and exterior surface finishes.Red stone was brought from neighboring cities such as FatehpurSikri, White marble was procured from Makrana (Rajasthan) and was duly paid for. Semi-precious and rare stones sometimes were brought from as far away as Upper Tibet, Kumaon, Jaisalmer, Cambay, and Ceylon.

According to Persian text(numbers) with stone names, such as

'Aqeeq 340, Lajward 240, coral 147, Sulaimani 559, Lashsunia 52, Tamra 398, Ajuba 850, Yashab 54, Pitunia 542 and Maknatsa 77. These figures do not reflect the number of stones in each case, which would be a very low figure for such a large project. These figures, represent a feriorderie (pile), each a cubazira (=32"). This represents the tank (a weight) in terms of precious stones. Also, provide theoretical qualitative tables used by the department.¹¹

Core of the building is made of bricks with stone reinforced according to a header-and-stretcher system. Bricks were manufactured locally and given chemical properties to strengthen them, such as jaggery (sugarcane juice preparation), batashe (sugar-bubbles), belgiri-pani, urad-

pulse, curd, jute, and kankar (sugar-bubbles). Fossil (clay pieces) were mixed with lime mortar to make it a perfect cementing agent.

Funds for the construction were provided from the imperial treasury of the Emperor. Accounts were maintained with Lala Rudra Das, by Anna and Pai. The cost of a precious stone installed in the main tomb and the wages of the artisans etc. were accounted for by him only. A separate account was kept of how much was spent on different parts of the building.

According to Nath that lahuri mention in Padshahnama ---For example, white marble plinth (called chakka) with four minarets cost 51,77,674-7anan-6pai, main tomb Rs53,45,361-10-0, inlay work And the white marble curtains around the cenotaph in the main hall cost 4,68,855-2-6 thus about 50 thousand tolas i.e. 466.55 kg of gold was put in the TajMahal and the total cost of the TajMahal was Rs. 18,48,426-7-6 (Rupees four crore, eighteen lakh, forty-eight thousand, four hundred twenty-six, and six rupees and seven aane). This is in addition to the cost of 40000tola (466.55 kg) of gold supplied by the royal treasury. The cost of wooden and brass doors, brass chains for the rear, gold-plated Kalash (last), and sandalwood coffin (for keeping the dead bodies) are also given. Curiously, we come to the cost of three sets of tomb stones. While two sets exist, the third is contained in a dungeon which is now permanently closed for the reasons Architecture of Taj Mahal'”

In the Taj complex, there are several complexes to the south and north. The city of Agra was originally named Mumtazabad, with the establishment of squares (squares), bazaars (bazaars), (sarais), and residences as well as open spaces. It is known as Taj Ganj at present. On the other hand, at a much lower level, is the main chowk (court) of the Taj, which is connected to the settlement by a road.

Main mausoleum is situated on a white marble platform, which is 328'-3" in height from the chameli-e-farsh. It is higher than Akbar's and Itmaduddaullah's tombs. Taj adjusted in perfect proportion with the superstructure and helps to give the building an extremely lofty and imposing height and a pleasing vertical which is the basic component of its beautiful effect. The tomb is in a rectangular area; surrounded by high walls on the eastern, southern, and western sides (the northern side is open to the river). On southern, there is main entrance of the Taj Mahal and the monumental two-story building. On eastern and northern sides, there are symmetrical gardens and in the middle of the building there is Roza of great emperors.

Mausoleum stands to its north. Garden is abundant with flowers and the velvet lawns are so soft that visitors sit comfortably and admire it. Roses in bloom in the ***According to Percy Brown Taj Complex are famous for their beauty honed in various flower shows. On one side of Taj, Nursery is developed. This is known as Khan-e-Alam nursery. The task of this nursery was given to Mirza Barkhurdar, a great man who lived during the time of Akbar the Great. He was given the title of Khan-e-Alam” by Jahangir.***¹²

In Islamic style of architecture, garden is not just another feature. It has a well-defined meaning and symbolizes spirituality. According to Holy Quran - A garden is symbol of paradise. It is believed that there are four rivers in paradise, one of water, other of milk, third of wine and fourth of honey. From this concept CharBagh style of garden planning took its roots.

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا
الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ
مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

SURAH BAQRA AYAT NO 25

‘God has promised to believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss is the good pleasure of God, that is, the supreme felicity.’¹³

Water was drawn from the river, filled in several stages, and stored in three overhead tanks. Water was brought to the tomb from garden Khan-e-Alam through a huge pipe. Diameter of the pipe was 9” inches. There was a separate series of the fountain for the north-south canal and lotus pond. A simple method was adopted to ensure uniform and low pressure of water in the fountain, regardless of the distance from the main and the outflow of water. Fountain pipes were connected to the water supply only through pitchers. Water was used to fill the pitcher first and flowed into the fountain simultaneously. Thus the fountain was controlled by the pressure of the pitcher and not by the pressure in the main pipe as the water in the pot was evenly distributed at all times.



