INDO-IRANIAN PAINTING

The history of Mughal painting resembles that of architecture; it flourished while the Empire flourished, and declined when it decayed. And just as the style and design of the Mughal buildings were originally introduced by Akbar from Iran and were insensibly transformed by the contact of Hindu ideas into the mixed Indo-Persian or Mughal style, so the art of painting in the Mughal age, though Persian in origin, was actually the joint product of Persian and Hindu ideas, and developed into two schools of painting, known as Mughal and Rajput, both of which owe their success to the incentive and support of the descendants of Timur. Hindu painting, which was founded on the pictorial art of the Buddhist priests of early ages, is essentially different from the Persian art, which was closely connected with the artistic schools of the Far East; but when the early Mughal Emperors introduced the latter style of painting into India, it rapidly attracted ‘many of the indigenous artists of India-hereditary painters- trained for generations to the use brush’, and was adapted by them to suit their own particular ideas. The methods of the Hindu painters are not dissimilar to those of the Persian school, but ‘in its motives, in sentiment, and in temper generally’, the school which they evolved strikes an entirely different note. The Mughal school ‘confined itself to portraying the somewhat materialistic life of the Court, with its State functions, processions, hunting expeditions, and all the picturesque although barbaric pageantry of an affluent Oriental dynasty’, while the Hindu artists, ‘living mentally and bodily in another and more abstract environment, and working for Hindu patrons, pictured scenes from the Indian classics, domestic
subjects and illustrations of the life and thought of their motherland and its creed\textsuperscript{425}.

The Persian method of painting, imported by the Mughal and thus assimilated by the Hindu craftsmen of India, was itself a provincialized from Chinese art, owing its peculiar characteristics to the connexion with the Far Eastern schools established by the Mongols and continued by the Timurids. Its two greatest exponents in the period immediately preceding the introduction of the art to India were the famous Bihzad or Heart, and his pupil Aqa Mirak of Tabriz, Bihzad, indeed, who enjoyed the favour of Sultan Husain Bayqara and subsequently entered the service of Shah Ismail I, founder of the Safavid dynasty, marks the transition of Persian painting from the Mongoloid style of the Timurid age to the more refined style associated with the Safavid kings\textsuperscript{426}. A well-known authority has remarked that the most striking feature of the painting of China and Japan is its line, of Iran its line and colour, and of India its colour\textsuperscript{427}. These characteristics were assimilated, mingled, and combined in the products of the artists patronized by the Mughal emperors, resulting on the one hand in the gradual transformation of purely Muslim art, and on the other in a new development of Hindu pictorial representation. The process of decline of the purely Mongoloid of Chinese characteristics and the gradual evolution of the Indian style can be seen in the copy of the \textit{Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria} (The History of \textit{Timurid} Family) and a copy of the \textit{Badshah Nama}, both preserved in the \textit{Khuda Bakhsh} Library at Patna. In the former the rigidity of the Chinese

\textsuperscript{425} Percy Brown, \textit{\textquotedblleft Indian Painting under the Mughals\textquotedblright}.

\textsuperscript{426} Percy Brown, \textit{Ibid.}, Smith, H.F.A.

\textsuperscript{427} \textit{Ibid.}
outline has been softened, and the scenery is distinctly Indian; while in the latter
Chinese influence has disappeared altogether, and the Indian style
predominates\textsuperscript{428}.

The Mughal emperors are known to have been great patrons of art. Their
master artists initially hailed from centers of Persian art that flourished in Central
and Western Asia, or worked under the influence of these schools. Babur (1526-
1530 A.D./935-39 A.H.), says of the famous Persian master painter \textit{Bihzad} that
‘His work was very gainty but he did not draw beardless faces well; he used
greatly to lengthen the double chin (\textit{ghab ghab}); beard faces he drew
admirably’\textsuperscript{429}. Of another famous Iranian painter, \textit{Shah Muzaffar}, he writes that
‘he painted dainty portraits, representing the hair very daintily’\textsuperscript{430}. The \textit{Zafar
Nama} Ms (mentioned below), previously in \textit{Babur’s} collection, contained \textit{Bihzad’s}
paintings\textsuperscript{431}. ‘Adel has noticed two artists (gilder-ornamentalists): Maulana
Muhammad-i-Muzahhab\textsuperscript{432} and \textit{Arayish Khan} who were active at Babur’s court.

