



## USE OF CALLIGRAPHY IN DESIGN DURING MUGHAL PERIOD

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### ABSTRACT

There are about 2.5 million Muslims in the UK and over 1500 mosques. The mosque is a place to gather for prayers, to study and to celebrate festivals such as Ramadan means the ninth month of the Muslim year, during which strict fasting is observed from sunrise to sunset and Eid means a Muslim festival, in particular Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha. The importance of mosque for imparting proper Islamic worship and knowledge.

A mosque is generally a very symbolic place for a Muslim, being a humble way for Muslims to recreate pure divine presence on earth. The main purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place where all the Muslims can come together for prayer and that's the reason every emperor has established Mosques and Masjids fully designed with calligraphy. It is observed that whether it is interior or exterior of the mosque or Masjid is well decorated with beautiful calligraphic style. It was the advantage of geometrical shapes of one particular style which was helpful for designing Mosque walls and Masjid during Mughal time. Calligraphy was being used on the walls of Mughal architecture as a design purpose so that people must remember by hammering about their religion in their mind.

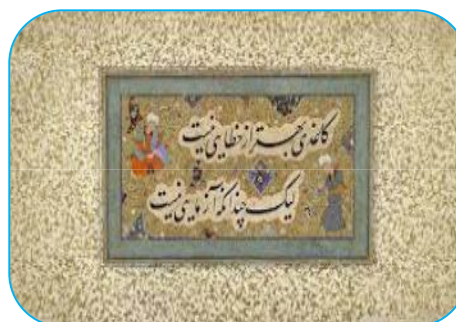
Earlier it is noted there are some architecture such as Mandir architecture, Jain architecture and Buddhist architecture but here it couldn't find any application of calligraphy for architectures. After studying the Mughal architecture it is found that many evidences of calligraphy used as design, for the beautification of interior and exterior and decorating the Mousque and Masjid.

**KEYWORDS:** personality characteristics , male and female adolescents.

### INTRODUCTION TO CALLIGRAPHY

Universally calligraphy is the art of beautiful hand writing. It is also said that calligraphy is a Visual Art. Calligraphy is something different than normal writing, it consist of beauty, grace, legibility and attraction. There are many different types of calligraphy in the world, western calligraphy, Eastern calligraphy, Islamic calligraphy and Southern Asian calligraphy. In Western it is called Calligraphy, Eastern countries like China and Japan calligraphy called as **Shodo**, in Korea it is called-**Seoye**. Calligraphy has its own nature, styles and form.

In Latin "Calli" means "Beauty" and "Graphy" means "To Write". Therefore it is said that the "Calligraphy is the art of beautiful writing". The first thing to understand the calligraphic art is to understand why calligraphy and its various scripts are important and necessary? The simple answer to this is how one should communicate to others. Earlier, in order to convey any messages orally and even



people who could not speak or hear could communicate through gestures and sign language. But here, one may not convey his message due to his absence in the chain. Due to this, later on writing skills came into existence. The artistic strokes created may or may not resemble letters. Calligraphy is widely used in font designing, alphabets and words as a way of expressing ones imagination through creativity and design. A contemporary definition of calligraphy is “the art of expressing thoughts with beauty, harmony and peace.”

According to history of writing the art of writing, calligraphy began with picture writing in caves on the walls. These representations of objects and symbols developed into the stylized hieroglyphics of the Egyptians used around 3500 B.C. the first alphabet was developed by the Phoenicians around 1000 B.C. and passed on to every port by this seafaring nation (Nautical nation).

## HISTORY

Earliest writings were pictorial and later these symbolic pictures were converted into alphabets in the form Greek and Aramaic language. Arabic writing came from Nabataean which had been derived from Aramaic while western writing originated from Greek alphabets. In the ancient times human being tended to make their writings more artistic and communicative which developed the decorative handwriting, called calligraphy. As a result, in various parts of the world different writing styles developed. Gaur (2006b) states that only three civilizations, Chinese, western civilization based on roman scripts and Arab could be considered as true originator of calligraphy. Arabic calligraphy is associated with Arab world and Islamic culture due to revelation of Quran in Arabic. Quran is the holy word of Allah, revealed on the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) through Gabriel over a period of almost twenty three years. Whenever any part of Quran was revealed, the prophet (SAW) asked to record it to one of the scribes and the verses were used to be written on leaves, bones, leather, stones and papyrus or parchment etc. (Randeree, 1985). Reavealation of Quran gave anew status to the Arabic Language and script (Gaur, 2006a) in the beginning of Islam, Quran was memorised orally with fewer records, but with the spread of Islam its text was needed to be reached to every Muslim especially for non Arab population. With the invention of paper, Quran was printed on a mass level with different calligraphic styles. First, Makki, Madani and then Basri Kufic were the early examples of calligraphy (George, 2003). The development of Kufic script provided a base for other kinds of Arabic writing styles. Apart from paper other medium like tiles, ceramics, stone coins, seals, metal objects, and textiles, building facades, arms and armours were also used as a base for calligraphic art (Etikan, 2008). Calligraphy on the surface of buildings was an iconic function and a medium of message and a tool for designers to create identity and spiritual built environment.