Entrance Gateway of the Taj: Main gateway of the Taj

Taj Mahal is the best quote of splendid decoration and aesthetic architecture. Its entrance, Mehman Khana, and the mosque are made of red stone. Main building made of white marble enhances the beauty of Taj Mahal. The marvelous white marble mausoleum placed in the middle of the beautiful garden attracts tourists from all over the world which is notable for its aesthetic looks. The center is octagonal, with 4 passages opening at 4 main points. The exact orientation of the tomb is close to the heavenly vision of the Mughals, who focused on geometric accuracy.

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Shahjahan used Islamic vision in the creation of the Taj. The central part of the TajMahal is the most sacred place. The visitor is in a place without spatial context, which enhances his perception of being in heaven. According to the Qur'an, eight pishtaqs define heaven, similarly in the TajMahal has an external pishtaqa, Taj Mahal plinth is square base essentially cube with chamfered edges, rough ally 55 meters on each side. On the long side,a massive pishtaq (or vaulted archway), frames the iwan, with a similar arch shaped balcony above. These main arches extend above the roof of the building by use of integrated faces. On either side of the main arch, additional pishtaq are stacked above and below. This motif of stacked pishtaq is replicated on the chamfered corner areas. The design is completely symmetrical on all sides of the height of main pishtaq is 35 meters decorated with beautiful calligraphy. Surah Yassn inscribed on this gate which is known as heart of Quran.



Main Iwan of the Taj

Sunlight illuminates the tomb from the balcony screens and the left ledges at the corners of the dome; the walls of each chamber are highly decorated with dado bas reliefs, intricate lapidary inlays, and sophisticated calligraphic panels, which look over the exterior of the complex. The tombs are covered with an octagonal marble screen or lattice panel, which determines the boundary of the tomb. Each panel is carefully carved. The rest of the surfaces are inlaid with semi-precious stones in extremely delicate detail, adding vines, fruits, and flowers.

Interior:

Its interior plan is composed of a central octagonal hall.58ft in diameter and 80ft in height. It has octagonal rooms at the four corners of the first floor connected by a gallery all trough the way. On the first floor, such octagonal rooms were repeated. Except the entrance of the southern side the arches of marble are filled with small glass pieces and a similar type of work has been done on the outside walls of the tomb. The pieces have been very skillfully placed which reflects the talent of the artisans of the time. The architecture that can be worked on to produce such amazing effects is incredibly except for entrance on the southern side, the hall's arches are in small portions. It is closed by marble screens which are filled with pieces of glass. Three-dimensional geometric decoration and central inlaid form highlight the interior of the dome. Light falling like

sunlight can be considered a symbol of the presence of the divine light of Allah inside the emperor's tomb. Milky light emerges from these glass pieces, which gives a feeling of coolness in heat. This characteristic features the interior as well as the atmosphere creating an illusory romantic feeling. The architecture that can be worked on to create such amazing effects is unbelievable. Appropriate stones have been used and emphasis is given to each studded flower and leaf. The border provides a delicate frame to the Kalash or flowerpot. The decoration of the tomb is minimal and discreet, with relief carvings of semi-precious and rare stones in white marble and highly refined jali work. Panels of dados feature beautiful floral compositions in high relief with stylized patterns inlaid.

In each case, it is a simple beautiful plant design made of slender twigs, curved leaves, and bold flowers, which are depicted as a bouquet from a simple plant with its twigs emerging in a curvy shape with its dominant influence harmonizes wonderfully. Most pleasing is the correlation between the art of chisel and the art of inlay. Each dado is rendered splendidly and truly like a Mughal miniature. These basic reliefs of the Taj are unmatched by any other specimen of its class.



Dome:

Taj Mahal's dome played an important role to increase its attraction. Dome is about 35 meters in height as it is based on a cylindrical drum which is about 7 meters in height. Due to its shape, the dome is often called an onion dome. Its glide finial on top of the dome holds its special place with traditional Persian and Hindu decorative elements. **According to EbaKock–purngahata motif inspired by a further source ,namely the baluster columns of the Buddhist and Hindu architecture of Eastern India¹⁴** The reason for giving such an unusual height of its dome was to enhance the beauty of the Taj to the highest grandeur. The mausoleum is octagonal. This octagonal tomb from the dome to the passage symbolically represents the path from earth to heaven

وَأَمَّا عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ نُّجْمٌ

*According to the Qur'an, four angels support the divine throne, and they will be eight on the Day of Judgment. Finally, the function of the dome is to represent heaven to the soul of the deceased*¹⁵ This dome is surrounded by very beautiful Chhatris at all four angles, which, despite being sufficiently separate, seem to be attached to it. The builders had learned a lot from Humayun's tomb, in that the Chhatris look very different from the dome, but in the TajMahal, they calculated the distance between two Chhatris very carefully and presented them in such a way that both of them are intertwined with each other. The dome is always seen alone and is seen with umbrellas amidst a cluster of spires. It is this five jewel scheme of the superstructure that endows Taj with such impeccable grace and impact.

