Chapter IV
Persian Elements
In
Mughal miniature
During
Akbar's Reign
"The result, especially under Jahangir, was an extremely refined naturalism, an enthusiasm for psychological portraiture and a taste for the dramatic gesture"
Persian art reflects a 5,000 year old cultural tradition shaped by the diverse cultures that have flourished on the vast Iranian plateau occupied by modern Iran and Afghanistan. The history of Persian art can be divided into two distinct eras whose demarcation is the mid-7th century's AD. When invading Arab armies brought about the conversion of the Persian people to Islam, whereas during the pre-Islamic centuries artistic expression was at the service of the kings and the worship of fire was prominent, during the Islamic period the arts served Allah, and religious structures and artifacts were the focal points of artistic interest.

Despite the sharp break between the ancient and Islamic eras, Persian art throughout centuries displays an underlying unity. Subject to many foreign invasions the Persian were always ready to absorb artistic influences from abroad and to re-express them with new meanings. Persian design almost invariably has stressed decorative forms rather than the human figure. These designs are both geometrical and floral, and very similar motifs appear in works produced hundreds of year apart. This continuity of forms—executed in such media as stone plaster, bricks tiles, pottery, and textiles—is the most distinctive feature of Persian art.

This title presumes the existence of more than a single Indian style of painting, during Akbar's reign, adopted by artists of Indian origin, with which one or more styles of contemporary Persia were synthesised. Different styles of painting were prevalent in India and Persia of the 15th and 16th centuries.

But a close study of the paintings that are dated or datable during the earlier part of the reign of Akbar before 1585 would make it clear that there were numerous other forms and styles of painting and many other cultural forces that were active at Akbar's court. The painting, even of the
formative period of what we call 'Mughal painting', present a wider horizon and take the context of Akbari painting. This thesis proposes, thus, to new Mughal paintings during Akbar's reign from a wider context.

Mughal painting as a subject of Indian art history and of the history of Islamic art, has often been discussed and documented by competent scholars and knowledgeable connoisseurs for the last 50 years or more. The theme is, therefore, quite familiar to all pupils of Indian art and culture. It is a well-known fact that this was a form and style of painting which was very different from whatever the art of paintings had preceded a succeeded it in India. This was why Coomaraswamy in his "History of Indian and Indonesian Art" left Mughal painting out of his analysis. Indeed he thought that it was not a part of the Indian art.

It is also quite well-known that Mughal painting is a court art which is supposed to have originated from the Timurid and Safavid styles of Persia, which were introduced by Humayun through the two Persian masters in his atelier Mir Saiyyid Ali and Abdus Samad. All along the approximately 150 years of the Mughal school's history, it received its inspiration and sustenance from Persian which is the reason why the form and style were once known as 'Indo-Persian'.\(^1\) This nomenclature is no longer in use; but, the implication still persists, though it is an accepted fact that despite its Persian origin and continued Persian inspiration, the school achieve an integrity and identity unique to it.

The reign of Babur (1526-1530) and Humayun (1530-1540) were too turbulent to play a vital role in the history of painting. Humayun however, during his exile, visited the court of Shah Tahmasp and brought back two Persian artists, Mir Saiyyid Ali and Abdus Samad, when he returned to Delhi. These artists, and other who came later from Persia, trained the Indian artists who produced the greatest Mughal miniatures.

Under Akbar the great (1556-1605), the imperial court was a haven for both statesmen and connoisseurs. Akbar extended the boundaries of the

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\(^1\) A Blend of Indian and Persian Style.
kingdom then reorganized it. Complete toleration was accorded to all sects and public religious discussions were fostered. This eleticism had far reaching effects. Persian was Akbar's language, but he had Rajput princesses in his harem. The Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*, was translated into Persian and native artists of the royal atelier who prepared the histories of the reign of the emperor and his *grandfather*.

The art flourished under Akbar did not entirely stem from painters such as *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Khwaja Abdus Samad*. Akbar created a new synthesis of art with the combination of Indian chinese's European art. *Hamza painting* belonged to tradition of tent hanging. It was mainly the work of *Mir Sayyid Ali* and *Khwaja Abdus Samad*, assisted by several other artists.

That the element of individuality was not entirely wanting in the artists, is evidenced by examining some of the illustrations by *Dhanraj*, *Paras*, *Shankar*, *Farrukh Beg* etc. The former shows a noticeable skill in the horizontally curved lines which are used with great clarity and boldness for shading the mounds and tree trunks. He displays an inclination for the blue and green colours which are, skillfully manipulated to achieve particular atmosphere. *Paras* seems to specialise in the use of straight lines. These are laid both horizontally and vertically for bringing out the shaded portions of background and costume folds. War scenes and congregational setting in light colours seem to be the speciality.

*Shanker* is a skilled designed artist, his paintings stand out for decoration and compactness.

The illustrations done by *Farrukh Beg*, an artist of qalmuck origin; have entirely Persian school effect in its feelings and atmosphere. The drawings of human and animal figures, designs displayed on costumes, buildings and ensighs etc. the depiction of hills and trees all associates the Persian style.

"Considering that they were collected before Persian miniature paintings were appreciated or even much noticed this group of manuscript provides an
excellent representation of the various style of the “Timurid and Safavid periods”.2

The earlier west Indian manuscripts illustrations have a relatively restricted palette, with yellow, vermillion, brick-red and crimson being the more prevalent colours. But, in the paintings of 15th and early 16th centuries one cannot fail to note the very lavish use of gold and lapis lazuli blue which appears to indicate a direct impact of contemporary Persian painting.

The manuscript of the Diwan-i-Amir Khusraw,3 a Persian text of Indian origin, now in the Freer gallery of Art, Washington, prepared, perhaps in the second half of the 15th century in the Muslim court of Gujarat, seems to have been directly influenced by the Persian manuscript of the Maqammat-i-Hariri, of Bibilothque Nationale, Paris. The style of the illustrations seems to be largely uninfluenced by the then Indian popular style of the Jain manuscript.