Humayun, while a fugitive, came into direct contact of the Iranian painters
active at Shah Tahmasb’s court in 1544 A.D./953 A.H. An Iranian wall-painting
hah Tahmasb entertaining Humayun’ in the Chihil Sutun Palace is unique

\textsuperscript{428} J.N. Sarkar, “\textit{Studies in Mughal India}”, pp. 290-91
\textsuperscript{429} \textit{Babur Nama}, Tr. By A.S. Beveridge, New Delhi, (rpt) 1979, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{430} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{431} T.W. Arnold, “\textit{Bihzad and his paintings in the Zafar Namah MS.}”, London, 1930; M.Brand and
G.D.Lowry,
\textit{“Akbar’s India”; “Art from the Mughal City of Victory”}, New York, 1985, pp. 91, 150, pl. on p. 89. It
Contains six double page illustrations by Bihzad. See also S.P. Veram, “\textit{Illustrations of Persian Classic
in Persian and Imperial Mughal Painting}” in The Making of Indo-Persian Culture, Indian and French
Studies (ed.)
\textsuperscript{432} Chahryar Adle, ‘\textit{New Data on the Dawn of Mughal Painting and Calligraphy}’, in ‘Alam and Delvoye,
The
Making of Indo-Persian Culture, pp. 190-91.
contemporary pictorial record of this event\textsuperscript{433}. Humayun utilized his forced sojourn at the Safavid court to gather notable Iranian painters around him\textsuperscript{434}.

Qazi Ahmad in his treatises on painters and calligraphers of Iran writes of Mir Musawwar and his son Mir Sayyid ‘Ali: “Mir Musawwar was a native of Badakhshan. He was a portraitist, working neatly, and made very pleasant and pretty images. When Humayun Padashah came to Iraq (-i-‘Ajam=Iran), he said to [Shah Tahmasp]: ‘If that Sultan of the Universe gives me Mir Musawwar, I shall send him from Hindustan one thousand Tumans (one Tuman was equal with 3 Lira sterling and 10 sent=3100 sterling lira) as present.’\textsuperscript{435}.

Humayun himself, in his letter to the Khan of Kashghar, described the skill of Dost Musawwar who was in his service in 959 A.H./1551-2 A.D.” And also being sent is one paper leaf containing a picture drawn in black by the learned Nadir-ul-‘Asr (‘Unique of the age’) Maulana Dost Musawwar who has long been in our service, and in painting is the Mani (Iranian painter and Prophet in Sassanid period) of the age. In gilding he is unique in these times and in setting [margin] lines (Khat bari) and writing has without doubt no equal\textsuperscript{436}.

Earlier for some time, Dost Muhammad had left Humayun to join the service of Humayun’s brother, Kamran Mirza at Kabul. Bayazid-i-Bayat writes:


\textsuperscript{434} Sukumar Ray, “Humayun in Persia”, Calcutta, 1948, the most comprehensive study of Humayun’s journey to Iran, seems to overlook this aspect altogether, except for two casual references (pp. 42, 67n.)


“At the time Mulla Dost was the leading painter [at the court] but he could not stay [in service] because His Majesty had given up ine. Without getting permission he had taken service with Mirza Kamran”\(^{437}\). The Iranian painters who served Emperor Humayun, namely, Dost Musawwar, Maulana Yusuf, Maulana Darvish Muhammad, Mir Musawwar (or Mir Mansur), Mir Sayyid ‘Ali, and Khwaja ‘Abd-us-Samad, greatly contributed to the evolution of the Persianized school of Indian art which matured as the Mughal school\(^{438}\). We need hardly say that the great masters Mir Sayyid ‘Ali (Safavid or Tabriz School) and Khwaja ‘Abd-us-Samad (Shiraz School), who are credited with supervising the earliest project at the Mughal atelier, the illustration of the Hamza Nama (in twelve volumes, each containing a hundred dlarge pictures executed on cloth), left their impress on the early Mughal School, and to a great extent formulated the narrative modes of the art of book-illustration in Mughal style. In this project fifty painters are said to have been employed under Mir Sayyid ‘Ali, and later Khwaja ‘Abd-us-Samad\(^{439}\). The Hamza Nama paintings vary considerably in style, several being purely Persian in drawing and colour. However, in general, non-Iranian elements are quite pervasive, yet none of the Hamza Nama illustrators can be described as being unfamiliar with Iranian painting. Persian art became more prevalent at the Mughal etelier as several indigenous artists worked under the tutelage of Iranian master painters. Khwaja ‘Abd-us-Samad

\(^{437}\) Ibid., p. 66.  
was the foremost amongst them, becoming the teacher of many notable Indian artists. Daswant was one who received highest recognition rivaling his colleague, Basawan. Abul Fazl writes his *Ain-i-Akbari*: “From the instructions they received, the Khwaja’s pupils became masters.” He further writes: “One day the eye of His Majesty fell on him [Daswant]; his talent was discovered, and he himself handed him over to the Khwaja. In a short time he surpassed all painters, and became the first master of the age.”