The dome is crowned by a gilded spire or finial. The finial was made of gold until the early 1800s and is now made of bronze. The finial provides a clear example of the integration of traditional Persian and Hindu decorative elements. The finial consists of a moon, an atypical Islamic motif, whose horn point is the heavenly ward. Because of this, the points are combined to form the trident shape. Whereas the reverse lotus represents knowledge in Hindu religious texts and the spiritual core represents the rise and continual expansion. This is due to blooming in water, which as per Hindu beliefs is a metaphor for life on earth, being born in a favorable environment.



Minarets:

Traditionally, Minarets are the elements of the mosque where Mozin calls for prayer. Each minaret is effectively divided into three equal parts by two balconies which are located on top of the tower. The top of the tower has a Chhatri with a finial. The roofs of the minarets have a lotus design over which is gilded. Each minaret was constructed slightly outward from the plinth, to prevent collapse. *The brackets bring a rhythmic play of light and shadow and render the otherwise black and white marble minarets adorned like bracelets on the arms of a beautiful lady.*¹⁶The minaret has a distinctive crown feature of Mughal architecture. The isolated minaret at the corners of the crown of the Taj was systematically discovered here as a result of a sudden miraculous inspiration. In many Mughal architectures we can see the Chhatris. Like in SherShahSoori at Sasaram(c1545) has identical separate Chhatris on all and Sheikh MohammadGaurh at Gwalior and specially Akbar's tomb has two minarets but Four fully-fledged minarets appear for the first time at its main entrance. Each minaret is circular and as it rises it shrinks. Their purpose was purely decorative.

Calligraphy



calligraphy of the Taj

The inscriptions around the arches of the TajMahal are generally assumed to be larger and larger than the top. However, upon closer examination, they are found to be of a similar size. Instead, the letters are densely engraved on the bottom, with a slightly flat surface in the middle; The inscription becomes more and more sparse as it rises up with a more flat surface between the letters. The depreciation of flat surfaces has been calculated correctly. Thus, the optical perspective of the letters is reconciled, and unmistakable. It is said that TajMahalwas created as a symbol of love. This belief persisted until the end of the twentieth century when historians learned a little more on the monument and discovered a different symbolism.



Jali

Tajmahal jail inlay

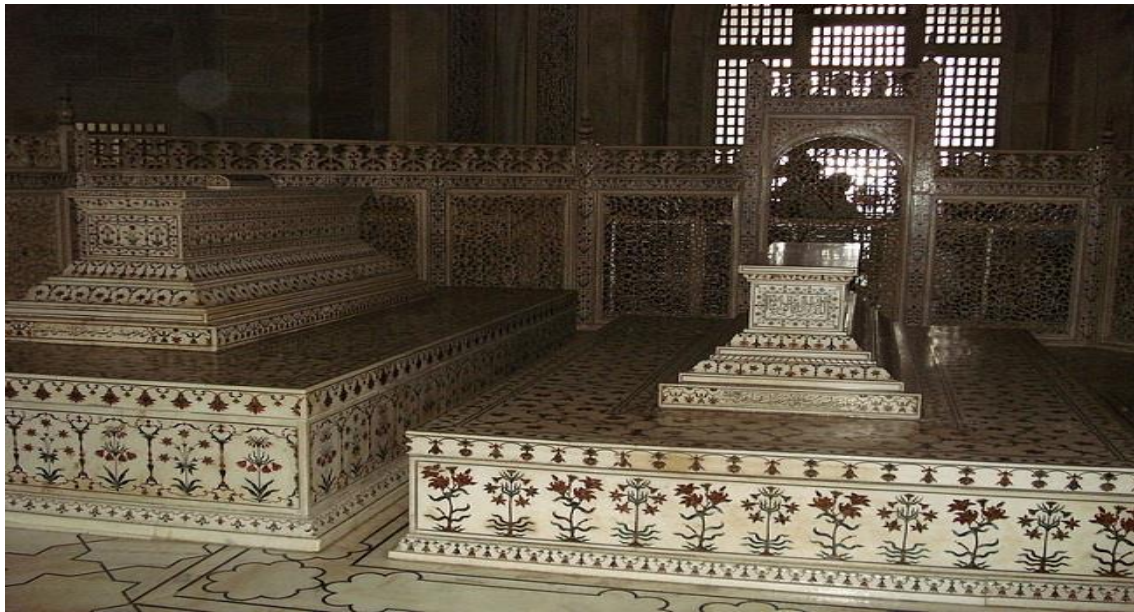
The interior of the Taj Mahal is very rich with traditional decorative elements. It would not be an exaggeration to say that this chamber is the jewel of the TajMahal. The inlay work here is not pietradura but a "painting" of colored stone, but lapidary. (Relating to engraving, cutting, polishing of stone and games) Every decorative element on the exterior of the tomb is defined by the art of a jeweler