Another profusely illustrated manuscript entitled Dastan-i-Amir Hamza4 depicting the romantic adventures of Hamza, the prophet Muhammad’s uncle, now preserved in the collection of Sitzing Pressusischer Kueturbesitz, Tubingen, West Germany, is also attributed to the late 15th century and as having been painted in North India stylistically, it’s quite crude and resembles the style of the Sikandar-nawab. Male figures may be particularly observed for their Persian origin.

The manuscript of the Gulistan-i-Sa’di5 is a Persian poem, now in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi. It is generally attributed to the illustrator, Haji Mahmood, a Persian refugee who arrived at the court of Mandu when Shaibain Khan Uzbek captured Herat in 1507.

All the illuminations in this manuscript are rendered in the Persian decorative style. In painting figures and apparel, the artist seems to have adopted a naturalistic approach but the figures are static and expressionless. The colours used are mostly analogous in character. The sky is either gold a

2. 15-16 Century Period of Iran and Persian History.
4. Epic Stories in Persian.
5. Poetic Collection of Sileikh Sad’ls.
blue. The clouds are depicted as in the Chinese style. The hillocks are shown in purple, green and blue in the usual Persian convention. In the interior scenes, the designs are of a variety of patterns, mostly geometrical. Indeed there is hardly any element in the painting which can be considered Indian either in form or spirit.

The chronology of a group of manuscript paintings usually referred to as the 'Chaurapan-Chasika' series has been, the topic of controversy among a group of art historians. One school of scholars associates these paintings with the art of Rajasthan before the establishment of the Mughal school. The other school is of the opinion that Rajsthani miniature school neither existed prior to the advent of the Mughals nor was it contemporary with the early Mughal school of painting.

The important contribution to our knowledge has been made in regard to the history of the origin of Mughal painting itself. Significantly, it relates to the role played by Humayun in this context and young Akbar's role in it.

For a long time, it has been known that Babur and Humayun were keenly interested in the art of painting. Babur, like his ancestors was a great connoisseur of poetry, painting and philosophy. He could critically appreciate them. In his memoirs the Tuzuk-i-Baburi, he has commented on Bihzad's painting, pointing out certain defects with remarks that "there is no equal to Bihzad in portrait painting, but he is an expert in the execution of bearded figures only. If he has to portray the figure without beard, he always elongated the chin". With great appreciation Babur also mentioned the name of Shah Muzzaffar, the painter, who excelled in the representation of hair style with accuracy and delicate rendering.

'Abdus-Samad Shirin Qalam', who is equally excellent in his contemporaries. He too has painted a polo ground. "There are two poles on either sides and riders are shown playing on the ground, who are followed by attendant carrying polo-sticks. On a rice grain he has painted a big talar in which two figures are
represented setting up a stove beside a pond. One of them is preparing chicken cutlets.

"A specimen of Mir Saiyyid Ali’s painting, a work of Abdus Samad, who has painted Navroz, one painting by Maulana Darvesh Muhammad, and also another painting by Maulana Yusef are being sent herewith. In future, God willing some more works of these artists will be sent to you”.

Firstly, its a well-known fact that Indian painting’s contact with Persian has a long history, at any rate from the 10th and 11th centuries AD. Such contacts have left underable influence on the frescoes of some of the Jain caves at Ellora belonging to those two centuries, if not a century earlier, on the west Indian manuscript illustrations of particularly the 14th, 15th and early 16th centuries, and on a number of book illustrations excited in the Delhi and regional courts of the 15th and early 16th centuries. More Chandra and Khandawala have also deduced sound reasons to assume that illustrated manuscripts of Mongol, Turkman and Timurid origins were imported to the courts of these Sultan’s periodically.

If Persian painting is the only source of the origin being claimed, which should be, if not the whole that atleast a major part of the Mughal school, then how is it that never before Akbar came to India’s throne, did a school of painting like that of the Mughal court, or even a similar school, come to being. Whatever Indian styles and forms that are generally referred to in this connection and which are assumed to have contributed towards the synthesis, namely, the west Indian manuscript, the local styles of courts of Delhi, Mandu and Jaunpur, were available and well-known to the Sultanate court as well.

The Mughal painting even in its formative period, completely different from the paintings can be dated in the 15th and early 16th centuries. The evident assumption is that there must have been elements of other forms and styles of Indian painting which aided the making of what Mughal painting came to be during Akbar’s reigns. One of the objectives of this

9. New Year’s day.
10. Corrupt from of ‘Mughal’.

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thesis, therefore is to find out the other Indian styles and forms that west Indian and Sultanate which made Mughal painting so very, unique from contemporary Persian painting—different in form, style, spirit and atmosphere.

Secondly the *Tazkir-i-Humayun Va Akbar* by *Biyazid Biyat* gives rise to a significant point of the form and styles of painting practised by the five Persian artists, who were imported by Humayun from Persia and who joined him at Kabul.

A careful scrutinization of the quotation would exhibit, quite convincingly, that these artists, including *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and *Abdus Samad* were true to the Persian tradition—miniaturist in the vain. The themes chosen and the technique followed are certainly of the miniature. Apart from this, it is general knowledge that Persian painting was basically a miniaturists art.

Humayun had gathered a group of artists, who may have been the contributors to the laying of the foundation of a small royal studio. It appears that after the recovery of his lost empire and re-establishment at Delhi he did not waste time in organizing a *Tasvir-Khana* as an adjunct of the royal library. But, we have no proof at our disposal to show that he recruited local talent or to prove that he had any intention of organizing a royal atelier on so large a scale so as to be able to undertake a vast project like that of the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah*. All that the two painting of the *Gulistan Album* of the Gulistan Library, both by *Abdus Samad*, proof that one of the two was rendered in 1551 AD when the artist had not yet arrived at the Kabul court and the other shows Akbar taking lessons from *Abdus Samad*, may be at Kabul. It is to be noted that both paintings are typically Persian in form and style. There is no trace in these paintings of what Mughal painting eventually came to be, even during the early years of Akbar’s rule.