*Aqa Reza of Heart*, at *Jahangir’s court*, was another painter from Iran, who like ‘Abd-us-Samad gave instruction in painting. According to an inscription on a miniature ‘A saint reading a book’ in the Muraqqa’-i-Gulistan (Gulistan Palace Museum, Tehran), the woman painter Nadira Banu is described as the pupil of Aqa Reza.

Besides, painters from Bukhara, Kabul, Samarqand and other parts of Central Asia were active at the imperial Mughal studio: the most distinguished amongst them are *Farrukh Beg Musawwar of Kabul, Muhammad Nadir of Samarqand* and *Farrukh Qalmaa* (of Mongol origin). Their style and technique set the trend in the Mughal atelier; it not only shaped the Mughal qalam, but also inspired the artistic expression in general for at least two centuries. Persian elements became an integral part of the Mughal painting, and no Mughal painting can be explained without knowledge of the Persian Schools of art. Even so, the Mughal

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School should not be considered a mere offshoot of the traditions of Persian painting; in fact it is always possible to distinguish a Mughal from a Persian painting.

The development of the Mughal School is credited to Akbar who sowed great in manuscript painting under the impact of Persian book-illustration. Under Akbar, copies of Persian classics were made and manuscripts acquired from Iran were decorated with pictures and border paintings. Akbar is said to have received instruction in painting from Khawaja ‘Abd-us-Samad while he was a prince. While ‘Abd-us-Samad’s instruction might have made Akbar familiar with the technique of the Persian painter, it was probably also the mystical feeling which pervaded Persian art which synchronized with Akbar’s own increasingly mystical temperament. He was quoted as saying: “There are many that hate painting; but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God; for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life, and will thus increase in knowledge”.

Subsequently, a good number of Persian classics, in prose and verse, as also historical works, became the objects of Mughal narrative art, Abul Fazl says: “Persian books, both prose and poetry, were ornamented with pictures, and a very large number of paintings was thus collected. The Story of Hamzah (Hamza Nama) was represented in twelve volumes, and clever painters made the most

447 Ain-i-Akbari, Ibid., p. 115
astonishing illustrations for no less than one thousand and four hundred passages of the story. The Chingiz Nama, the Zafar Nama, this book [Akbar Nama], the Razm Nama, the Ramayan, the Nal-o-Daman, the Kalilah-o-Damnah, the ‘Ayar-i-Danish, etc., were all illustrated\textsuperscript{448}.

The surviving illustrated manuscripts of Akbar’s court exceed the short list given by Abul Fazl\textsuperscript{449}. Major Persian literary works, the Divans (poetical works) of Hafiz, Amir Nizam-ud-Din Hasan, Anwari and Amir Khusrau; the Gulistan and Bustan of Sa’di, the Baharistan of Jami and the Nafahat-ul-Uns, were repeatedly illustrated at Mughal atelier, the trend continuing until the end of Shahjahan’s reign (1626-56 A.D./1035-65 A.H.), though with less energy. During the seventeenth century the art of book-illustration became of secondary importance, given place to album pictures, especially portraits.

In the depiction of Persian subjects, most Mughal painters followed Persian models, and mystical feelings accordingly find expression. But the Mughal artists interpreted the Persian themes in their own way. It is true that the Iranian painters who sought employment at the Mughal atelier probably never consciously made a serious attempt to make their work conform to the style of the Mughal school\textsuperscript{450}. However, the fact remains that though there was no such conscious effort to shift from one tradition to another, the Iranian masters’ work did not remain uninfluenced by the native traits of Indian art. Their encounter

\textsuperscript{448} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{449} Verma, “Mughal Painters and Their Works”, Op. Cit., pp. q32-33
with the latter obviously marked the beginning of an integration of the two great oriental art traditions, Persian and classical Indian, at the Mughal studio.

Signs of this significant phenomenon in the art of India are visible even in some of the works executed during Humayun’s time. Brand and Lawry emphasize the naturalism and interaction of figures in the miniature, ‘Princes of the House of Timur’ (c.1555 A.D./964 A.H), and in several other miniatures of the Khamsa of Nizami (c.1555 A.D.964 A.H.) in the Lalbhai Collection, Ahmadabad451. These miniatures clearly differ from the more stylized composition of the Safavid School. In their opinion with this shift there evolved a coherent and dynamic mode of expression. Even the art of an orthodox Persian master-painter such as Khwaja ‘Abd-us-Samad bears evidence of a shift from strict Persian conventions during his stay at the Mughal atelier. The earliest miniatures ascribed to him show a strong affiliation with the fifteenth-sixteenth century Tabriz School, where the crowded composition is filled with surface decoration. In his early works, we see a profuse use of decoration with geometrical motifs in the architectural columns; angels on doorways (spandrels); wall-paintings depicting lovers and hunting scenes; the sky painted flat in gold pigment occasionally embellished with flame-shaped clouds; dense craggy hills spread all over the landscape and trees (the Chinar, plane tree, and cypress pre-eminentely), all in the Iranian tradition452. A change from this exclusive Iranian tradition in ‘Abd-us-Samad’s art was first noticed by Ettinghausen. With reference to the miniature, ‘Akbar presenting a miniature to his father Humayun’

