Chapter - III
RISE OF ARABIC AND PERSIAN CALLIGRAPHY IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

The period of medieval India starts with the coming of Muslims in India from 11th century onwards. When India came under the rule of Muslim rulers, this naturally entailed a change in official language. The official languages were Arabic and Persian, in medieval India, under Muslim rule. One important reason for selection was of Arabic, the ‘Holy Quran’, which was revealed in Arabic and read and written in sacred Arabic script. This resulted in progressive development of Arabic calligraphy not only in India but also in Muslim countries of the world. It was patronized and encouraged by the rulers, nobles, and intelligentsia belonging to Muslim faith.\(^1\)

With the development of Arabic and Persian calligraphy the use of the art of Sanskrit calligraphy still continued to flourish in the domain of religious texts and Hindu literature during Sultanate and Mughal’s periods. The Muslim rulers generally followed the policy to encourage both the Hindu and Muslim arts and traditions in the Indian subcontinent. They patronized traits of culture generally and helped in its expansion and development. They introduced many notable changes and innovation in the social and cultural fields.\(^2\)

The Urdu language is an amiable mixture of many languages such as Persian, Arabic, Hindi and Turkish. Urdu developed mostly because of fusion of the Indian and Islamic cultures during the Sultanate and Mughals periods. Similarly
modern Hindi was developed due to addition of Sanskrit and prakrit grammar and vocabulary in traditional Hindi along with words borrowed from Persian and Arabic. Thus it progressed identically with Urdu.  

**Arabic Calligraphy:**

Arabic script is derived from the Aramaic Nabataean alphabet. Arabic belongs to the group of Semitic alphabetical scripts in which mainly the consonants are represented. Arabic lettering has achieved a high level of sophistication. Moreover inscriptions are found incorporated in the decoration of almost very Islamic work, and in that a large number of objects and articles innumerable designs and styles were used.

In this way Arabic calligraphy developed into a very important and flourishing art, and found important part in devotional activities of Islam. It was regarded one of the best means by which the divine word of God can be recorded or displayed. It has all aspects of creative expression in Muslim culture, including art and architecture. Arabic is an important international language spoken and used in many countries in Middle and Far East, Asia and Africa, and Africa possesses rich literature. It is the script of the Muslim’s holy book, ‘the Quran’.

Arabic calligraphy has naturally become the most reverend form of Islamic art. It provides a link between the languages of the Muslims with the religion of Islam. The holy book of Islam ‘Al-Quran’ has played an important role in the development and evolution of the Arabic Language, and expansion of calligraphy in the Arabic alphabet. Famous Islamic artists have created specimens in Arabic calligraphy of supreme quality. Even today,
we come across with elegant Arabic calligraphy in the form of the proverbs, verses, from the HADITH and passages from the Holy Quran. In modern times Arabic literature of Islamic calligraphy is still known as a flourishing Islamic art business.

Muslims believe that the Quran is a composite record of words of God delivered to Prophet Muhammad through inspired revelations. These revelations were mediated through the angel Gabriel to the prophet at Mecca and Medina between 610 to 632 till Muhammad (PBUH) death.\textsuperscript{5}

**The Origin and Development of Arabic Calligraphy:**

Arabic script has developed in a comparatively brief span of time and is comprised of most frequently used alphabet, and today it stands second in use only to the Roman alphabet.

Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca in 570 AD. In 610 at the age of forty, Muhammad (P.B.H.) went to a mountain cave called Hira outside Mecca, for devotional purposes. It was there that he received his first revelation which comprised the five verses of Sura 96 The Clot (Al-Alaq) of the Holy Quran. The fact that the revelations had come to the prophet Muhammad in Arabic, along with the high status accorded to the language in the Quran, created a new prestige for the Arabic language its written form and visual expression, since no other book could matched the Quran in its holiness being God’s eternal word – the ‘Quran’ elevated the status of all Arabic books including art of its writing. There are many examples to highlight the chief developments that took place in the art and practice of copying Islam’s sacred text between the seventh and the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{6}
The Arabs were the late comers in their writing system in contrast to other nations such as Egypt, Babylon and China etc. But now Arabic alphabets are popular and wide by used in the world today and Arabic language is the second language in terms of use in the world, though it developed at a much later date. The late development of Arabic language was due to many reasons such as the people of Arabs were mainly nomadic and they were not having any tradition of keeping, written records and relied heavily on oral traditions and memory. They were great poets and lovers of poetry but did not generally like writing.

According to their traditions they hung some inscribed golden letters on the wall of Kaaba. Even after the advent of Islam, the verses of Quran in Arabic were usually transmitted orally instead of written form. But when the art of writing became common among Arabs then they started and developed written form and soon in the art of writing they surpassed the world. They not only made their script beautiful, and developed a system of calligraphy which contained their best artistic talents.

The holy prophet of Islam Muhammad (P.B.H) also advocated the importance of knowledge of learning he said “Allah created pen for bestowing knowledge upon Adam by telling him the names of things.”

Allah says in the holy Quran in Sura 2‘Al-Baqra’ (The Cow) all the names of these things were narrated by ADAM to angels.

Again in Sura- 96 ‘Al-Alaq’ (The Clot) He says “Read and the Lord is most Bounteous who teaches by the pen teach man that which he knows not.”
Allah taught Adam in paradise use of a pen and he taught him names of things there. Islam gives importance to pen, because pen is a source of seeking knowledge and collecting and dispersing it in the form of written words which exists forever.

Allah gives emphasises on the need of seeking knowledge in Sura 68 ‘Al Qalam’ (The pen) and exhorts people to read.

The origin of Arabic calligraphy had different theories based on legendary and metaphysical hypothesis but the inscriptions which were discovered in North peninsula of Arab made it clear that it had divinely inspired origin.  

**Divinely inspired origin:**

According to this theory origin of Arabic writing is purely divine and is bestowed by God who taught Adam all names.

**Ancient Egyptian Origin:**

This theory says that Arabic script is derived from it Hieroglyphic writing of Egypt. It is the oldest link known between Arabic and ancient Egyptians writing. Hieroglyphic writing was modified and improved by the Phoenicians who introduced alphabets which they taught to Arabs and Greeks in the 16th century BC. Then it was spread in Europe.

