ABSTRACT

Mughal art occupies a prominent place in the history of Indian art and both are complementary to each other. After detailed study of the origin of Mughal School, it is beyond doubt that Mughal school had its genesis in Persian art and influenced by Indian school of Behzad. The mughal emperors from Babar to Shah Jahan were the patrons of art and under their wholehearted patronage and support art and painting flourished upto unimaginable heights and their valuable contribution added laurel to all forms of art. It was all due to their regular and serious and devotion to art that it erected a solid base for it, which later on became a citadel of art and was called Mughal school of art and painting. The contribution of Persian artists in this regard also cannot be pushed into oblivion. Even today Mughal painting enjoys a unique and exalted status in the realm of art and all that was the product and creation of Mughal courts. The paintings
of the courts of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan are different in style, form and content.

Portraiture was very much appreciated and inspired by Mughal emperors, particularly by Akbar and Jahangir. They had their own ateliers, employing foreign and Indian artists and also personally supervised the work and gave directions to the painters. In historical illustrations crowded court scenes were depicted and individual faces and features and were drawn and painted without sacrificing their physical and psychological characteristics. It was due to the royal patronage that the mughal art is the amalgam of sophisticated techniques of Persian and European traditions. Akbar is conspicuous for his interest in different religious and Hindu classics and epics i.e. Ramayan, Mahabharat and Razm Nama were illustrated by artists of his atelier. His interest in Indian literature encouraged the change of the Mughal school from its Persian beginning into an indigenous tradition. Akbar was very much interested in European art and he had sound knowledge of the Christian religious
paintings. The use of western techniques is evident from the miniatures prepared in his atelier. Although religious manuscripts along with the Bible were painted yet, the Mughal school maintained its own indigenous qualities. In the paintings of heroic events and battle fields the Akbari Painters were inspired by Persian Sources Sufis and Saints being popular themes in Persia were retained in Akbari paintings. So Akbar paintings differ from contemporary classical Persian paintings and happen to be a creative mixture of Persian elements with Indian and European features. Now in topic compels me to depart from the Akbari era and to take up his successor for his efforts in the advancement of Mughal art and paintings.

Jahangir in his efforts towards the promotion preservation of dignity of the Mughal school of art and painting drew inspiration from his great grand father Babar, who was an embodiment of aesthetic spirit, ability and high ideals and dedicated lover of art and learning and Babar's Memoir's stand as a testimony to
his wisdom and aesthetic qualities. Like his ancestors Jahangir maintained his own atelier and all the renowned artists and painters of his noble father's atelier were not only retained, but the rising painters were also employed. Jahangir was an aristocrat with an eye of a naturalist, the vision of a poet and heart of a saint and like his noble father treated all religious equally. He generously patronised all kinds of creative art. the Mughal school of painting which was in a progressing state attracted his special attention and under his guidance the quality of painting was considerably improved. Like his great grand father, Jahangir was an unsatiable sight seer, an eager student of the habits and appearances of birds and animals. He was also an ardent lover of natural objects as well as beauties of nature unlike Babar and Humayun, he was sympathetic towards Indian painters and appreciated their talent and appeared them in numerous ways and employed them for mural decorations and were also assisted by Persian artists. As for painting he regarded it as a
source of wisdom and an antidote against the poison of ignorance.

Like his ancestor's Jahangir also wrote his Memoir's and tried to make it a complete record of all important events of his reign, and Fatehpur Sikri and Agra were vividly accounted. His Memoir's also disclose that Jahangir being a true Indian, was a lover of Indian flowers, fruits and birds and animals which is fully witnessed in the paintings of his devout painters Abdus Samad, Mir Saiyed Ali, Mansur and others. His Memoir's furnish a vivid account of gold and silver coins, which were impressed with verses and date of coinage with Hijri year etc. His personal habits and attractions along with confirmation of titles and mausabs and robes of honours to his trusted courtiers have been specially mentioned in the Memoir's and it is a full fledged record of his political, social, literary and aesthetic inclinations.

Manohar a renowned painter was also very close to Jahangir. Illustrations to the Diwan of Anvari (A.D.
1588), *Khamsa of Nizami* (A.D. 1595), *Majnu at the tomb* of his father (Fig. 3) and *Naushervan* and the *owl* (Fig. 4) his logical and imperial portraits are his precious gifts to the posterity and are held as the finest in the Mughal art. The portrait of *Jahangir’s accession to the throne* A.D. 1605, a joint venture of Manohar and Mansur in (Fig. 11). Institute of the Peoples of Asia Academy of Sciences Leningrad remind us of his exalted place in the realm of painting.

Another in the list of painters most favourite with Jahangir is Bishandas. He was a master portrait painter, who illustrated *Kulliyat-e-Sadi* with Aqa Riza and Abul Hasan. He also specialised himself in the painting of harem scenes. Portrait of *Raja Suraj Mal Rathore* brother in law of Jahangir, and *Jahangir nama* and *Padshahnama* are his masterpieces. *The house of Sheikh Phul* is the finest of his paintings (Fig.) was inscribed by Jahangir as works of Bishandas. The portrait of *Shah Abbas* in different positions is also attributed to Bishandas. The scenes of *birth of Prince*
Salim and abode of Sheikh Salim Chishti at Sikri upholds his dignity as a painter.

The next in the galaxy of Jahangirs painters is Mohd. Shareef son of Abdus Samad. He held the title of Amirul Umra under Jahangir. He painted the picture of an armed horse man on a grain of rice. He was also a calligrapher with Jahangir's full confidence in his friendship, intelligence and learning, Shareef rose to the position of grand Wazir with a rank of 5000 with 5000 horses and high position in court and later on commander of army in Deccan.

The next in group is Aqa Riza, a professionally trained Safavid painter. He was the father of Abul Hasan, famous painter of Jahangir's court. His miniatures are the testimony to the honour he received from Jahangir. His works highly influenced the Mughal School in its formative stage. He was regarded as the main figure in the evolution of Salim's taste in painting. He was a matured master painter, who painted youth, middle aged and old with equal charm.
Farrukh Beg is another distinct star in the galaxy of Mughal painters. He belonged to the Kalmuk clan of Central Asian Turks. He joined Akbar's court in 1585. In Akbar nama and Aain-e-Akbari Abul Fazal testifies about his skill in painting. He was a master of miniature painting and Jahangir's Album contains so many of his miniature Gulshan Muraqqa with pictures of adorable youths and saints support that he was a master painter. His paintings are still available in Bostan Museum, Tehran, Alwar Museum in India.

Abdul Hasan son of Aqa Riza is also a renowned painter. Pleased with his skill and ability in painting Jahangir conferred on him the title of Nadir-uz-Zama. Jahangir said "Abul Hasan drew the picture of my accession to the throne and it was worthy of all praise". Abul Hasan infused true spirit and life in the art of painting. He was a man of sheite affiliations. Portraiture was his main subject. He was influenced by European paintings. His portraits are most concentrating in Mughal art. He used his left hand to paint plates XXVI and XXVII.
Mansur one of the most leading painters was very dear to Jahangir, who bestowed upon him the title of *Nadir-ul-Asr*, and repeatedly mentioned him in his Memoir's.

Under Jahangir, all the painters were specialists of their subjects and margin painting developed as a separate branch. Mughal painting represents personal tastes, prides, pleasures, hobbies and temperament of emperors and courtiers and presents cultural history of the people of those days and has been a perennial source of inspiration for the future lovers of art and painting.