(datable before 1580 A.D./989 A.H.), he says, 'the hustle and bustle of the subject, the realistic approach of the painter, and the way of showing attendants and servants outside the wall with the main scene behind, that is higher up in the painting, betray an Indian style'\textsuperscript{453}.

Ettinghausen’s observation on another miniature of the same painter, ‘Khusrau hunting with dogs and cheetah’ (c.1595-6 A.D./1004-5 A.H.) is equally relevant. He finds that ‘the conception and the perspective of the rocky landscape, the spirited composition, and the costumes are in Akbari style, with none of the pure Persian mannerism’\textsuperscript{454}. This change in a Persian master’s work would not have happened without a liberal attitude towards an integration of diverse trends of art at the royal atelier. Scerrato, indeed, sees the influence of the Indian traditions, particularly the vigorous realism of the Rajput school, on Mir Sayyid ‘Ali’s style whose work belonged to ‘the classic’ tradition of the Tabriz school. He writes: “His figures acquired greater strength, at the same time retaining their characteristic and refined grace.”\textsuperscript{455}

Of the Persian classics, the Khamsa of Nizami, the Khamsa of Amir Khusrau, the Divan (poetical work) of Hafiz, The Gulistan and the Bustan of Sa’di, the Divan of Amir ‘Ali Shir Nawai, the Kalila-o-Domnah, the Anwar-i-Suhaili (a Persian abridgement of the Sanskrit classic \textit{Panchatantara}) and the ‘Ajayb-ul-Makhluqat were illustrated both in the Iranian and Mughal styles, but some of the Persian favourites that were repeatedly illustrated in Central Asia and Western

\textsuperscript{454} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 20, pl. 17.
Asia find little place in the imperial Mughal atelier. A case in point is the Shah Nama of Firdawsi, of which no illustrated manuscript from the Imperial Mughal School is known. An illustrated copy of the Shah Nama, containing ninety miniatures, preserved in the British Museum, (Or.5600) belonging to the late sixteenth century Mughal School is, however, is supposed to have been prepared at the library of the Mughal noble, ‘Abd-ur-Rahim Khan-i-Khanan\(^{456}\). It may be noted here that the royal library of the Mughal Emperors had a famous illustrated copy of the Shah Nama (Timurid School, c.1440 A.D./849 A.H.) in its possession;\(^{457}\) and in 1582 A.D./991 A.H., Akbar also had an illustrated Mughal copy of the Shah Nama\(^{458}\), but no such version seems to have survived\(^{459}\). As against this, classics, like the Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah (Tales of the adventures of Amir Hamzah), and the Darab Nama illustrated at the Mughal atelier, are not known to have been illustrated in Persian painting. However, much before Akbar, copies of the dastan-i-Amir Hamzah were illustrated in India in the Sultanate period\(^{460}\).

Of the historical chronicles, the Zafar Nama and the Jami’ut-Tawarikh (or Chingiz Nama) were also illustrated at the imperial Mughal studio, where there was relatively a greater emphasis on the visual narration of historical literature. The Tarikh-i-Alfi, compiled at the instance of Akbar in 1580 A.D./989 A.H.,\(^{461}\) was

\(^{457}\) M. Brand and G.D. Lowry, “Akbar’s India”, pp. 8292, Fig. 10.
\(^{461}\) Ain-i-Akbari, pp. 113, 498.
later illustrated with pictures in 1594 A.D./1003 A.H. Likewise, several illustrated copies of the Babur Nama, translated into Persian in 1590 A.D./999 A.H. from the original Turkish text, were prepared. Undoubtedly, the illustrations of the greatest historical importance are those of the two official histories respectively of Akbar and Shahjahan the Akbar Nama and Padshah Nama.