**Modern Theory:** According to this theory, the Arabs became familiar with writing only when they migrated from rural areas to the more civilized parts of the Arabian Peninsula, and started to live in a more advanced fashion. The Arabs established a kingdom, invented a script when the kingdom disappeared at the end of the second century A.D. the script moved forward to north of Arabia.
It has been recorded that the first person to adorn with the idea of painting and illumination of the written words was the conquering lion of God Ali Ibn Abi Talib fourth caliph and son in law of the prophet. The Holy Quran was revealed to the Holy prophet Mohammad (P.B.H). It was the first book that was revealed in the Arabic language. Before this, all the divine books and scriptures were revealed in Hebrew.

With the spread of Islam in different countries of the world the art of Arabic calligraphy was also spread widely and developed far and wide with the progress and development of Islam. Not only copying of the Quran was done through of calligraphy but various hadeeth(s) of the prophet(s) were also written in different forms of calligraphy. The sayings of the holy prophet(s) presented among his followers in a very ornate and beautiful manner that could attract reader’s attention more keenly. So that considered an easy way to attracts people’s attention towards religion and knowing about its principles and qualities of God who created all this universe.

Arabic calligraphy acquired a sublime reputation for being the Devine, moral and artistic representation of Islamic faith and arts. The contributions of calligraphers and their legacies still remain today. The rules governing the use of scripts, the writing techniques, and the entire calligraphic culture the scripts generated are a valued part of the heritage of the Islamic world. The calligraphers used different methods to make Arabic script more easy and beautiful in writing. This process of making the script more beautiful and easy gave birth to different styles. Some of the styles become very popular and famous. They are described below.
(i) **Kufian Script (plate 3.1)**

The Kufian script is the first of those calligraphy scripts to gain popularity. It was angular, and specific proportional measurements made of squares and short horizontal strokes, long verticals and bold compact circles. For three centuries, this script was mainly used to copy the Quran. In early times kufian was a dominant priestly script. It was created after the establishment of two Muslim cities of Basra and Kufa in the second decade of Islamic era around 8th century AD. It became known as al-khat-al-kufi. Kufian script had a profound effect on all Islamic calligraphy. This script chosen to use on oblong surfaces with its glorious geometric construction. Kufian script could be adapted to any space and material from silk squares to the architectural monuments left by Timur at Samarkand.

The most unique variants of kufian script are:

**Al-kufi-al-mukammal:** The writing stands out against a background of floral and geometric designs superimposing the movement of the script over the movement of the underlying pattern.

**Al-kufi-al-muzaffar:** The flow of the words blends beautifully in a unique way with the movement of the stressed and dense vertical letters.

**Al-kufi-al-handasi:** The composition is based on intertwining of geometrical shapes, squares and triangles - with the words.°

(ii) **The Cursive Naskh Script: (Plate 3.2)**

It was more often used for casual writing. This script had rounded letters and thin lines, usually written with short
horizontal stems and with almost equal depth above and below the medial line. The curves are full and deep the uprights straight and vertical and the words generally well spaced. It was preferred to Kufian script for copying the Quran as technique used for writing in this style was more refined. Almost all printed materials in Arabic is in Naskh.

It gained popularity after being redesigned by the famous calligrapher Ibn-Muqla in the 10th century. Naskh style displayed a very rhythmic line because of comprehensive system of proportion. Later again it was refined by Al Bawwad and others to modified into an elegant script, it became easy to read and write. Currently naskh is considered the supreme script for almost all Muslims and Arabs around the world.\(^\text{11}\)

(iii) **The Thuluth Script: (Plate 3.3)**

Thuluth script was first formulated in the 7th century during the Umayyad caliphate. But it could not be developed fully till the late 9th century. The name means one third, because of the proportion of the straight lines to curves or just because of the script was a third, the size of another popular contemporary script. It was rarely used for writing the Quran.

Thuluth had enjoyed enormous popularity as an ornamental script for calligraphic inscriptions, titles, headings, and colophones. It is still the most important of all the ornamental scripts. The thuluth script had ornamental beauty formely associated with the Kufian script in the 13th century. Thuluth is usually written in ample curves and it has a strong cursive aspect curved letters written with barbed heads. The letters are linked and sometimes intersecting, thus to bring out the cursive flow.
Thuluth is known for its elaborate graphics and remarkable plasticity.¹²

(iv) **The Taliq and Nastaliq Script: (Plate 3.4)**

The Taliq style was developed in Iran for writing Persian texts, this was the a hanging style meaning that the letters slanted from top right to bottom left. Around 1400, this evolved into the Nastaliq form which followed the strict rule of Ibn, Muqla. It is believed to have been developed by the Persians from an early and obscure Arabic script called Firamuz. The Persians started using Arabic script in place of their own script after their conversion to Islam and Arab conquest. The Taliq and Nastaliq styles were contributed to Arabic calligraphy by the Persians. Nastaliq style is extremely cursive, with exaggeratedly long horizontal strokes.

The script is currently in great favour with Arabs, and popular in different calligraphic styles among the Persian, Indian and Turkish Muslims. The Persian calligraphist Mir Ali sultan-al-Tabrizi developed from Taliq a lighter and more elegant variety which came to be known as Nastaliq. However, Persian and Turkish calligraphers continued to use Taliq as a monumental script for important occasions. The word Nastaliq is a compound word derived from Naskh and Taliq. Taliq and Nastaliq script were used extensively for copying Persian anthologies, epics, miniatures, and other literary works but not for the Holy Quran.¹³

(v) **The Deewani Script: (Plate 3.5)**

The Deewani script is a cursive style of Arabic calligraphy. The Deewani script is an Ottoman development parallel to Shikasteh script (broken style). The script was largely developed by accomplished calligrapher Ibrahim Munif in the late 15th
century from the Turkish Persian Taliq. Deewani reached its Zenith in the 17th century under the reign of the early Ottoman turks.