Throughout the Islamic architectural history calligraphy had been a highest form of ornamentation. Even in modern time it has been used as decorative element on the exterior surfaces of buildings and as a part of interior design too (Hussein, 2016). These words of god chosen deliberately for a cause appropriate to its location with their aesthetic value. This study will investigate the art of monumental calligraphy during Mughal period in North India. Six representative buildings from three capital cities of Mughal India will be surveyed to find out the stylistic development and techniques used in calligraphy on the surface of the building.

## MUGHAL CALLIGRAPHY IN DESIGN

It is said that, when Islamic rule was established in North India, Islam had already a five year old culture and heritage rooted in West and Central Asia. Many Islamic arts including calligraphy had already been established in it's advanced form. In addition Indians improved this art and its best examples could be seen during Mughal period. In India before the arrival of Muslims, Arabic calligraphy was unknown. The language of Muslim rulers was Arabic, Turkish and Persian but Persian took a position of language of court (Welch, Keshani, & Bain, 2002) while Arabic was used for religious text

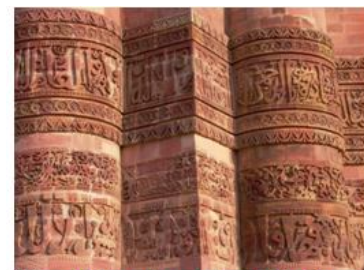


Figure 1 Calligraphy as design-Qutub Minar, India

predominantly. The original examples of Arabic calligraphy on monuments could be experience in the first mosque of North India known as Quwwatual Islam mosque and on **Qutub Minar**. Aibaq's successors extended the construction of these buildings and added other monuments like tomb of Iltutmish and Alai Darwaza. All these buildings have fine examples of monumental calligraphy in Kufic and Naskh style (**fig.-1** Qutub Minar) this legacy of ornamenting the buildings with Gods words was continued to the next dynasties and they also contributed to flourish this art.

It is observed that, when Akbar shifted his capital to Fatehpur Sikri where he built palaces and a grand mosque, calligrapher Ahmad al Chishti inscribed the Quranic verses on the monuments. It is noted that many other Persian painters and calligraphers contributed to Mughal art during sixteenth century like, Mir Ali al-Haravi, Abd al-Samad Shirazi and Aqa Riza al-Haravi (Soucek, 1987). Mir Abd Allah Mushkin Qalam was renowned calligrapher during Jahangir's Period. Abdul Haq who was the calligrapher of the Quranic inscription on **Taj Mahal** as shown in (**Fig.-2**). These calligraphers worked with different versions of calligraphic styles like, kufic, Naskh, Muhaqqaq, Taliq Nastaliq, Thuluth and Tughra as shown in TajMahal. Bihari script of India had been used to write many manuscripts of Quran as design.



Figure 2 Calligraphy on Taj Mahal, India

In the Interior of Qila -e-Kuhna Mosque all bays have decorative niches in qibla wall. The south most and north most niches are decorated with calligraphic arched sandstone panels sandwiched between outer border and inner panel of white marble. All the calligraphic style used here is Naskh as design. After winning Gujrat Akbar built a victory gate known as Buland Darwaza, a south entrance to the great mosque of Fatehpur Sikri (UP). The gate has beautiful design in the form of inscription in carved relief work on sandstone (**fig.3-Buland Darwaja**). The calligraphy on this gate is in Thuluth script and calligrapher mentioned his name as 'Husain bin Ahmad al Chishti'.



Figure 3 - Calligraphy on Buland Darwaja

#### Akbar's tomb: -

Jahangir the Akbars son made many changes to the original form of Akbar's tomb located in Sikandara Agra. Elegant white marble decoration at the entrance gate to the tomb shows Jahangir's involvement in design. The inscriptions on facades of the gate are in both in Persian and Arabic languages. It contains the praising words for emperor, modified quotations from Quran and on the last panel name of the calligrapher with date is mentioned in (**Fig - 4**).