Besides, whatever other proofs we have in the above written facts, does not signify that Humayun ever aimed at organizing any activity of the sort

11. Arti Studio.
that Akbar did for the production of the works such as the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamza*, the *Tutinama*, the *Anwar Suhaili* etc. All that Humayun’s *Tasvir-Khana* seems to prove is that an art studio which was like what other medieval emperors, kings and nobles maintained as part of their libraries. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to discuss the origin of the Mughal paintings’ history, but more so formally and stylistically.

Abul Fazl mentions in the *Ain-i-Akbari* that “the number of masterpieces of painting increased with the encouragement given to the art. Persian, books, both prose and poetry were ornamented with pictures and a very large number of paintings were thus collected. The story of the Hamza was represented in 12 volumes and eleven painters made the most astonishing illustrations for no fewer than 1,400 passages of the story”.

Illustration to the "*Dastan-i-Amir Hamza*", "Fairies call on Hamza to kill the Dragon".

The very first series of paintings executed by the newly founded Mughal studio is at the same time the most remarkable and unique in conception and quality. In size the surviving folios from the gigantic 12-volume project of the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, are the largest of all Mughal paintings; in spirit and expression these are also the most powerful and well composed.

In his childhood Akbar was fond of hearing the stories of the heroic exploits of *Amir Hamza*, a mythical figure from Seistan, having the same name as that of the Prophet’s uncle. According to one Mughal court chronicle, Humayun initiated the project to prepare 1200 to 1400 large-sized paintings painted on cloth pasted on one side of the folio. Another contemporary writer tells us that it took long 15 years to complete the series. A later historian adds that the project was directed by *Mir Saiyyid Ali* and later on by *Khwaja Abdus-Samad*, and as many as fifty painters comparable with the great Persian master *Bihzad* worked to complete this vast undertaking. Without trying to reconcile between these conflicting evidences we may

conclude that the project was initiated around 1565-67 on the orders of Akbar and completed by 1580-82.

Not more than 160 illustrations from this unique series have survived, mostly in European and American collections. The present painting and the following one are from the rich holding of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Akbar was fond of fables and animal stories in the childhood and early youth. Stories from the age-old Sanskrit Classics, the *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa* were compiled and rendered in Arabian by *'Ibn-al-Muqaffa'* in the eighth century. This celebrated Arabic version, *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, was translated into Persian as *Anwar-i-Suhaili* in the fifteenth century by *Husain Waiz-i-ibn 'Ali al-Kashifi*. Several illustrated manuscripts of this popular work were prepared in Persia and the Islamic world. At least five profusely illustrated copies of *Anwar-i-Suhaili* or its alternate version, *'Iyar-i-Danish'* , were prepared by the Mughal painters (and also at Ahmedabad).

The school's copy, clearly dated in 978 Hijra/1570, containing twenty-seven miniatures of exquisite workmanship, is a key material in the study of early development of the Mughal style. It was prepared when the Hamza project was in progress. Yet the illustrations, none of which bears an attribution, are of a rich and luxurious nature not encountered in the large paintings of the *Hamz Nama*. These also show a happy blending of Persian conventionalism and Mughal realism.

"In this painting the hunter is about to shoot an arrow to the fleeting blackbuck, both rendered with great care and liveliness. The sky is touched up with strokes of green, white, blue, orange and gold. The trees and flowering plants are more naturalistically rendered, though the rocks arranged in coulisses and the river with its plastic turbulence and stony bank follow the set Persian tradition." 13

*Hamza* is a massive work comprising 1,400 paintings, took fifteen years to complete. The Persian flavour is extremely strong, but Indian elements are evident in the shape of faces or the vitality and majesty of an elephant.

13. The Hunter and the Blackbuck, illustration to the "Anwar-i-Suhaili".
Other works that were illustrated in Akbar's reign included the 'Khamsa of Nizami', a classic of Persian literature, the romantic tales of Laila and Majnu. 'Shah Nama', the great epic of ancient Persian, 'Razm Nama' the Persian translation of the epic Mahabharata, 'Akbar Nama', the history of his own rule.

Golden City of Dwaraka: This miniature comes from a now dispersed Razm Namah. Though their style may be slightly later, these are almost the equal of the paintings in the celebrated Jaipur copy. The miniature represents the city of Dwaraka, newly built in the instigation of Krishna. It replaced Mathura after the ferocious attacks of the demon King Jarasandha had caused it to be given up.

Shah Nama was the beautiful manuscript. All the manuscript were destroy, the manuscript does not seem to have survived. Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, that sumptuously illustrated copy of the Shah Nama had first been deposited in the royal library, this wonderful miniature showing a "well laid garden of beautiful trees, creeper and flowing shrubs with formal water—sources fed from a sport carved as a bull-head is a closely related to the garden of the Hamza Nama".14

The miniature shows princess Rudaba, daughter of Mihrab, king of Kabul, a petit beauty clad in Mughal costume, lets down her long tresses as a rope for the prince zal to climb up to her palace tower.

Badauni has rather critically recorded that, "Akbar had the shahnamah and the story of Amir Hamzah, transcribed into 17 volumes in 15 years and had spend a large quantity of gold in illustrating it".15

"Mulla Allauddin Qizvini" in his Nafais-alMaathir states that, "it is now seven years that in compliance with the Royal command of his Imperial Majesty Akbar, Mir has been busy in the Imperial Library, preparing an illustrated edition of the assemblies described in the romance of Amir Hamza. The idea of producing the unique edition is an invention of the radiant genius of his Imperial Majesty and

the Mir is trying to complete it with scrupulous care. It is in fact a book the like of which no one has even seen....” Imperial Majesty (Humayun) Mir Sayyid Ali has been busy in the Imperial Library, preparing an illustrated edition of the assemblies in the romance of Amir Hamzah”.  