The Mughals had Arabic and Persian books in the imperial library. The illustrated manuscripts not only had a decisive influence on the formation and development of the Mughal School, but also greatly influenced the themes and subjects of Mughal painting. Mention may be made of the famous manuscripts of the Timurid school, the Shah Nama mentioned earlier and the Zafar Nama (dated 1467-8 A.D./876-77 A.H.), now preserved at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Yusuf va Zulaikha (c. 1500 A.D./909 A.H) inscribed with the name of Mirza Kamran, a brother of the Emperor Humayun, has also survived. It contains illustrations in the Bukhara style. Two other illustrated works of the Bukhara school, the Bustan of Sa’di (Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 

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Boston), dated 1531-32 A.D./940-41 A.H.\textsuperscript{468} and the Thufat-ul-Ahrar (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin)\textsuperscript{469}, datable to 1544-45 A.D./953-54 A.H.m which belonged to Prince Murad, were placed by Jahangir in the Imperial Library in 1605 A.D./1014 A.H.

Painting of the Bukhara style can also be seen in the Mughal manuscripts. Duval Rani Khizr Khani (dated 1567 A.D./976 A.H.)\textsuperscript{470}, Anwar-i-Suhaili (dated 1570 A.D./979 A.H.)\textsuperscript{471}, \text{and Gulistan of Sa’di (dated 1567-68 A.D./976-77 A.H.)}\textsuperscript{472}. These bear testimony to the close association of the Mughal painting with the art of Transoxiana and the interaction between the painters of these two art traditions.

The Mughal School whose distinct style emerged by 1580 A.D./989 A.H., even so bears identifiable marks of the impact of the Shiraz, Safavid, Timurid and Bukhara art traditions, especially in the case of manuscript painting. In the manuscripts of the Anwar-i-Suhaili (dated 1570 A.D./979 A.H., School of Oriental and African Studies, London), the Tuti Nama (c.1565-80 A.D./974-89 A.H.) we find all the hallmarks of Iranian painting: ‘single-scene’ representation, symmetrical composition, breaking up of a visual field into two or more units, figures extending beyond the picture frame, multiple views comprising a ‘bird’s

\textsuperscript{470} Losty, “The Art of the Book”, p. 86 (‘In composition these miniatures owe something to Bukhara prototypes’).
\textsuperscript{472} Losty, “The Art of the Book”, p. 86.
eye view', high horizon lines, objects shown only in part on the extreme outer margin of a visual field, patterning of architecture and tend hangings, and restricted movement. The very conception of illustration on pages of books in the codex form is clearly Iranian.

In portraits the pasteurization of faces in ‘three-quarters view’, a characteristic trait of Persian art dominated the Mughal portraiture at least still the end of the sixteenth century. Again, the technique described as Siyahi Qalam or Nim Qalam was brought to India by the painters from Transoxiana. In this context, the role of Muhammad Nadir of Samarqand (active at the studio of Jahangir and Shahjahan) is important. His works comprise a good number of portraits, executed especially in Siyahi Qalam. This particular technique practiced at centers such as Heart and Bukhara becomes noticeable in the Mughal School during the last phase of Akbar’s reign. In this technique, the whole drawing is finished with thinly-shaded black lines with minimal of modeling and very limited use of colours. The two miniatures ascribed to Shankar and Hirnand in the MS Akbar Nama of C.1604 A.D./1003 A.H. (British Museum, Or. 12208, folios 136a, respectively) offer the best examples. At Akbar’s atelier, the pictures finished in this technique are still rare, but it seems to have become popular during Jahangir’s reign, especially in portrait painting. Anupchhatra, Chitarman and Hashim are amongst other seventeenth-century Mughal School

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ho showed great fascination for the technique of Sihayi Qalam. Numerous portraits ascribed to them were executed in this technique.

It is important to note that the Mughal margin-decora
tion in gold, which almost became an integral part of margin painting under Jahangir and Shahjahan, bears traces of earlier Timurid traditions. Border painting in gold was introduced in the Timurid period and then extended from Bukhara to various Persian centers, and thence to Mughal India. It is characterized by fantastic rocky landscape with trees, bushes and plants often interspersed with fighting and hunting scenes and mythical birds and animals executed in ‘gold, frequently with an application of undertone of green, red and yellow.

The linear art form, the use of limited brilliant colours and profuse embellishment of architectural columns in a jewel-like manner seen in the Mughal miniatures also reflect the Persian technique of line-drawing and the color palette of Iranian painters. Similar is the case of the abundant use of gold pigment and a propensity for ultra-marine blue in Mughal painters’ work. The latter invites special attention since ultra-marine is obtained by brinding calcined lapis lazuli (Lajward), a costly semi-precious material imported from either Iran or Badakhshan. Its use in Persian and Mughal paintings further shows a relationship between these two traditions. Significantly, in Mughal India, this stone was considered an article of royal gift. Bernier observes that the ambassadors from Khans of Balkh and Samarqand presented some boxes of

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lapis lazuli to Aurangzeb after his accession\textsuperscript{478}. Tavernier mentions Badakhshan as the source of lapis lazuli\textsuperscript{479}.