This outstanding Deewani script was both decorative and communicative. This script was distinguished by the complexity of the line within the letter and the close juxtaposition of the letters within the word. A variation of the Deewani, the Deewani-al-jali, is characterized by its abundance of diacritical and ornamental marks.\(^\text{(vi)}\)

**The Riq’a Script: (Plate 3.6)**

This script is also called Ruqah (small sheet). It has evolved from Naskh, and Thuluth. It is the most commonly used script for everyday use, it is simple and easy to write. Its movements are small, the geometric forms of the letters are similar to those of Thuluth but are smaller with more curves. Riq’a is rounded and densely structured with short horizontal stems, and the letter Alif is never written with barbed head. Riq’a was one of the favourite script of the Ottoman calligraphers and underwent many improvements at the hand of Shaykh Hamdullah Al Amasi. Later Riq’a was revised by other calligraphers and went on to become the most popular and widely used script. Today Riq’a is the desirable script for handwriting throughout the world, among Muslim calligraphers.

The above described scripts got the popularity and maintained their positions very well in medieval India. These different styles of Arabic calligraphy were mostly displayed on the wall surfaces, in writing of manuscripts, on miniature paintings to describe the theme and also in writing poetry by
different poets. These were very popular under Muslim emperors. They patronized and encouraged the use of Arabic calligraphy mostly for decorative purposes.  

**Persian Calligraphy:**

Persian calligraphy is the calligraphy used in Persian writing system. The history of calligraphy in Persia dates back to the pre-Islam period. In Zoroastrian era beautiful and clear writings were always praised. In Persia calligraphy has been considered among the artistic symbols, letters and elements, which form the word, always bear undeniable aesthetic qualities.

Iranian calligraphic styles such as Taliq, Nastaliq, Naskh, Thuluth, Riqa, Towqi, Shikesteh, Kufic and other decorative scripts, stands proud as charming among those of every other nation particularly so, when those are adorned with illumination, which bestows hundred-fold prominence to their sublime forms. Iranian calligraphy truly deserves such illuminations, and such a reverence, its masterpieces, when framed and set upon walls, bear all the attraction of great paintings affecting even foreigners. Thus many of them are lovingly collecting items of Iranian calligraphy.

Average Iranian spectators basically familiar with calligraphy, so they all have a close recollection of tradition of penmanship. Evolution of various styles of penmanship aesthetic changes and developments of Iranian calligraphy, assess essential aesthetic variations, evaluate the degrees of evolution attained and discover the brilliant ability of Iranian artist’s mind within the context of history.
History and Evolution:

It is believed that the ancient Persian script was invented during 500-600 BC to preserve monument inscriptions under rule of Archaemenid kings. These scripts consisted of horizontal, vertical and diagonal nail shape letters and that is why in Persian it is called “Script of Nails” or “Khat-e-Mikhi”. (plate3.7) Centuries Later, other scripts such as “Fahlawi” (plate 3.8) and “Avastae” (plate3.9) scripts became popular in ancient Persia.

After initiation of Islam in the 7\textsuperscript{th} century, Persians adopted Arabic alphabet in Persian language and developed a contemporary Persian alphabet. Arabic alphabet consists of 28 characters but Persian added another four letters and presently it is comprised of 32 letters.\textsuperscript{17}

The Persian or Farsi Script: (plate 3.10)

The Persian used to use the Fahlawi script which originated in the city of Fehla, which lies between Hamdan, Asfahan, and Azerbaijan. The ordinary Persian script was commonly used in Persia before Arabs. When Persians were defeated by Arabs then they become familiar with Arabic letters and Arabic became their official language and handwriting. The Arabic letters replaced the Fahlawi script and it then became known as “Taliq” (plate3.11) because of its cursive style and horizontal forms. Persia also produced alluring and attractive masterpieces of Islamic art. During the reign of Shah Ismail and his successor Shah Tahmast (1524-1576) the Taliq script was formulated and developed into a widely used, native script which led to the invention of a lighter and more elegant version called “Nastaliq (plate3.12)”. These two relatively young scripts soon were
elevated to the status of major scripts. Although Nastaliq was a beautiful and appearing script.

Turkish calligraphers continued to use Taliq as a monumental script for important occasions. The word Nastaliq is a compound word derived from Naskh and Taliq. The Persian calligrapher Mir Ali Sultan Al Tabrizi invented this script and devised the rules to govern it. Taliq and Nastaliq scripts were used extensively for copying Persian anthologies, epics, miniatures, and other literary work but not for the Holy Quran. There is only one copy of the Holy Quran written in Nastaliq. It was done by a Persian master calligrapher Shah Mohammad Al Nishaburi in 1539. The reign of Shah Abbas (1588-1629) was the golden era for this script and for many master calligraphers. The next popular calligraphy style is ‘Cursive Nastaliq’ or “Shekasteh Nastaliq” (plate3.13) follows the same rule as ‘Nastaliq’ with more flexibility.

At the beginning of the 3rd century Hijrah, after consolidating their position in both Persia and Iraq, the Abbasid Dynasty showed deep interest in Arabic calligraphy. They tended to encourage in Naskh and decorated the letters with excessive designs and motifs to an extent that gave their script a particular character. The Persian script was used in the writing of literature and poetry books, whereas books of Hadith were written in Naskh.

The Persians excelled in the cursive script. They added ornamental decorations that made the script unique with its beautiful inclined letters. Letters were changed in length and thickness according to the taste of the artist and the thickness of the pen. Letters were unique for their accuracy and extension and
they bore no formations. Persian script was used in writing the
titles of books and letters and is widely used in Iran, India and
Afghanistan.  

INSCRIPTIONS (During Sultanat Period)

Inscriptions word is mostly used for ‘carving on monuments’,
some of them are discussed here which were made in medieval India
during Sultanate period.

(i) Calligraphy on Qutub Minar: (Plate 3.14)

Qutub Minar, the first monument of Muslim rule in India, started
the beginning of a new style of art in architecture which is known as
Indo Islamic style. Qutubuddin Aibak founder of the slave dynasty laid
the foundation of Qutub Minar in about 1199 AD as a victory tower. It
had a height of 72.5m with a tower taper from a base of 14.32m and
2.75m at its top and took 20 years to complete.