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Pietra dura or inlay work of Cenotaph

The inner chamber of the Taj Mahal is an octagon, which houses the tombs of Mumtaz and Shah Jahan. It is a masterpiece of artistic craftsmanship, the example of which is hard to find. While each entrance is equally furnished, only the south (garden side) door is used for entry. As *Ferguson has rightly said, no words can express its immaculate beauty, seen in the tender gloom of the subdued light coming from a distant and half-closed opening. The screen of marble tracery around the tombs is a masterpiece in itself. Despite all the artistic resources that Shah Jahan had, it was a work of ten years. In the center is Mumtaz Mahal lies. The white marble of his tomb blooms with a never-ending garden of Persian flowers, created by the magic of Mughal artists*



Graves of Shahjahan & Mumtaz Mahal

Graves:

The original tombs of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal are built under unpaved ground (Kacchi Qabrein) according to Islamic customs. Shahjahan did not want the final resting place of his beloved queen to be defiled by hostile traitorous rulers. When Shahjahan was

imprisoned by Aurangzeb, he sealed the secret plan by burying Shahjahan next to his mother. Although MumtazMahal was very much in love with Shahjahan and Shah Jahan also wanted his tomb to be built near the tomb of MumtazMahal. When Shahjahan died, his eldest daughter, Jahanara Begum, along with some of her loyal nobles took Shahjahan's body in a boat on the Jamna River and buried near MumtazMahal, and later Shah Jahan's death was announced. This secret work was done because Aurangzeb did not want Shahjahan to be buried in the TajMahal.

Mumtaz's grave is placed right in the center of the inner chamber. The base of which is a small marble sarcophagus about 4.9 by 8.2 feet and both the coffins are elaborately studded with precious and semi-precious gems. The calligraphic inscriptions on Mumtaz's coffin identify and praise her. On the cover of the coffin, there is a raised rectangular lozenge i.e. a writing tablet. According to Islamic tradition, elaborate decoration of tombs is prohibited, so the original graves of Mumtaz and Shah Jahan have also been made raw. 99 names have been written.

Aesthetics of the Taj -----

The Taj is crown, the jewel of Indian architecture which is very close to the great concepts of the Persian builders, as it is a unique example of the world. That takes this idea of individuality further than any other Mughal monument. The Taj represents the highest development towards individualism in art. *According to E.B .Havell "The beauty of the Taj, as in all GreatArt, lies in its simplicity."*¹⁷

*Taj meant to be a feminine. Its concept, and every line and detail of it, express the intention of the designers. It expresses the beauty of Mumtaz Mahal, which still resides on the banks of the gleaming Jamuna, early in the morning, in the blazing afternoon sun, or in the silver-silver light. Or rather, we should say, it expresses a brief idea; It is a great tribute to Indian womanhood and also known as Venus de Milo of the East.*¹⁸

TajMahal is a unique building from Aesthetic point of view. Its main beauty is that entrance gate, guest house, mosque made of red stone while the main building is made of white marble. The dome, minaret, Iwan, garden calligraphy, geometric designs etc, is aesthetically pleasing and increases the beauty of the Taj.

The proportions of the buildings, materials are filled with symbols of the TajMahal starting with the layout of the complex and reflecting the proficiency of every individual engaged in the construction work. It's architecture and design provide material for students and researchers interested in symbolism in art.

According to historians, in front of the Taj Mahal, Shahjahan wanted a black-colored Taj Mahal to be built for himself, whose place had also been decided, but before that his son Aurangzeb had imprisoned him and this dream of Shah Jahan remained unfulfilled.

Conclusion:

Taj Mahal was not only built as a monument per se. It was conceptualized as a spiritual building made in the memory of his beloved wife with a view to fulfill her last wish. It reflects the interests of Emperor Shahjahan for architecture. This is an important quote of Indo-Persian-Islamic elements and beauty of love. Even after four Centuries, this symbol is radiating its glory to the world In the form of TajMahal his love for his beloved Mumtaz Mahal has been immortalized.

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