These contemporary references are enough to prove that the work of the Hamza series was started as per Akbar’s command. But some confusion pertaining to its date of execution still exists.

Rai Krishnadasa comments in this regard that “Abdus Qadir Badauni, the plain-speaking chronicler of Akbar, observes that by 1582, when the work on illustrating the Mahabharata was commenced, the illustrations of the Hamza Nama and Shah Nama had been completed, the work having been done over 15 years. In this way, the period of Hamza Nama series falls between 1567 and 1582, if the period of 15 years is to be calculated from 1582”.

But this argument raises an important issue. If the work of the Hamza Nama was started in 1567 AD, the twelfth reignal year of Akbar, then we should be told what happened during the long gap of 12 years after Akbar’s occasion? It is however, difficult to believe that there had been a sterile period in the court atelier inherited by Akbar, as assumed by S.C. Welch. Even Badauni’s statement does not help us that the two manuscripts namely, the Shah Nama and the Hamza Nama had been the most expensive at it took 15 years to complete them.

Shahnawaz Khan mentions that the “Hamza Nama was bound in twelve volumes and each volume contained 100 folios and each folio contained two pictures”.  

The total comes to 2,400 pictures. Out of this large number, only 150 still survive in different collections still known to us.

These paintings are executed on fine cloth of various sizes. Two folios in Bharat Kala Bhawan are of two different sizes—61cmx71cm and 44.5cmx61cm. Similarly, other folios belong to Vienna and British

Museums have varied sizes of which a few have been mentioned by Emmy Wellesz.

It appears from the statement of Shahnawaz Khan that 50 painters were engaged to complete this voluminous work,° but no painter has been named, either on the painting or on the margins. Since the chief artists Mir Saiyyid Ali and Khuwaja Abdus Samad were suprintending the work, the Persian influence in the paintings was inevitable. Clearly, whatever work was done under their guidance bears the stamp of the Persian school. In spite of this, there are certain other elements in the Hamza painting which are to be noted. Early attempts at synthesis of Persian and Indian styles can be witnessed in numerous Hamza paintings.

Persian ethnic types are very common in the Hamza paintings, both in male and female figuration, this was to be expected since the theme was Persian. But, in Persian paintings, the proper representation of a human male figure is rarely shown in profile; there are generally shown in frontal or three-quarter view. In the Hamza, however there are very many paintings which are not only rendered in profile, but are also very skilfully rendered, expressive and fully alive.

In Persian painting movements of figures are slow and thin faces do not depict any emotion or feeling. But, in the Hamza paintings, figures move vigorously and contributed dynamism to the entire composition which is missing completely in an average Persian painting. Some of the figures are garbed in the traditional Persian style, but the majority of them are the costumes and turbans conforming to the style prevalent during Akbar’s time in India. The most important feature, however, is the human figuration of the Hamza paintings, it is rendered in bold, rounded lines and the three-dimensional roundness of form that are important to them.

These two features along with the dynamism of the figures in the Hamza paintings mark them as somewhat different from the general trend of classical Persian painting out of the 15th and 16th centuries.

It is a strange happening that Persian ethnic types in female figuration is extremely rare if not completely absent. In fact, even in the Hamza paintings which are the earliest Mughal court paintings, female figuration, speaking generally, is typically Indian, not only in appearance, stances and movements but also in costumes, ornaments and head-dresses. Truly, the female figures of the Hamza paintings appear to have been painted in a tradition which is closely linked to the 16th century ‘Chaurakanchasika Series’ of paintings. In these two, one cannot miss the modelled lines and the three-dimensional rounded vision which impart to all figures, men and animals, trees and places etc. a depth and dynamism, which are absent from classical Persian painting.

Even at this early stage of Mughal painting, there was a fusion between the classical Persian manner and method on one hand and what may be termed as Indian manner and method on the other. The bold, roundly modelled lines with shades, the three-dimensional volume and the dynamic movement came presumably from the Indian classical tradition. It is not impossible, that part of it may have been influenced by contemporary European Renaissance painting, as for example, the drapery of some of the figures in the Hamza painting, the naturalistic treatment of the trees and the three-dimensional vision in a general way.

It is not merely the elephant which is represented naturalistically in its full rounded volumes brought about by round modelled lines and tonal qualities of colour but all other animals as well, except the horse and the bull which are usually done in the Persian manner. The dynamism and naturalism of form which is imparted to the Hamza paintings is very different from the static feel of the Persian paintings. Moreover, quite some times, some animals are represented in a suprisingly naturalistic manner, for example the figures of lion, monkey, goats in the painting described as Kausaj finds Zamurrad sleeping.

Here, in the treatment of these figures are noticed a new-method Chiaroscuro work, which is found either in the classical Persian or Indian tradition. I
have selected only a few paintings to show the synthesis of Persian and Indian style.

1. Kausaj finds Zamurad sleeping.\textsuperscript{20}
2. Ibrahim carried to battle by gints.\textsuperscript{21}

These paintings are actually landscape set in architectural frameworks. This manuscript consists of the duality of the heroic and romantic deeds of Amir Hamza and his associates, the general trend of the illuminated folios remained narrative.

"A much analysed painting in the one the shows the great, Zamurad, sleeping and being watched by Kausaj. The right top corner has a rural scene which is subjectively completely unconnected with the main subject of the painting. This rural scene consists of two women coming to draw water from the village well, groups of crows and buffaloes in the neighbourhood, a shepherd, a man milking a buffalo, couple of houses with thatched roofs, among other things. Not only that, the two women have typically Indian facial and physiognomical features and Indian dress and ornaments, the other figures also are very Indian in appearance and environs. So are the figures of the peacock, the cranes and the monkeys and the environment created by the rich provincial vegetation in the larger area of the painting."

It's quite evident that the rural scene at the top right corner was for filling up the space left in the larger composition which was thematically, formally and stylistically different, and that it represents one of the various indigenous forms and styles that were current in North India in pre-Akbar times. From its formal character it appears that it was the folkish prototype of what later contributed towards the making of Rajasthani painting.