The tower comprises of five different storeys, with a prominent
balcony. The first three stories are made of red sandstone, the fourth
and fifth were of marble and sandstone. The decoration of Qutub
Minar is consistently Islamic in character from base to top. The Qutub
Minar is covered with intricate carvings and beautifully inscribed
verses from the Quran are in Kufian style with floral motifs.

Qutubuddin Aibak, the first Muslim ruler of Delhi Sultanat
commenced the construction of Qutub Minar but could not complete
its basement. His successor iltutmish added three more storeys and in
1368, Firoz Shah Tughlaq constructed the fifth and the last storey. The
bottom story, consisting of alternately rounded and angular flutes.
Some three meters from the plinth, the looped bell and garland and the
lotus borders of the ancient Hindu tradition have been carved. The
second third and fourth storey were built by Iltutmish. The fourth story was struck by lightning in 1370 then it was replaced with two more storeys by Sultan Firuz Tughlaq.19

Qutubuddin also built a mosque in Ajmer called Arha’I Din Ka Jhopra. And his successor Iltutmish added some more decorative elements in it. Iltutmish also built a mosque at Badayun along with an Idgah and a tank and a lofty gateway at Nagory. But his mausoleum is most important, for its inner surface is completely covered with inscriptions. The development and difference of the architectural styles from Aibak to Tughlaq are quite evident in the Minaret. The purpose for building this beautiful monument has been speculated upon the usual role of a minaret used calling people for prayer in a mosque and a sign of victory.20

(ii) Calligraphy in Quwwatul Islam Mosque: (Plate 3.15)

Quwwatul Islam Mosque (Might of Islam) is the earliest existing mosque in India. It consists of a rectangular courtyard of 43.2m by 32.9m enclosed by cloisters which were erected by Qutubuddin Aibak with carved columns and other architectural structure of twenty seven Jain and Hindu temples. Thus in it both pre-Islamic and Islamic features are present. It was built out of the materials of temples.

The construction of the mosque was started in 1193 AD by Qutubuddin Aibak and was completed in 1198 AD. A massive stone screen of lofty five arches was put up in front of its prayer hall which had engraved Islamic characters in the building. The screen was beautifully carved with borders of inscriptions and geometrical and arabesque designs but the craftman used some Hindu motif visible on carved designs.
Subsequently the mosque was enlarged by two Muslim rulers Shamshuddin Iltutmish and Alauddin Khalji. The script which was used to decorate the walls and arches of the mosque is purely Islamic in character and used the Kufian style. At some places angular or geometrical Kufian style is also visible which add beauty in its characters which attract beholders attention. 21

(iii) Calligraphy on Iltutmish Tomb: (Plate 3.16)

Iltutmish the son in law and successor of Qutubuddin Aibak completed its construction in his own lifetime in 1235 AD. He decorated the interior parts profusely with calligraphy containing the verses from Holy Quran. The construction of this masouleum clearly represented a departure from the Hindu custom of cremating the dead.

Below the plat-form of the tomb, some Arabic inscriptions were carved beautifully in Kufian style. It all shows that Iltutmish loved and respected the religion of Islam very much. In that way calligraphy played a big role in spreading the religion of Islam and by extension Arabic calligraphy. 22

Calligraphy during Mughal Rule in India:

The Mughal Empire was founded by a Central Asian Chief Babur in 1526, when he defeated Ibrahim Lodi the last of the Delhi Sultans in the first ‘battle of Panipat’. The Mughal Empire was an empire having biggest territorial extent and ruled most of the Indian subcontinent between 1526 to 1857.

The word Mughal is an Indo Aryan version of Mongol. Mughals were the great lovers of art, especially of Indian works of art and architecture. The best artistic specimens were produced during the Mughal period under the patronage of Mughal Kings. The Court
artisans produced many royal historical texts adorned with calligraphy, metal work, and engraving, and jade carving. They were all prominent forms of art during the Mughal period. This dynasty was the greatest, richest, and long lasting Muslim dynasty to rule in India. The dynasty produced some of the finest and most elegant arts and architecture in the history of Muslim dynasties. A minor script appeared in India called Bihari but not was very popular. Nastaliq, Naskh, and Thuluth were adopted by the Muslim calligraphers during this era. The intense development of calligraphy led to the creation of new versions of Naskh and Thuluth. These mughal scripts are thicker and bolder the letters are widely spaced, and the curves are more rounded.

The style of painting and beautiful calligraphy on miniatures or in album pictures was very much influenced by the Persian effect. The rulers of the house of Timur gave due regard and importance to the artists in their courts right from the days of Babar who founded Mughal rule in India. From that time the Persian styles and techniques started coming in India in the form of miniature or album pictures. Humayun brought two skillful Persian artists with him Meer Syed Ali of Tabrez and Khwaja Abdussamad of Shiraz, who served at Kabul in the court of Humayun. Through these artists the technique of miniature painting came in India.  

MINIATURES AND ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS:

The art of calligraphy reached new heights in India during Mughals because of Persian influence. Calligraphy was executed beautifully on miniatures as well as varied manuscripts were written down during Mughal period in attractive designs.

Mughal painting is a particular style of south Asian, generally confined to miniatures either in the form of a book illustration or as
single work to be kept in albums. The word ‘miniature’ derived from the Latin word ‘minima’ which means small. The simple decoration of the early codices were miniated or delineated in the form of miniature paintings which could be fitted in albums. Such manuscripts or pictures are more durable and with their small size it is easy to preserve them. This technique reached great heights in India under Mughal rule. It was used for manuscripts and books decoration and was developed in the form of small sheets. Small paintings kept in albums are also called miniatures.24

This tradition of miniature painting came in India from Persia through two Persian master artists of this technique Mir Syyed Ali of Tabriz and Khawaja Abdussamad of Shiraz. Both talented artists came to India along with Mughal ruler Humajun and spread the technique of miniature painting all over India they taught to many artists in the technique of miniature painting and good calligraphy. In Persia many expert calligraphers worked under the guidance of these intelligent artists.

