
Analyzing the Persian Influence on Akbar's Ideology

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Abstract

Akbar was born to Humayun and Hamida Banu Begam and his mother was daughter of Persian Shia. When his father was vanquished by Sher Shah Suri, he made a run to Iran where he was treated princely and he was wonderstruck and felt amazed at Persian art and architecture and praised the work of Persian a--rtisans and craftsmen and asked them if they would work in his Mughal Empire. Akbar from his childhood only had a religious bent of mind and had adopted religious tolerance towards other religions. In spite of being a Mughal emperor, he was extremely influenced by Persian culture, literature and architecture like his father. He had adopted this policy for the betterment of Mughal Empire and the people of India.

Keywords: Akbar, Persian Influence, Mughal Art & Architecture

Introduction

Akbar was influenced by many religions like Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism etc, but he was most influenced by Persian religion because of its architecture, art, religious ceremonies, its rituals and rites. His mother was a Persian Shia so it was must that he would be impressed by the Persian religion. Indo - Persian culture flourished cheek by jowl during the period of Mughal Empire and led the golden age of Indo-Persian culture to the art and architecture of Mughal era. It had been a language of Mughal till the demise of the cruel Aurangzeb. This culture began to amalgamate and mingle with the native Indian segments and a marked Indo-Persian culture emerged characterized by Mughal style arts paintings and architecture. He himself was a booster of art and culture, so he had an athenaeum which consisted of volumes written in Persian, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, Urdu, etc. With this, he advanced the growth of a hefty, vigorous and firm economy, accelerating to commercial diffusion and greater promotion of delicacy.

Persian Influence on Akbar

Truly Persian has been persisted as the common language of private correlation and a badge of culture in India. When Islam set its foot in Persia and the teachings of the holy Quran spread commonly, Persian notions even got proficiency of demonstrating in

Arabic.¹Persians were the only ones who occupied themselves in maintaining knowledge and penned down the analytical scholarly works. Hence, the most evident Persian ancestor furnished among non-Persians is literary.²To some extent, the Parsi society attained appreciable notability during the reign of Akbar. It is said that their beginning was from Gujarat only as their ascendants had established there while approaching India. "During Akbar reign *Dastur* taught Akbar the customs and conventions of this creed, he was so much fascinated that he was contemplated as having become a convert to faith of Zarathrusth. He was alleged to have accepted the *sadra* and *kusti* worn by Parsi." Akbar was utterly honest in his devotion to the Parsi religion.³

Persian Influence on Architecture During Akbar's Reign

There is no uncertainty that architecture outstretched the zenith of its glory during the Mughal rule and it is fusion of Persian and Indian style. It is contended mixture of Hindu and Muslim architecture. The tomb of Humayun is one of the marvelous buildings in Delhi which was constructed after Humayun's demise by his companion Hamida Banu Begam. It was accomplished by renowned Persian builder Malik Mirza Ghiyas and was finished or carried by Indian craftsmen and it is an elegant example of the blend of Indo-Persian tradition.⁴ It was from his mother that he innate stately manners, his amity for literature and arts are artlessly contentment in philosophical consideration. In fact, where a famous Fatehpur Sikri was founded in 1571, the city known by the name of *Fathabad* was Persian name. Even in Akbar's rule, the city which is in Sikandara had a voluminous Persian verses registered in it and were accomplished by *Abdal-Haqq-Shirazi*.⁵ With the accretion of Akbar, Mughal architecture acceded towering glory, and the monuments of his religion which have been bestowed to the succeeding generations fully approve the stated Abul Fazl and while he still clunged to Persian ideas rooted from his mother, natural inclination towards Hinduism, connected with his predetermined policy of obligating his Hindu subjects to the sovereign authority directed him to bring out the styles of architecture in his several buildings and some of them were Jahangir Mahal in Agra Fort, buildings at Fatehpur Sikri

¹ Muhammad, Zia-ud-din; Kaleamullah Barech; Sadia Barech, *Persian language and literature during the reign of Akbar* [online] URL- <https://www.questia.com>; Journal of Asian Civilization

² Yasik Suleman, Jonathen Owens Mouten de Gruyten; *Arabic as a minority language, 1990* [online]; Arabic in the Fray: language ideology and cultural politics; Edinburgh university press, 2013

³Edwardes. S.M, C.S.I, C.V.D and Garrett H.L.O, *Mughal rule in India*; 1979, Asian Publication Services, New Delhi, India, p.305

⁴Sonali, *Features and development of architecture during Mughal period/2854*[online] URL- <http://www.historydiscussion.net>

⁵The reign of Akbar, 1556-1605; *Islamic Architecture*, [online] URL- <https://islamicart.com/literary/empires/India/Akbar.html>

etc.⁶On the other hand Akbar's Persian alliances are characterized in the renowned burial chamber of Humayun at Old Delhi which was completed in 1569.⁷

Persian Influence on Literature During Akbar's Reign

During Akbar's reign the religious literature was highly advanced and was at its highest glory. The religious literature was rewritten into Persian language from other languages like *Turkish, Sanskrit, Chaghatai* and *Arabic*. At the same time, poetry accessed eye-catching place in Persian literature and due to this only, the approach to voice the love of artistry and nature was equipped. *Ain-i-Akbari* has enrolled the names of 59 leading Persian poets who adored the advocacy of Akbar. This was the aeon of many famed writings in Persian language. *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* penned by *Abul Fazl*. The brother of *Abul Fazl*, *Faizi* was a prodigious poet of Persia and was responsible for the rephrasing of many Sanskrit works in Persian.⁸He unruffled both in Persia as well as Arabic and was a mastery prose writer. Collectively, Akbar's reign was golden era of both Persian and Hindi poetry in India.⁹During the reign of Akbar, Persianized form of Hindi namely called, Urdu was gradually developed as a convenient way of communication between the foreigners and the inhabitants which almost similar to that of Persian as spoken in India.¹⁰