But, it was not merely that the Persian and the Indian that were being synthesised into one integrated form and style. Here and there certain features which appear to have sourced their inspiration from the paintings of the European Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries have already been referred to.

\textsuperscript{20} Collection: Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
\textsuperscript{21} Collection: Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.
The manuscript of *Tilasm* and *Zodiac* preserved in the Raza Library, Rampur contains 16 folios only, each folio being 18"x13". The paintings have been rendered on both sides of each paper folio and are lived with a coarse line. The paintings do not carry any signature, nor is there only proof in the manuscripts or in the paintings to depict that the paintings were executed under emperor Akbar's command. But the form and style of paintings have a very close affinity to those of the *Hamza* paintings and their very quality suggests direct royal patronage and a data which is very close to that of the *Hamza*. Obviously, the theme of magic too is closely related to the magical subject of the *Hamza*. "*Akbar in his younger days, appears to have been very fond of these magical stories.*"

For analysis, following three paintings have been chosen by me.

i) *A man utters unintelligible words.*

ii) *Slave girls sporting in a stream.*

iii) *A man resembling a fakir.*

The first painting presents a well-dressed man in red *chakdar-jamah*, green turban, white scarf and blue shoes, sitting on a rock and appears to be addressing at bird resting on a tree at the left. The second illustration depicts a stream flowing out of a rock, in which four girls frolick. The third painting presents a male figure with a staff, seated on a rock piece; at first sight the figure looks like Shiva holding a trident, seated in the Himalayas.

The compositions in the first two paintings are naturalistic with a sense of space green trees, yellow flowers and blue sky are conceived and worked out from this approach. The naturalistic treatment is specially obvious in the treatment of trees. This treatment, as already indicated, is so similar to the treatment of trees in contemporary European Renaissance painting, that a contact between the two cannot altogether be ruled out.

Yet, simultaneously, the conventional Persian approach and treatment is strongly marked in the rendering of rocks and water. In third painting

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23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
referred to above, Persian features are most noticeable in the rendering of the chinat tree and golden sky.

But, the most un-Persian like character of the paintings is visible in the treatment of numerous motifs which have been clearly given a three-dimensional effect. Depth is created through light and shades at places where needed, and the pattern of light and shade move as per the formation of various motifs. For example, the foreground rock is horizontal, the left one is vertical and the top right one circular. The strokes of brush and pattern of shade correspond therefore to the same direction, and result in a dynamic pattern round the figure.25

Human figuration in all the three compositions had been arranged so as to suggest that they were rendered on-the-spot; so lovely and natural are they. The gestures, facial contours, anatomical proportions, in fact, their physiognomy and movement speak of their frank Indian affiliation. The figure with many faces, looking in different directions, the orange staff black and white ethereal skin all seem to have been lifted from Hindu religious motifs. The group of girls sporting in water with their garments hung on a tree beside the stream, remind one immediately of the famed Krishna-Lila episode.

The sharp, bold lines delicately shaded, help bring-out the figures of men and women and the hillocks in relief, these lines give a sense of depth and in their broad brush-strokes give the impressive mural quality which characterises the Hamza painting.

But the paintings of the Tilasm and Zodiac are not as crowded or dynamic as those of the Hamza. Here, only the relevant figures are introduced, as one finds in Persian paintings. Yet, the nature of the composition of these few figures is such and they are so much dramatised that they appear to be of a different world of vision and execution. This world is of traditional Indian art. Here too, a creative fusion between Persian and Indian was taking place.

25. Art and Persia - Dr. Anis Faruqi.
Similarly, in Akbari paintings, no authentic portrait of the harem as seen in whatever female figures were depicted in the paintings were either servants or court dancers or musicians.

The anatomy of Indian and Persian is the same as the Akbari paintings, the only difference being that the figures in the Akbari paintings are more proportionate and well-ordered. In pre-Akbari indigenous paintings, male figures generally appear in a dhoti with a long scarf over a naked torso.

In the female figures, there were two kinds. Women were dressed in a sari or skirt and blouse. Often there is a petka, the end of which goes below up to the ankles of the figure. A transparent or opaque odhni was also worn. The decorations of pearl jewellery and ornaments are used profusely. However, from the illuminated folios, it is clear that the latter type of costume was extensively worn both in the lower and upper class of society of that period.

In the Akbar paintings too, the later category remained prominent following the tradition of the manuscripts: *Laurchanda*, *Mahapurana*, *Chaurapanchasika*, *Geeta Govinda* etc. The earlier Akbari paintings like the *Tuti Nama* certain a strong Indian traditional influence in the execution of female figures, but in the later manuscript like the *Tuti Nama*, there is a strong Indian traditional influence in the rendered in the female figures, but in the later manuscripts like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, this style becomes more sophisticated and the transparent effect of the odhni is extremely elaborate.

There is also a tradition of continuity in the appearance of male-type costumes in the Akbari paintings. The *chakdar-jamah*, narrow long petka, narrow trousers and trousers which were medieval Indian costumes in vogue had also been followed by the Mughals. The proof of this fashion in pre-Akbari India can be traced through the manuscripts of the *Chaurapanchasika* and the *Laurchanda*. However, it appears that the Kulahdar turban which was fashionable during the Sultanate period was

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not worn in Akbar's reign and thus, it is rarely depicted in the Akbari manuscript painting.