In Persia it is the main technique of painting. A Persian miniature is a small painting, whether book illustration or a separate work of art intended to be kept in an album of such works. The technique is broadly comparable to the western and Byzantine traditions of miniature in illuminated manuscripts. Although there is an equally well-established Persian tradition of wall painting but the survival and quality of preservation of miniature is much better. Therefore, miniatures are best-known from of Persian painting in the west. Miniature painting became a significant Persian art in the 13th century, and reached its zenith during 15th and 16th centuries. This art continued, to flourish under some western influence, and has many modern experts. The Persian miniature cast dominant influence over
Islamic miniature traditions, principally the Ottaman miniature in Turkey, and the Mughal miniature in the Indian subcontinent, influenced by Persian miniature art, Indian Hindu, Jain and Buddhist traditions Indian art developed considerably during the period of the Mughal Empire during 16\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

In Persia it is difficult to trace date because there is no date of origin of miniature art. Historical evidence is given. But this art reached its peak in Persia mainly in Mangols and Timurid period during 13\textsuperscript{th} to 16\textsuperscript{th} century and was largely influenced by Chinese paintings. The Mangol rulers of Persia brought with them numerous Chinese artists to Persia.

In India many illuminated manuscripts were written during Mughal period having some Persian influence and in some of them beautiful depiction of miniatures in accordance with the theme of the manuscripts is visible.\textsuperscript{25}

Some miniature paintings are discussed below:

(i) Tutinam ‘Tales of parrot’ (plate 3.17)
(ii) Hamzanama ‘Dastaan-e-Amir Hamza’ (plate 3.18)
(iii) Akbarnama (plate 3.19)
(iv) Ramayana (plate 3.20)
(v) Mahabharata ‘Razma-Nama’ (plate 3.21)

\textbf{Tutinama:(plate 3.17)}

Tutinama literally means “Tales of parrot.” It is a 14\textsuperscript{th} Century Persian collection of a series of 52 stories containing 250 miniature paintings. The illustrated version was prepared as per orders of Mughal Emperor Akbar in the later part of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Its history in Persia in the 14\textsuperscript{th} century AD is linked with an earlier ancient anthology of ‘seventy tales of the parrot’ in Sanskrit compiled under the title
Sukasaptati (a part of Katha Literature). It reached Persia in 12th century AD from India. Parrots are popular story tellers in works of fiction. The stories of Tutinama are said to be continued by Ziya’al-Din Nakhshabi a Persian physician cum sufi-saint who migrated to Badayun, Uttar Pradesh in India in the 14th century. He wrote it in Persian language and translated classical Sanskrit version of some stories similar to Tutinama into Persian, around 1335 AD. It is conjectured that this small book of short stories. Having moralistic theme influenced Akbar very much during his early years. It is also inferred that since Akbar had a big harem (of woman siblings, wives, and women servants) these moral stories were considered of specific orientation towards the control and training of women.

The stories of Tutinama are adventurous and moralistic nature area narrated by a parrot. The parrot lived with its owner Khojasta a young Lady advised her not to commit any adulterous act with any lover in the absence of her husband. These stories were illustrated during Akbar’s reign in the form of miniature paintings. Through miniatures one can easily guess the theme of the stories and the manuscripts were written down in Persian calligraphic style. The main artists were Mir Syyed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad renowned master artists of Persia painted it which gave superb depiction of beautiful themes. The main narrator of the 52 stories of Tutinama was a parrot, who told stories to his owner Lady Khajosta, in order to prevent her from keeping of illicit affairs while her husband was away for business trips. The merchant had gone leaving behind his wife in the company of a myna and a parrot. The wife strangled the myna for advising her not to indulge in any illicit affair. The parrot realizing the gravity of the situations, adopted a clever but indirect approach of narrating fascinating stories during the next successive 52 nights. By telling
these entertaining episodes the parrot diverted Khajosta’s attention and restrained her from going astray.

The paintings of Tutinama seen in various libraries across the world focus on the main theme or episode of the stories. The straightforwardness of expressions seen in the painting is attributed to presence of pre-Mughal qualities of paintings. Several portfolios of Tutinama are also stated to be produced similar to the Malwa manuscripts with illustrations bearing date of 1439 AD and are perfectly similar to the original. The only difference seen refers to the tasteful colours used in Tutinama paintings, which make it rich in colours of best quality.

It has already been stated that authorship of the illustrated miniature paintings of Tutinama vested in two Iranian master artists named Mir Syyed Ali and Abdus Samad who were brought to India by Humayun to teach this art to him and to his son Akbar. Initially, these artists stayed in Kabul with Humayun (where he lived in exile) and when he won back his empire from the Suri Dynasty they came to Delhi with him. The artists then moved to Fatehpur Sikri with the Mughal Emperor Akbar, where a huge workshop of artisans was engaged in producing types of different miniature paintings. They illustrated the Persian stories of Tutinama with brilliant miniature paintings. This type of painting came to be known as the Mughal paintings, and flourished during Akbar’s reign from 1556 to 1605 AD. The Emperor’s leadership made the Mughal empire the most powerful empire of the world Akbar provided personal patronage lavishly to promote art of miniature paintings, not only through Iranian artists but also involved a large number of Indian artists who were also well versed in local styles of such miniature paintings that were produced in the imperial workshops. It thus developed this art as a unique blend of
India, Persian and Islamic styles. Initially, it was the illustrated version of Tutinama, which had 250 paintings. The Original Version of most of these excellent paintings is now kept in the Museum of art, while some are preserved in a British Library. This became the precursor for many more refined forms of Mughal miniature painting portfolios such as the Hamzanama (Adventures of Amir Hamaza), Akbarnama (Book of Akbar), jahangirnama (Tuz-e-Jahangiri autobiography of Mughal emperor Noor-u-Din Muhammad Jahangir) and so forth, which were created during the reign of subsequent Mughal rulers during 16th to 19th century. These Mughal painting had distinct Indian, Hindu, Jain and Buddhist influences and characteristics. The Mughal paintings covered mainly portraits of Mughal emperors, Queens, Court scenes, hunting scenes, special ceremonies, battle scenes, love scenes, and various activities of royal household. The technique of miniature painting was also widely adopted and copied by Rajput and Malwa rulers. Who were subordinate to Mughal Empire.