Persian Influence on the Art During Akbar's Reign

During Akbar's reign art had a scores of jumbles. The new style brought an improved significance in the subject matter. Persian technique of art was initiated by Akbar and Abdus Samad in India. Conventional Persian painting had been perturbed mainly with the analogy of scholarly standard such as *Yusuf Va Zulaykya*.¹¹During his reign we acquit mixture of both Indian and Persian styles of painting which gained the Mughal form. This expansion of painting is advertised in *Turkish-i-Khandam-e-Taimuyia* and *Akbarnama*.¹²The blend of two styles of Persian and Indian can be marked in the miniature of *tarikh-e-Khandan-i-Timur* and miniature of *Badshahnama*. In his court, there were at least one hundred admirable painters and many of them were Persians.¹³The offshoot was the designing from 1570-1585 the wall of Akbar's new capital by collective workers of Persian and Indian Painters, who may have resumed their work in a solitary state, were yet exclusively assimilating advance objectives and fascinating building a regular school of Indo- Persian art. The resources of life in the

⁶ Edwardes .S.M,C.S.I.C.V.D and Garrett H.L.O, *Mughal rule in India*; 1979, Asian Publication services, New Delhi, India, p305

⁷ Smith, Vincent Arthur(1962), *Akbar The Great Mogul: 1542-1605*, Delhi: S. Chand, p.435

⁸*Literature in Mughal empire*; URL- <http://www.historytution.com/medieval-India>; [online] Infotech Pvt. Ltd

⁹ Burke. S.M; *Akbar the greatest Mogul*; first published in 1989, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi;110055

¹⁰ Vincent, A. Smith, C.I.E, *Akbar The Mogul 1542-1605*, New Delhi, Vinod Publications, P.8

¹¹The reign of Akbar, 1556-1605; *Islamic architecture* [online], URL- <https://islamicart.com/literary/empires/India/Akbar.html>

¹²*Development of Mughal Painting*; [online]; URL- <https://www.google.com/amp/s/skyskool.com/development-mughal-painting>

¹³Mondal Santanu; *History of Mughal empire*; [online] ; URL- <https://www.importantindia.com/5267/architecture-during-mughal-period-of-Akbar>; 9 October,2013

Mughal court were managed on the Persian model. The Persian master most closely coupled with Indian branch of the school founded by Akbar was *Bihzad of Heart*, the peer of Babur. The main subject, two men and woman seated among purely conventional rocks, is in the older Persian style.

Persian Influence on Religious Policy

As his father, Humayun brought Persian influence and like that Akbar encouraged it and it gave Akbar a starting point for his demonstration. To make the strategies of Mughal Empire affluent, Todar Mal, the finance minister ordered for the use of Persians the language of record throughout the empire.¹⁴ It is said that in the deliberation of religious topics by scholars like Parsis and Jains, his confidence in Islam was flustered. Due to this, he thought of finding new religion and that was *Din-i-Ilahi* which was most of the Persian influence. He was swayed by the Parsi religion; he began to present himself in the crowd before the sun and the fire and ordered all his attendants to rise respectfully when the lamps were at eventide.¹⁵ He also adopted the names of Persian months and celebrated 14 Persian festivals.¹⁶ At the beginning of the 29th year of reign, there were commemorations and religious festivals. He pronounced the celebration a new era known as '*Divine era*'. It was based on the Persian solar calendar. It was due to Persian influence and was caused by his passion to scrap the Islamic Hijri era.¹⁷

Conclusion

Though Akbar was influenced by many religions and culture, for example, he esteemed the sun and the light after Hindu and Parsee was in vogue, he respected the canvas and images of Christ and maiden Mary, accomplished non-injury of the Jains but it was Persian culture which influenced him the most.¹⁸ He was influenced by the immense culture and riots of Persia. He was known as *Farr-i-Ijadi* which means (light of god) and this concept of light is derived from Persian language which means there was Persian influence on him. To maintain the calmness and order in a conventional and humanly assorted empire, he adopted such culture and policies with which he vanquishes the pillar or support of non-Muslim subjects. Expressing through Indo-Persian culture, he earned for himself a divine status and also established a sacred religion called *Din-i-Ilahi*. Abul Fazl and Faizi, (brother of Abul Fazl) the two most renowned scholar of Akbar's court were also responsible for the influence of Persian on him. There was a great influence of Akbar's adopting Persian culture, like the religious policies, economic policies, art and architecture, *Din-i-Ilahi* and it changed the course of history. Because of his ideal cultural synthesis and religious diversity Akbar reserved a unique place for himself in Indian history.

¹⁴ Sharma, Sri Ram; *The religious policy of the Mughal Emperors*; first published in 1940, Munshiram Manohar Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Third Edition, 1988, , New Delhi, 110055, p23

¹⁵ Smith, Vincent Arthur (1962), *Akbar The Great Mogul: 1542-1605*, Delhi: S. Chand pp.162-4

¹⁶ Singh Amit Kumar, , *Persian influence on Mughal Empire*, shabd-brahm [online] available at www.Shabd-brahm.com

¹⁷ Srivastava, A.d; *Akbar The Great*, 1062, Shiva Lal Agarwala, p.302

¹⁸ Ibid, p.470

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