*Tuti Nama* (1560–1568 AD) is a romantic composition centering round the story of a parrot. It was written by Ziauddin in the early 14th century and copied in the court in 1560's. It appears that three copies of this manuscript are extant one in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, the other in the Chester Beatty Library and the third in the Library of Baron ES Feuillet de Conches. The Baron's copy contains 103 miniatures. According to Gray, the Chester Beatty manuscript is also lavishly illustrated and the range of colours appear to be more Indian than Persian. Here, the following three illustrations are reproduced from the Cleveland copy.

i) *The lady talking to a parrot.*

ii) *A fowler extolling the virtues of a parrot by Basawan.*

iii) *Within a walled enclosure, monkey bites a young man by Daswant.*

Compositionally, the first painting frankly reminds us of the painting of the *Laurachanda-Charuapanchasika manuscript* of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. It is symmetrical in arrangement; the pavilions with projecting cornices; the placement of decorative pots follow convention. In the second painting also, the artist-Basawan, seems to have followed practically the same architectural feature and compositional scheme.

But Daswant, the painter of the third illustration appears to have been inspired more by the Persian tradition, since he worked under the direct supervision of the Persian Master Abdus Samad from his very early life. The decorative and geometrical elements in his composition are handled very efficiently and depict professional skill. One fact is these paintings which deserves special mention is that the architectural setting is treated in a flat two-dimensional manner, without proper consideration of perspective.

The presentation of landscapes, generally, stick to the Persian tradition. This is very clear in Daswant's painting where the sky is hired in gold and
trees are treated quite decoratively. But Basawan renders the sky and trees somewhat differently; he appears to have adopted the contemporary European manner in the rendering of the sky and the trees in the background.

But in the *Tuti Nama* a Kulahdar turban is shown but there is no noticeable projection of the kulah similar to the style appearing in the Mahapurana of 1540.

*Anwar-i-Suhaili* (1570 A.D.) this manuscript, a book of fables, dated 1570 AD and belongs to the collection of the school of oriental and African studies, University of London. It is important in the sense that this is the only illustrated manuscript of the early Mughal period which is dated and shows the starting of Indian naturalism introduced into a Persian background. The flush-cut composition is the principal characteristic of these painting as can be seen in the following two folios selected by me.

*i) Monkey and bears.*

*ii) Monkey.*

It seems that originally, for the text matters, some more space on the left side of the folios was given by the margin drawer, but may be the space for the requisite illustration was later felt to be inadequate. Consequently, the original middle margins were removed. The impressions still exist, can be seen clearly. However, in both the compositions, two major elements namely, the landscape and animal figuration deserve notice.

The general treatment of the hillocks, the use of decorative and spray-type trees, the water streams as also the trees extending well beyond the margin give ample evidence to indicate that the artist seems to be influenced by Persian traditions. But a closer study of the paintings reveals that the general atmosphere and treatment are much more simple than the Persian classical tradition.

33. Ibid.
The most fashionable turban of that time which Akbar himself called the 'Sees Sobha' was perhaps the approved official turban. It was literary an improved style of the turban which appeared in the Laurchanda-Chaurapanchasika and the Mahapurana. But, this very head-dress remained in vogue during Akbar's reign and thus, in almost all the contemporary paintings male figures are shown wearing the same turbans appear in different styles covering a period commencing from the styles of the Persian manuscript of Jami-al-Tawarith of Rashiuddin to the contemporary Akbar's styles.

In the pre-Mughal Indian paintings, the gestures of figures were restricted. They moved only in certain directions and as a consequence, the static, manneristic compositions are observable. But this rigidity of figures disappeared in the Akbari paintings. For example, in the earlier manuscripts like the Tuti Nama and the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, human beings seem very natural with a wide repertoire of poses and stances. In the later manuscripts like the Babur Nama and Akbar Nama, there is a good amount of heroic and adventurous display. Thus, it is proved beyond doubt that the only objective of the Akbari painters was to capture significant movements of human life and give them an eternal character. The same staticness of figures as aforementioned in the case of pre-Mughal paintings was also a chief characteristic of Persian painting before the advent of Bihzad. May be, for the very first time, Bihzad attempted to break this monotony by representing figures as realistically as possible, but it appears that he neglected the expressions of the figures. Therefore, the Bihzadian figures lack feeling. Realising this negative aspect of Persian painting, the Akbari painters tried to full in this gap. Their brush could skillfully depict expressions of anger, joy, pain, sorrow, disappointment and surprise. In the Akbar Nama by the Victoria and Albert Museum, there is an illustration depicting emperor Akbar in a fierce rage, dressed in a dhoti and scarf, felling Adhani Khan with the blow of his fist and having him flung headlong from the walls of the harem terrace. This is one of the most successful and representative examples of capturing the mood.
In pre-Mughal Indian painting, the themes were mostly romantic and religious. Therefore, the battle scenes and depiction of soldiers in Indian painting had been very few. But, the representation of the army in the Mahapurana manuscripts is very coarse and puppet-like. The soldiers seen in the Lakpasutra and Kalata Chauja Katha are evidently Persian in character.

Conversely, Persian being a militant race had been basically interested in wars. A soldier was given a heroic rank. The Persian Shah Nama is a testimonial to this fact and is full of heroic events and battle fields.

Sufis and saints were popular themes in Persian painting. The same tradition was continued in Akbari paintings. Akbar was a devout believer of Sufism. Thus, the manuscripts of historical treatises like the Akbarnamah and the Babur Nama depict many instances showing Sadhus and saints in their various pre-occupations:—meditation and rendering social service. In the Akbar Nama of Victoria and Albert Museum, there is an illustration depicting a fierce armed clash between two groups of Sadhu which is unique in its character.

The other salient feature which Akbari painters introduced in their painting was the exposition of different classes of people. It seems that this was attempted in Persian paintings first by Bihzad. For example, in his one of his paintings he has skilfully shown a group of labourers busy in building a fortress. This gives evidence to the fact the Bihzad studied the lower classes of people very closely. Similarly, in the Akbar Nama and many other contemporary manuscripts such working people very shown in great detail. The boatmen, water bearers, betel sellers, labourers, disabled people etc have been very naturalistically rendered.