In Tutinama a particular story narrated by the parrot to his mistress Khajosta when she was about to leave her house in the night, has been depicted vary beautifully in the illustrated version of Tutinama. The story related to a Brahmin boy who fell in love with a princess but they were unable to meet each other. One magician friend of the Brahmin he turned him into a woman through magic. Then he was allowed to enter into the palace. After sometime to avoid discovery of his identity, the Brahmin ran away with the king’s daughter and married her. The magician then appeared before the king and demanded to return of his daughter. The king some how found out the truth and approved their marriage. The gifts from king were passed on by the magician to his Brahmin friend and his wife and they lead a happy life. The parrot concluded the narration before down with the
advice to Khajosta that she should never betray her husband and remain with him throughout whole life with loyalty.

These illustrated stories with beautiful depiction of their theme through miniature art and excellent calligraphy in Naslaliq script show their perfection in art and marvelous work done by and the artists of superb capabilities and orders.26

(ii) HAMZANAMA (dastaan-e-Amir Hamza) (plate 3.18)

The Hamzanama is a Persian story based on the heroic deeds of Amir Hamza a legendary figure in epics. It was designed to develop and expand a story of telling performance. The Hamzanama or Dastaan-e-Amir Hamza is an important work which narrates the fantastic exploits and achievements of Amir Hamza an uncle of the prophet of Islam. An illustrated manuscript of the Hamznama a marvelous masterpiece of art was created in 1558-1573 under the Mughal emperor Akbar. It comprised of 1400 volumes or canvas folios. On one side of the manuscript painting covering area of about 54cm x 69cm this is the beautiful specimen of a fusion of Indian styles. On the other side the Persian text in Nastaliq script is written. The folios are nearly arranged and the texts on the back of the folio correspond to the painting. The bulk of these folios are available in the Victoria and Albert Museum and British Museum in London.

The colophon of this manuscript is still missing. None of the folios of this manuscript so far found is signed. According to Badauni and Shahnawaz Khan the work of preparing the illustrations was supervised initially by Mir Syyed Ali and subsequently by Abdus Samad. It took fifteen years to complete the work.27
**AKBARNAMA** (Biography of Akbar) (plate 3.19)

The Akbarnama literally means Book of Akbar. It is an official biographical account of Akbar the third Mughal emperor (1556-1605) written in Persian, in this biography a detailed account of the life of Akbar since his childhood has been described. At the age of 13 in 1556 when he became emperor in the beginning after some difficulties he established his rule. It includes vivid and detailed description of his life and rule to achievement.

Firmly he was a very intelligent and liberal king. He was not a fanatic like other rulers of his time. He took delight in learning good things of different religion and followed them. He started a new religion ‘Deen-e-ilahi’ which was aimed on principal of compromise or ‘Suleh Kul’. He became very popular in a short time because of his qualities and generosity. He married Jodhabai, the sister of Rajput Raja Man Singh and respected the Vaishnava and other faiths and cultures.

After his death his son Salim, born from of Jodhabai, inherited the throne and assumed the title of Jahangir, and continued policy of toleration adopted by his father Akbar. Akbar combined the persian and Rajasthani art which gave birth to the famous Mughal School of art.

Akbar was interested in painting since his childhood. In Ain-e-Akbari it has been written that Akbar gave a great regard to the painters and gave them encouragement and rewarded. That is the reason, the paintings during his time were comparable to works of Bihazad. A painting wizard of the world. In Akbar’s Court painting was of very high order specially became of its marvelous colour scheme. The artists were both the Hindus and the Muslims. But the Hindus were more in number.
Akbarnama written by Abul Fazl one of the nine jewels of Akbar’s royal court was selected by Akbar for miniature painting. It is stated that the book contained more than 100 paintings and it took seven years to complete it in the year 1602 AD. The original manuscript contained paintings supporting the texts and fully represented the Mughal School painting. It was produced by masters of the imperial workshop, including a Hindu artist Basawan, who known as an innovative Indian artist.

Akbarnama consists of three volumes. The first volume deals with the genealogy of the descendants of Timur, and detailed information about the birth of Akbar, his accession to the throne, and the account of first seventeen years of his reign. The second part narrates the events from the eighteenth year to the forty sixth year of his reign. It abruptly and there because Abdul Fazl was assassinated at the orders of Jahangir. The account of Akbar’s reign from the 46th year, till his death in October, 1605 was later added to the second volume by Inayat ullah or Muhammad Salih. This work in known as Takmil-e-Akbarnama, omits many happenings between 1602 and 1605. Besides recording Akbar’s life during his reign, the Akbarnama also throws ample light on the social conditions of India. Both Abul Fazl and Akbar has tolerant religious ideas, and Abul Fazl has presented Hinduism in a good manner before to the Muslim masses and Mughal ruling class.

The third volume of Akbarnama is named Ain-e-Akbari. It includes the details of the demonstrative system of the empire and “Account of the Hindu sciences.” Here Abul Fazl describes his ambition in his own words “it has long been the ambitious desire of my heart to review to some extent, the general conditions of this vast country, and to record the opinions and doctrines by the professed
majority of the learned scholars among the Hindus. I do not know the love of my native land had affected the truth or exactness of historical research and genuine truthfulness of narrative”.

In this book Abul Fazl also gives several Indian versions of geography, cosmography and some tidbits on Indian aesthetic thoughts. Most of these informations are derived from Sanskrit texts and knowledge systems. Abul Fazl’s admits that he did not know Sanskrit and probably that he was provided with such informations through non-Muslim literate members of Akbar’s court.

In his description of Hinduism, Abul Fazl tries to present it in a lucid manner so that the Muslims could understand it easily. Here Abul Fazl submits that the symbols and images considered sacred by the Hindus are not idols of worship. They are only used to keep their minds from wavering and religions wandering. He writes that Hinduism believe in serving and worshipping of God. He also explains the prevalent caste system to his readers and indicates the name, rank and duties of each caste. He also gives details of sixteen sub castes which emerged because of intermarriage among the main four castes.

Abul Fazl also discusses about Karma theory in the biography of Akbar and states, “This is a system or knowledge of an amazing and extraordinary type, in which the learned men of Hindustan concur without dissenting option.” He places the action and events which they face in their next life (JANAH) into four different categories. First is that there are many ways in which a person belonging to one class can be corn into a different class in his next life and there are same cases in which a change in gender can be brought about. He classifies the second kind as the different diseases and sicknesses one suffers for his Karmas. The third type refers to actions which cause a woman to be
barren, or the death of child. The fourth type deals with cases of money and generosity and their absence because of deeds.