The use of ultramarine blue in Indian painting goes back, however, to ancient times, for example, in the frescoes at Ajanta and in the palm-leaf manuscript painting of eastern and western Indian schools\textsuperscript{480}. It would not be out of place to notice here a bacchanalian scene from cave no. 1 at Ajanta (c.600 A.D.) which shows foreigners (in all probability Persian as can be judged from their features and costumes) enjoying wine\textsuperscript{481}. This point to the direct interaction of the Indian painters at such an early date with the Persian examples, not known, which would have served as a source of this scene. In another instance, the illuminated margins of the manuscripts Kalpasutra and Kalkacharya-katha (c.1475 A.D./884 A.H.) from the western Indian school show abundant borrowings in terms of form and subject from Persian painting\textsuperscript{482}. These include floral meanders; scrolls and cartouches composing figures of female dancers, warriors, angels, birds and animals, composite and mythical forms of birds and animals, a variety of trees, and arabesques. The use of bright colors, lavish use of gold and luxuriance of detail in the illustration were the main traits of Persian art acquired by the Indian artists of this school during the fifteenth century (dafter 1450 A.D./859 A.H.).

\textsuperscript{481} Smith, “A History of Fine Art”, pl. 86(B) Ghosh, “Ajanta Murals”, pl. XLI.
\textsuperscript{482} Khandalavala and Chandra, “New Documents”, pp. 32-37, pls. 6-7, figs. 59-96.
We thus deal with a relationship which did not simply begin with Mughal painting, but had ancient and medieval antecedents. Mention may also be made of the illustrations of the *Ni’mat Nama* and *Miftah-ul-Fozala* (Mandu school, that have been considered by some scholars as the source of some of Persian features absorbed in the Mughal painting. Further, a variety of geometrical motifs comprising an octagonal or hexagon with a star, curvilinear forms and interlacing patterns seen in the Mughal paintings, too, bear testimony to their affinity with Persian painting. The aureole, figure of the dragon, lion with flame-like phoenix, unicorn, etc., were also adopted in the Mughal paintings from Persian miniatures.

As with European pictures, copies of Persian miniatures were also often ordered by the Mughal Emperors. On a few known Mughal version of Persian painting, we can see ascriptions containing the name of the Mughal artists who copied them. It seems that the works of the great Iranian master, Bihzad, were of great attraction for the Mughal patrons. Nanha, a court painter of Akbar and Jahangir, is known to have copied at least two works of Bihzad, “Masons at work’ and “Camel-fight’. The latter also contains Jahangir’s autograph which shows that it was executed by Nanha in 1608-9 A.D./1017-18 A.H. at his command.

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484 Verma, “Art and Material Culture in the Painting of Akbar’s Court”, New Delhi, 1978, p. 39. Pl.XXVII “In the illustrations, the designs appear in different setting and forms, e.g., the geometrical and Ornamental patterns and the stylized version of natural objects-a legacy of the Persian Qalam. The Motifs, five-petalled flowers with two stems on each end, a lotus with elongated petals, interlaced with Curvilinear leaves in onion-shaped units are quite common. Geometrical designing is based on the Repetition of such units as a triangle, a square a rectangle, lines and semi-circles. The hexagon, however, Is the most commonly used”.
Daulat copied the portrait of Maulana ‘Abd-ur-Rahman-i-Jami (a poet) from an original by Bihzad.  

The works of Bihzad and other Persian artists were preserved in Mughal albums: Nasir-ud-Din Album and Muraqqa’-i-Gulistan (Gulistan Palace Museum, Tehran), Jahangir Album (National Library, Berlin) and Dara Shokuh Album (Indian Office Library, London). It is also notable that the paintings of Persian origin were also put into Mughal manuscripts. The best example of this is the MS Anwar-i-Suhaili (dated 1596-97 A.D./1005-06 A.H.) now preserved at the Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi. At its beginning, it contains two full-page Persian miniatures of the sixteenth-century Safavid School.