The appearance of Basawan’s name in the Tuti Nama and his use of indigenous aforementioned architectural settings in his composition, is evidence that in North India, if not in other places, a special architectural pattern was used in painting to the extent of mannerism. There are numerous pictures depicting a nayak-nayika composition within a verandah type **
chamber. In the Kalpasutra, the Aranyaka Purana and the Laurusdha, the pavilion is simple but in the Bhagwat Purana and the Chaurapanchasika, the pavilions are profusely embellished with designs and patterns. Basawan also used decorative patterns in the pavilions.

In the Hamza, the architectural patterns have taken a synthetic shape. Both Persian and Indian standard architectural prototypes seemed to have been rendered with a distinguishing aptitude for decorative realism. However, gradually, the decorative features began disappearing from the Akbari painting. The architectural settings became majorly realistic, probably based on contemporary architectural designs. Such instance can be sited from manuscript like Akbar Nama, Babur Nama and Baharistan-i-Jami.

Our analysis of the painting of the Akbari studio, clearly shows that it was his tradition which was largely used to bear upon the imparted classical tradition from Persia. In the process, inspite of being manuscript illuminations and small scale album painting Akbari painting came to attain the quality of large scale.

Mughal painting of the Akbari period, happen to be a creative fusion of all the elements referred to.

**MY FINDING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION**

This title assumes the existence of more than a single Indian style painting adopted by artists of Indian origin which fused in work a singular or more styles of contemporary Persia. A detailed study of paintings of the former period of Akbar's reign prove this assumption to be correct. It's as a well-known and accepted fact that the Mughal school was unique when compared to the schools a styles which had preceded or succeeded it.

Though it is a fact that the Mughal school originated from the Timurid and Safavid styles of Persia yet it achieved an identity
and integrity which was unique to it. The extent to which this identity and integrity was achieved has been studied exhaustively in the recent years and new facts and information have come to light. This research and analysis of new materials has been conducted by well-versed scholars.

It has been noted that the Jain style of manuscript illustration influenced the Mughal school and vice-versa. In certain paintings of this school of the 15th and early sixteenth century characteristics typical to the contemporary Persian painting can be clearly seen. However, at the same time, one must state that the nature and character of this fusion and its consequences which can be seen in the paintings themselves have nothing in common with the what happened in Mughal painting even in its very early stages.

The manuscript of the Diwan-i-Amir Khusaru, a Persian text of Indian origin has illustrations whose styles appears to be majorly uninfluenced by the then popular Indian style of the Jain manuscripts. Other profusely illustrated manuscripts also may be particularly observed for their Persian origin.

The discovery of the Nimatnamah (the book of delicacies) is a milestone in the history of pre-Mughal painting. From the illuminations, it seems that its artists attempted to Indianize the Persian tradition. Although, the delicacy and sophistication seen in the Herat Style is not present, yet there is a favouring of greater simplification. Similarly the Muflahul-Fuzala, a Persian lexicograph, the Gulistan-i-Sadi also indicate the same strong Shūaz school tradition.

The chronology of a group of manuscript illustration usually referred to as the Chaurapan-Chasika series has been the topic of controversy among a group of art historians. One school of scholars associates these with the pre-Mughal Rajput school

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whereas another school thinks that the Rajput miniature school was not-existence prior to or contemporary to the Mughal school.

Numerous paintings of manuscripts such as the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, Tutinama etc. have very many features that happen to the typical characteristics of the illustrations of the Laur-Chanda-Chaurapanchasika group referred to above, simultaneously with an increasing amount of features drawn from contemporary Persian paintings of both metropolitan and provincial centres.

But the most important contribution to our knowledge has been made in regard to the history of the origin of Mughal painting itself. Significantly, it relates to the role played by Humayun and also Akbar's contribution to it.

The tale of Humayun's exile at Persian Shah Tahmasp's Court, his interest in the painting school that was being followed in the court, his techniques, his personal relationship with numerous Persian artists, the invitations he extended to Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, who finally accompanied him to Delhi are well-known. New facts, however, have also been discovered.

Indian painting's contact with their Persian counterparts has a long history, at any rate from the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. The Persian paintings and manuscript illustrations influenced the Indian paintings to an extent. But, the question which arises is as to why, despite the influences of the Persian as well as the Deccan schools, the sultanate court painting was not at all similar to the Mughal school?

In answer to this query once assumes that there must have existed several other forms and styles of Indian painting which aided the making of what Mughal painting came to be during Akbar's reign. Whatever factual information we have does not
signify that Humayun ever aimed at organizing any activity of the sort that Akbar did for works such as. The Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, the Tutinama etc. All that Humayun's Tasvir-Khana seems to prove to that an art studio was what other medieval emperors and were maintained as part of their libraries.

Persian ethnic types are very common in the Hamza paintings, both in male and female figuration. But unlike the Persian paintings, the human male figure is often shown in profile, its not in the Persian general frontal or three-quarter view. The figures are skilfully rendered, impressive and fully alive unlike their Persian counterparts. The faces have vigorous expression and the entire composition unlike the static and expressionless Persian paintings. The most important feature of the Hamza paintings is that it's rendered in bold, rounded lines and there is a three-dimensional roundness of form.

It's obvious that in human figuration, depiction of nature, the artist has attempted to draw in a time-to-life manner.

It's peculiar that female figuration is extremely rare in Persian ethnic types. In the Hamza paintings, the female figures seem to have been painted in a tradition which is closely linked to the 16th century Chaurapanchasika series referred to earlier. We know as a certainty that even at this early stage of Mughal painting, there was a fusion between the classical Persian and Indian classical tradition. The dynamism and naturalism of form which is imparted to the Hamzah paintings as, very different from the static feel of the Persian paintings. One also notices the neo-method chiaroscuro work, which is either in classical Persian or Indian tradition. Three dimensional effects with aerial perspectives have also been shown. The landscapes are however in the famed Shiraz style but with greater use of bold outlines and shading.
Indigenous Indian and Persian floral and plants motifs have been used.

It is also noted that there is a deliberate attempt to present figures in their relative sizes and proportions as to give the impression of perspective, which we assume indicates knowledge and experience of perspective in Renaissance European art.