So these are some of the way of life with which a person spends his or her life and all these things affect his rebirth and a person has to suffer or flourish accordingly. With these references he describes the life history and detailed account of Akbar rule.28

Ramayana (plate 3.20)

Ramayana as we know that it is an ancient Hindu epic written by Valmiki in Sanskrit. During the Mughal King Akbar this Hindu epic Ramayana was translated in to Persian and painted in the form of miniature paintings. All the scenes are beautifully painted and it is really a very fine depiction of the theme of Ramayana. All the characters were painted according to the legend and it is a very good specimen of Persian calligraphy.

The name Ramayana is a tatpurusha compound of ‘Rama and ayana’ which means ‘Ram’s journey’. Ram is considered the incarnation of the Hindu preserver-god Vishnu. His wife Sita is abducted by the demon king of Lanka, Ravana. Thematically the epic explores the tenets of human existence and the concept of dharma. The epic has cast important influence on later Sanskrit poetry and Indian life and culture, particularly through its meaningful and effective shlokas. The Ramayana is not just an ordinary story. It contains the teachings of ancient Hindu sages and presents them in allegoric narrative form with emphasis on philosophical and the devotional elements. The characters Ram, Sita, Lakshamana, Bharata, Hanuman and Ravana are all fundamental characters represent cultural consciousness of India.
Traditionally, the Ramayana is ascribed to Valmiki, who is regarded as India’s first poet. The Indian tradition is unanimous that the poem is the work of a single poet, the sage Valmiki, a contemporary of Rama and a peripheral actor in the epic drama. The story’s original version in Sanskrit is known as Vakmiki’s, Ramayana, and probably compiled during the 4th century BC. It is an epic poem of some 50,000 lines and its text is found in several thousand forms of partial and complete manuscripts.

During Mughal king Akabir this story was translated from Sanskrit to Persian because Akbar was a liberal king and took interest in scholarly things and therefore he was called ‘Akbar the great.’ He was not a partial or orthodox in his religions views and tolerated people of other religions. Due to his interest in Hindu religion Ramayana and Mahabharata were translated in his period. Then he commanded his artists to prepare the series of Ramayana in the form of miniature paintings along with Persian text so that people may get benefits of the teachings of Hindu religion and sayings of ancient Hindu sages.29

**MAHABHARATA (Razm Nama) (PLATE 3.21)**

Mahabharata is an other ancient epic of Hindus. Persian translation of Mahabharat commissioned by Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1582. It was written in Sanskrit by Vyasa. It depicts the duties of relationships, (DHARMS) and portrays ideal characters like the ideal servant, the ideal brother, the ideal wife, the ideal king and ideal guru. Mahabharata is regarded one of the major Sanskrit epics of ancient India and forms part of the Hindu ‘itihas’ or ‘history’.

In this epic a historical battle was described through Sanskrit words between Kauravas and Pandavs. They fought in battle field of
the Kurukshetra and decided the fates of Kauravas and Pandavas. The Pandavas assisted by Sri Krishana and won the war.

The epic of Mahabharat contains good philosophical and devotional material, such as the description of the four “goals of life.” The first is ‘dharma’ which means ‘right action’ and is very important for every human being. Every man has to follow the right principles and spend his or her life according to the right teachings. The second is ‘artha’ which means ‘purpose’. This principle is same for everyone as he has to choose the right purpose and complete it through right actions. If purpose is lawful or genuine the actions will be automatically genuine and right. The third is “Kama” which means desire or sexual “pleasure.” For example if man feels fatigue then he needs some rest to rejuvenate himself. The fourth is “moksha” which means “Liberations.” This principle is also very important for discovering new things in life, which make life good and pleasant. According to the epic, by following all these four principles, a man can lead his life successfully. These golden rules of life have been depicted in this ancient epic, in the form of a war between forces of evil and good. Mahabharata contains the Bhagavad Gita, the story of Damayanti, and abbreviated version of the Ramayana, and the Rishyasringa, often considered as a separative work. All these parts give moral guidance. It is estimated that the final Sanskrit text of the Mahabharata epic was probably prepared in the early Gupta period around the 4th century CE.

Akbar was very fond of painting so he ordered to translate various Hindu and non Hindu stories and got them painted in the form of miniature with their Persian translation. According to history the story of Mahabharata was also translated in Persian by the order of
Akbar and turned it into an illustrated manuscript. It is in a beautiful specimen of Persian calligraphy and also remarkable miniature.

According to Ain-e-Akbari, Akabr did not support orthodox Muslims who took painting as against the Islamic religion. He was of the opinion that through painting one can realize the existence and greatness of god. Those who hate painting can not fully appreciate God’s greatness.

These are some majestic illustrative manuscript of Mughal period translated in to Persian and painted in the form of miniature during Akabr’s reign. They involved a long period of time in their preparation. These miniature or illustrated manuscripts of Mughal period are considered excellent specimens of glorious ‘art of calligraphy’ which reached new height of perfection in India. It can be said that “the art of calligraphy” reached its peak during Mughal’s time in India specially due to lavish patronage of emperor Akbar and his successors.30

Mughal miniature also adopted some Persian subjects like Shereen Farhad, Laila Majnu, Amir Hamza etc. On these miniature paintings calligraphy was done mostly in Persian style because of the Persian influence on Mughals. It was mostly Persian calligraphy in character.

INSRIPTIONS (During Mughal’s Period)

The buildings of the Mughal period reflects improved techniques of architecture, display of the wealth of the state and ideas new and unique regarding heroes, the love of poetry, gardens, flowers, flowing water, spring and natural scenes. The great Mughal builders Akbar and Shah Jahan, translated into stone, the refinement, elegance and strength of their empire and made themselves immortal. To decorate the
buildings the art of calligraphy which was used by them surpassed all other arts of that period. Some famous work are discussed below-

(i) **Calligraphy on Buland Darwaza: (Plate 3.22)**

The Buland Darwaza is the most impressive structure at Fatehpur Sikri in Agra. Emperor Akbar made this in order to commemorate his victory over Rajputs and rulers of Khandesh and Ahmednagar in Gujarat and Deccan. The structure stands 140 feet on the pedestal and 54 feet above the ground, the gateway is approached by a steep flight of 42 steps which adds elevation and majesty to the entire structure. Buland Darwaza is counted as one of the tallest gateway in the world, almost entirely made out of the red sand stone with a generous spell of marble decoration on it.