Jahangir in his account of the year 1619 A.D./1028 A.H. gives a graphic description of a Persian miniature ascribed to Khalil Mirza Shahrukhi brought from Isfahan by Khan-i-Alam – a Mughal ambassador sent to Iran: “Among them was the picture of the fight of Sahib Qiran (Timur) the Tuqtamish Khan, and the likenesses of him and his glorious children and the great Amirs (commanders) who had the good fortune to be with him in that fight, and near each figure was written whose portrait it was. In this picture there were 240 figures. The painter had written his name as Khalil Mirza Shahrukhi. The work was very complete and grand, and resembled really the paint-brush of Ustad Bihzad if the name of

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th painter had not been written; the work would have been believed to be his. As it was executed before Bihzad’s date, it is probable that the latter was one of Khalil Mirza’s pupils, and had adopted his style. This precious relic had been obtained from the illustrious library of Shah Ismail I, or had come to my brother Shah ‘Abbas I from Shah Tahmasb. A person of the name of Sadiqi, a librarian of his, had stolen it, and sold it to someone. By chance (the painting) fell into the hands of Khan-i-‘Alam at Isfahan. The Shah heard that he had found such a rare prize, and asked it of him on the pretence of looking at it. Khan-i-‘Alam tried to evade this by artful stratagems, but when he repeatedly insisted on it, he sent it to him. The Shah recognized it immediately he saw it. He kept it by him for a day, but at last, as he knew how great was our liking for such rarities, he – God be praised-made no request whatever for it, but told the facts of the case (about its being stolen) to Khan-i-‘Alam, and made the picture over to him.”

Jahangir, who loved to have an authentic portrait of Shah “Abbas I (1587-1629 A.D./996-1038 A.H.), sent Bishandas, a master portrait-painter of his atelier, along with his ambassador Khan-i-‘Alam to Iran. He writes: “At the time when I sent Khan-i-‘Alam to Persia, I had sent with him a painter of the name Bishan Das, who was unequalled in his age for taking likenesses, to take the portraits of the Shah and the chief men of his State, and bring them. He had drawn the likenesses of most of them, and especially had taken that of my brother, the Shah exceedingly well, so that when I showed it to any of his servants, they said it was exceedingly well drawn.”

492 Ibid., pp. 116-17.
He further writes, “Bishan Das, the painter, was honoured with the gift of an elephant”.

A few such portraits have survived, which certainly bear witness to Bishendas’s success as a portrait-painter. However, it is intriguing that this historic event remains unnoticed in the chronicles of Iran despite the fact that the Iranian painters gave some importance to Khan-i-‘Alam’s embassy. At least two Persian versions of Bishandas’s work ‘Khan-i-‘Alam with Shah ‘Abbas I and courtiers in a landscape’ painted by Mu’in Mussawarand Khairat Khan are known. Other two pictures on this theme belong to the Isfahan School, and are ascribed to Reza ‘Abbasi. The first miniature is a signed work of this painter executed in 1632 A.D./1041 A.H. at the command of Hakim Shamsa Muhammad (Fig. 10). The second, of ground 1650 A.D./1059 A.H., shows the figures of Khan-i-‘Alam and Shah ‘Abbasi which are almost identical with Bishandas’s work, and bears a doubtful ascription giving the artist’s name, with signature (Fig. 11).

In other portraits of Shah ‘Abbas I from the Mughal School, Shah ‘Abbas is shown with Jahangir. (i) ‘Jahangir embracing Shah ‘Abbas’ and (ii) ‘Jahangir entertains Shah ‘Abbas’ (here Asaf Khan (left) and Khan-i-‘Alam; are also shown standing in the foreground),d were executed after 1619 A.D./1028 A.H. i.e., after

493 Ibid.

the return of Bishandas from Iran\textsuperscript{498}. Jahangir invariably addressed Shah ‘Abbas as his brother. The inscription in the second miniature above the figure of Shah ‘Abbas also reads: \textit{“Shabih-i-Baradaram Shah ‘Abbas} (Likeness of my brother \textit{Shah ‘Abbas}).’ The inscription given at top and bottom of the miniature further testify of the high esteem in which Shah ‘Abbas was held at the Mughal court:

\textit{“(Translation) Shah Jahangir and Shah ‘Abbas, two brave young kings, representatives of God- they seized with joy the cup of Jam (i.e., the world). Hearing the call to world dominion, both heroes and world conquerors are united in the purpose of bringing together all people as friends and brothers in peace. May God give them victory”}\textsuperscript{499}.

The gifts exchanged between Jahangir and Shah ‘Abbas I often included the rare species of birds and animals. A falcon sent by Shah ‘Abbas I in 1619 A.D./2018 A.H. is described thus Jahangir: “The Shahi falcon, too, got mauled by a cat owing to the carelessness of the Mir Shikar (master of the hunt) [of Shah ‘Abbas]. Though it was brought to the Court, it did not live more than a week. What can I write of the beauty and colour of this falcon? There were many beautiful black marking on each wing, and back, and sides. As it was something out of the common, I ordered Ustad Mansur, who has the title of \textit{Nadir-ul-‘Asr} (Wonder of the Age) to paint and preserve its likeness. I gave the Mir Shikar Rs.2000 and dismissed him\textsuperscript{500}.