The paintings of the Tilasm and Zodiac also follow naturalistic treatment which is similar to that of contemporary European Renaissance painting. Yet, Persian treatment is also strongly marked in the depiction of many elements unlike Persian paintings, three-D effect has been obtained by using the light and shade Renaissance technique. The Human figuration are however frank in their Indian affiliation. Here too, a creative synthesis of the Persian and Indian was taking place.

The romance and eventual marriage of Dewal Devi with Prince Khizir Khan than inspired Amir Khusrau to write a poem on this theme, written in Nastaliq now with the National Museum. The paintings are partly decorative and partially narrative. The style is somewhat Persian in some paintings and like the Laurchanda-Chaurapan-Chasika in others. What is very noticeable in the Indian affiliation, are the strong lines, roundness of limbs and drapes. Unlike Persian miniature, the glaze and luminosity have been subdued.

The Tuti Nama is a romantic composition centering around a parrot's story. Compositional and architectural schemes of it's paintings are similar to that of the Laurchanda-Chaurapanchasika though Basawan's treatment is more sophisticated. But some of the paintings and characteristic, specially the landscapes are in the Persian tradition. The human figuration is also in the
Chaurapanchasika style coupled with the western light and shade treatment.

The Anwar-i-Suhaili is a book of fables. It's important in the content that it is the only illustrated manuscript of the early Mughal period which is dated and shows the beginning of Indian naturalism imparted to a Persian setting. Though the general landscape of the paintings appear to be rendered in the Persian tradition, but the general atmosphere and treatment is much more relaxed and similar than the Persian. The effect of sciagraphy and other techniques adapted from the western Renaissance and Indian classical traditions can be seen. The rendering of animals is as close to real-life as possible, an attempt to create a 3-D effect has also been noted. Subjugation of the glaze and luminosity of the Persian tradition has result in a soothing effect.

The human figures in Akbari paintings are proportionate and well ordered. However, no authentic portraits of the harem can be seen. The common women and the court dancers and attendants who were shown depict a strong Indian traditional influence. Both the male and female figures are smartly attired according to that period's fashion and follow body contours. The extensively applied style of modelling is European. For the first time, in Akbari paintings, one can see the skillfully depicted the various, human emotions.

Battlefield scenes are forceful, strong and active. Sadhu's and saints are also painted often. Another salient feature which Akbari painters introduced in their painting was the exposition of different classes of people.

The architectural motifs in Akbari paintings are both Persian and Indian prototypes. Though the early setting had a distinguishing aptitude for the decorative. Later settings became majorly realistic.
The depiction of trees, foliage and landscapes in the Akbari paintings marked the beginning of realistic representation. Both Persian and Indian foliage was rendered, but the initial decorative aspect disappeared. Thus, in the later Akbari manuscript they are seen only when absolutely necessary. The Akbari painter attempted to portray nature as accurately as possible. There is a preference for modelling through light and shade.

In rendering of landscapes, gave a true feeling of space within the picture-plane. A sense of space and perspective was created. Experts opine that this sense of expression was sourced from European aesthetics.

The Mughals were great lovers of nature, specially interested in water streams. Akbari manuscripts are illustrated with beautiful scenes where technique used was identical to the Persian one. Waves were given decorative finishes, stippling was also used. The fundamental structure of the stream is Persian, resembling the outer surface of fish-scales, and failed in creating the desired transparency.

The drawing mountains and hillocks, the Akbari painters followed the Persian tradition; but they appeared to have experimented with this motif in different ways. To add effect of volume, intensive modelling and roundness through sciagraphy was done. In the Akbari tradition, the Persian feature of incorporating certain shapes of animal and human figures was also copied.

Cosmetic clouds shown in the Akbari paintings were based on the western model, giving roundness, volume and simultaneously a feel of softness.

In depicting animals and birds, the painters had a command over the drawing and painting of both wild and domestic animals and

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the maximum realistic effects were produced. Birds were given
due preference and serious attempts were made to study them.
Consequently they were drawn and rendered as accurately as
possible.

The composition of the Akbari paintings was the same as the
Parsi tradition, which the paintings generally in a vertical formation.
The compositions compartmentalized the various elements using
walls, tents etc and fused them into a rhythmic singular space.
Apart from these "receptacles", the compositions in the Akbari
paintings also follow various European geometrical methods.

The use of "multiple perspectives" in plastic art form was popular
in the sub-continent of India and Persia during the medieval period.
It remained unchanged till about the end of the 16th century,
when Akbar's atelier was exposed to European painters for the
first time. Henceforth, volume and space in the Akbari paintings
compositions were created through the western device of light
and shade.

Akbar's painters adopted the linear rhythm of the Indian and Persian
traditions. The whole framework of the art of painting was based
on the line. The mastery of line reach such a pinnacle in Mughal
work that some historians have assumed that their work was
done by a one-hair brush (though it was never the case). In the
paintings of Basawan, however, depth is created by the use of
choppy lines and stippling.

In the context of colour, Akbari painters opted for a sober palate
using what is termed in modern times as the tempera medium,
which was a purely Indian device. The Akbari painters used this
medium very effectively. Through colours and their appropriate
application, painters had make their compositions life-like. As a
western device, the colours in the foreground of the picture plane
are of darken hues and the background lighter.

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Akbari painting, from the very beginning, was different from contemporary, classical Persian painting and there were numerous other elements in it which could not be explained by any reference to Persian art. These elements were mostly Indian, belonging to residual classical and contemporary medieval traditions. Akbar’s decision that he was an Indian, helped in the acclimatizing of his Persian cultural inheritance with that of India.

Indeed, the very social composition and historical character of Akbar’s studio conditioned and determined a varied form and style of art which was reflected, in various degrees of fusion and integration. Elements of various forms and traditions of painting like Persian, contemporary medieval Indian, ancient Indian, classical folk-art or whatever residue that remained of it and even contemporary European traditions.