The blend of Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture is evident by the use of Quranic inscriptions on the front, pillars, and cenotaph. The arch of entrance from both the sides shows a very fine blend of Persian and Arabic calligraphy. The calligraphy work done on the inner facade of Buland Darwaza has no parallel in India or any other country. Buland Darwaza has a very famous inscription written on it. This inscription is actually a quotation attributed to Jesus Christ” who is revered equally by both Christians as well as Muslims. It says “that is almost ironical for a city that was abandoned in less than 15 years from the day it was constructed”.

The Thuluth script was used in the inscriptions made in Arabic in the small rectangles, some inscriptions were made of Persian style in some places. The gateway which rises to a height of 45 meters, presents an awesome spectacle of isolation and has exquisite Persian calligraphy inscribed on it. In another inscription it is said “The world is a bridge to pass over it but build no house upon it. For whoever
hopes for one hour, hopes for all eternity. The world is one hour, spend it in prayers, for the rest is unseen.”31

(i) Calligraphy on Taj Mahal (Plate 3.23)

The Taj Mahal is a famous mausoleum located at Agra in India. The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1628 – 1658) built it as a mausoleum in memory of his favourite wife Mumtaz Mahal (Arjumand Bano Begum). It took almost 25 years to build it. The construction began in 1631 and was completed in 1654. The resources of the empire were generously used in its construction. There was a labour force of 22000 people including some best known architects, masons, and artisans. During the rule of mughal emperor Shah Jahan, calligraphy reached new heights of excellence especially when the Taj Mahal was built, one name remain closely associated with the Taj Mahal, in particular with the superb calligraphic inscriptions displayed in the geometric friezes on the white marble that is the name of the ingenious calligrapher Amanat Khan, whose real name was Abd Ul Haq.

This comparable calligrapher came to india from Shiraz, (Iran) in 1609. Shah Jahan conferred the title of Amanat Khan upon this Iranian as a reward for the calligrapher’s dazzling virtuosity. In all probability, Amanat Khan was entrusted with the entire calligraphic decoration of the Taj Mahal. During Jehangir’s reign, Amanat Khan has been responsible for the calligraphic work of the Akbar mausoleum at Sikandra and for that of the Madrasah Shahi Mosque at Agra.

It is quiet possible that Amanat Khan was responsible for the choice of the epigraphs of the Taj Mahal that is the quranic verses and other religious quotations appearing on the mausoleum. He signed inside the calligraphic inscription on the left side.
Ustad Esa Effendi Khan probably from Turkey is supported to be most likely designer of the building. Ismail Khan another artist from the Ottoman Empire designed the dome while Qasim Khan, a master goldsmith cast the solid gold finial on it and, Chiranjilal was the chief sculptor and designer of the mosaic structure.

The main gateway of the Taj Mahal is made up of red sandstone, its archways and its pishtaq arch incorporate Arabic calligraphy One of the inscription known as Daybreak (al Fajr) completely in illegible Thuluth script. It utilizes inlaid decorations with floral motifs. The vaulted ceilings and walls have elaborate geometric designs.

Across the four arches of the main building Surah ‘ya sin’ is written in beautiful Arabic calligraphy in Thuluth script. The inlay work is 1.5 inch deep with black stone which we call Jasper. The calligraphy passages reflect on problems of life and death, while the designs enhance the grace and elegance of these passages in many intricate ways. Higher panels are written in slightly bold letters to reduce the skewing effect when viewed from below, to ensure its uniform appearance from the vantage point of the entrance. The size of letters increases according to it relative heights and distance from the viewpoint. The text chosen refer broadly to the themes of judgement on good actions and rewards for the faithful in paradise.

A modern historian Wayne Begley suggests that Amanat Khan was responsible not only for the design of the script but also for the choice of the text, as he has signed on several panels. The majority of the text was taken from the Quran. The Taj Majal is generally considered the finest example of Mughal architecture. A style combines elements of Persian and Indian architecture. The white domed marble mausoleum is the most important part of the monument.
It is listed as a UNESCO world Heritage Site. In 1983 it was described as a “universally admired masterpieces of the world’s heritage.\(^{32}\)

**(iii) Calligraphy on Taj Mahal Mosque: (Plate 3.24)**

Taj Mahal Mosque is on the western side of the Taj Mahal made up of red sandstone. It is used for Prayer purposes and faces the direction of the holy city of Mecca. The boundary near the wall of the mosque has a small stone enclosure which temporarily housed the remains of Mumtaz Mahal before they were finally buried in the adorned mausoleum. The pietra dura on the outside boasts of four octagonal towers and three elegant domes. The sparkling floor is made of velvet red shade materials and is covered with 539 prayer carpets.

The interior of the mosque is inscribed with delicate calligraphy citing the name of Allah and quotations from A HADITH of the Prophet (P.B.H) and some small verses of Quran. The calligraphy is executed beautifully in illegible thuluth script.\(^{33}\)

**(iv) Calligraphy on tombs of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal: (plate – 3.25)**

The actual tomb of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal are in the crypt of the Taj Mahal building. Shah Jahan’s cenotaph is beside Mumtaz’s cenotaph, and is bigger than his wife. They are decorated with lapidary and calligraphy. The six names of God which are written on Shah Jahan’s tomb are O Noble, O Magnificent, O Majestic, O Unique, O Eternal, O Glorious. They are all in illegible Thuluth script.

On the crypt cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal, it is very apt and appropriate for graves is inscribed verse 3:185 “Every soul shall taste of death and ye shall have your reward on the day of resurrection, and he who shall be far removed from hell, fire, and shall be admitted into
paradise shall be happy, but the present life is only a deceitful provision”. The calligraphy is completely in Thuluth script.\textsuperscript{34}
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