\textsuperscript{498} For their reproductions, see Milo C. Beach, “The Imperial Image, Painting for the Mughal Court”, Washington D.C., 1981, pls on pp. 74,78.

\textsuperscript{499} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 170.

\textsuperscript{500} \textit{Tuzuk}, p. 108.
A likeness of this executed by *Ustad Mansur* is preserved in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston\(^{501}\).

Jahangir never failed in acknowledging Shah ‘Abbas I’s appreciation for rarities and in 1621 A.D./1030 A.H. Jahangir included a Zebra among the royal gifts sent to Iran\(^{502}\). Of his own curiosity aroused from seeing this animal Jahangir records in his memoirs. A picture of this animal executed by Ustad Mansur bearing Jahangir’s autograph, dated 1621 A.D./1030 A.H, has survived and, is lodged in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

To sum up, the relationship of Iranian and Mughal painting ws profound as it emanated from common cultural traits, which went beyond sectarian affinities. Indian art did not remain uninfluenced by Persian painting which encompassed Central and Western Asia. The Mughal miniatures themselves thereafter travelled far and wide, and the most celebrated painters of Europe, Rembrandt (1606-69 A.D.) not only had Mughal miniatures in his collection, but also tried his hand at working in the Mughal style. Contemporary Iranian painters too were influenced by Mughal painting, especially such as had been to India. On the Indian side the assimilation and adoption of the Persian traits at the Mughal atelier was so quick that Robert Skelton feels amazed at the skill of the indigenous painters unfamiliar as they were with the refined Iranian style, adopting so soon the tenets of that school. Yet their effort was one of creative adoption not slavish imitation. They infused into their enterprise not only certain interests and techniques of the Indian tradition, but also a concern for realism.

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\(^{502}\) *Tuzuk*, p. 201.
and a sense of humanism, which surely derived in part at least from that figure of unequalled greatness, Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad Akbar. With an infusion, again, from Renaissance painting, what was brought into being now was a style of painting that has its own place in the history of world art. It is not to be forgotten, however, that the achievement was, still in essence, one of the many products of the cultural collaboration between India and Iran that has subsisted in the past.

Iranian Painters in India

**Rahmati Tabrizi:**

According to Auhadi, Rahmati was an important tourist. He also was well versed in calligraphy and could write Naskh and Sols handwriting. Auhadi met him Shiraz. Rahmati visited India in 1015 A.D./1606 A.H. to see the country. He died at Agra in 1025 A.H./1016 A.D. He felt a Divan (poetical book) with near 8000 verses.\(^503\)

**Zain-i-Isfahani:**

Originally he was from Basnian of Faridan in Isfahan province, but he was born and grew up at Yazd. His ancestor Khwaja Malikshah and his father Khwaja Muhammad Hussain were trader. Hakim Zain-ud-Din Mahmud was a calligraphist. He visited India during Akbar and Jahangir’s reigns in order to see the country. He was a friend of Auhadi. Zain-i-Isfahani also left some verses.\(^504\)

**Khwaja ‘Abd-us-Samad-i-Sheerin Qalam:**

Khwaja ‘Abd-us-Samad was born at Shiraz. His father Khwaja Nizam-ul-Mulk was Vazir (minister) of Shah Shuja of Shiraz. Before Humayun left Iran, he went to Tabriz, where ‘Abd-us-Samad paid his respects. He was even at that

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\(^{503}\) T. Auhadi, fol. 265.

\(^{504}\) T. Auhadi, fol. 284.
time known as a painter and calligraphist. Humayun invited him to come to him, and though then unable to accompany the emperor, he followed him in 956 A.H./1548 A.D., to Kabul.

Under Akbar, ‘Abd-us-Samad was a commander of 400; but low as his mansab (rank) was, he had great influence at court. In the 22nd year he was in charge of the mint at Fatehpur Sikri, and in the 31st year, when the officers were redistributed over the several Subas (provinces), he was appointed divan (royal office) of Multan.

As an instance of his skill it is mentioned that he wrote the Surat-ul-Ikhlas (Quran, Sur.XII, on a poppy seed (Dana-i-Khashkhash).

‘Abd-ur-Rahim’ Anbarin Qalam:

‘Abd-ur-Rahim came from Heart and was employed as a painter and calligraphist at the court of Akbar, who honoured him with the title mentioned above. He retained his fame till the reign of Jahangir. A number of specimen’s from his pen have survived.

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507 History of Indo-Persian Literary, Nabi Hadi, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 281-82.