Figure 4 Calligraphy on Akbars Tomb

#### Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daula: -

Nur Jahan, the wife of Jahangir commissioned to build a mausoleum for her father, Itmad-ud-Daula at Agra. The building indicates transition from the Akbar's red sandstone to Shahjahan's white marble buildings. The central arch of the tomb has a band of white marble with relief work of calligraphy shows the use of calligraphy in design. There are nine panels of Arabic inscription on each facade and one panel on every side of polygonal minaret at the same level as shown in example (**Fig- 5**).



Figure 5 Calligraphy on Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daula

#### Taj Mahal:-

It is found that, 'Taj Mahal' a wonderful and fabulous piece of design in Mughal period. Mughal architecture often mentioned as the symbol of love by poets in all the ages. The whole structure in

white marble is famous for its well versed decoration with arabesques, geometrical patterns and calligraphy. At the southern arch of the interior of the tomb, a signature was marked with date by calligrapher mentioned himself as 'Amanat Khan Shirazi' the calligrapher had already been worked for Akbar's tomb where he mentioned his real name 'Abdul Haq' while signed on an inscription at its gateway. Most of the inscriptions are Persian at Akbar's tomb in comparison to Taj where the inscriptions are from Quranic verses (shloka). It is presumed that the selection of verses and surah to be inscribed on the monuments was done by the calligrapher (Begley, 1975).



Figure 6 Calligraphy on Taj Mahal Gate

The calligraphy at Taj looks well matched with its plan and elevation so that the inscriptions become included part of the scheme. Though not mentioned in the contemporary construction techniques but the whole building clearly seems to be designed on a modular system (Balasubramaniam, 2010). The themes of the selected passages of Quranic verses are about the day of judgement, paradise for the true followers, rewards to the faithful and divine mercy of Allah. These themes suit the function of the tomb and recall and communicate the viewer to the world hereafter (Koch, 2005). The black calligraphic verses are inlaid into the white marble. On the southern gateway to the tomb first 21 verses of Surah Yaseen (Surah-36) are inscribed. The marble Jaali enclose contains the cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal at the centre and Shahjahan's was buried later to adjacent to her. The asymmetrical position of Shahjahan's cenotaph shows that Shahajahan was not planned to be buried here. The tiered sides of cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal are decorated with floral patterns while the top is embroidered with calligraphy framed with floral border. The top of cenotaph of Shahjahan along with its tiered sides are decorated with floral patterns. The calligraphy at Taj Mahal is the peak of the art work in the Mughal architecture.

### Jami Masjid Delhi:

According to sources it is said that Mughal emperor Shah Jahan built Jama Masjid during the year 1650 to 1656 AD Jama masjid is also known as the Masjid-i Jahan Numa of Delhi, is one of the largest mosques in India. It was constructed with the help of 5000 labours. It was built up by the Mughal Emperor Shaha Jahan. The courtyard can accommodate more than 25000 people at a time. On the floor of Jama masjid total 899 black borders are marked for worshippers. Shahjahan shifted his capital from Agra to Delhi in 1638 and planned a new city named Shahjahanabad. The jami Masjid was proposed near bazaar to serve the population of the city. They are written in Tughra design of Thuluth script. All the small arches have inscriptions above on white marble panels inlaid with black stone. They put up with information regarding the history of building, construction duration, cost, name of builder and calligrapher. These panels put up with Persian prose and Quranic verses. It shows that Islamic calligraphy is used broadly to decorate the interior and exterior walls of the Great Mosque can be seen in other examples:-



Figure 7 Calligraphy on Jami Masjid, India



FIGURE 1 CALLIGRAPHY ON MUGHAL SELIMIYE MOSQUE DOME



FIGURE 2 CALLIGRAPHY ON MOSQUE-SHAHDAH



FIGURE 3 CALLIGRAPHY ON BADA GUMBAD

## CONCLUSION

Calligraphy was being used on the walls of Mughal architecture as a design purpose and the same religious quotation was repeated many times so that people must remember by hammering about their religion in their mind. It is generally written on mosques walls and Masjid. In this topic it is observed that Muslims have tried to publish their religion with the help of designing the Interior and exterior of the mosques walls, and Masjids.

It is observed that the spiritual wordings of Islamic religion in all the Mosques and Masjids of Mughal architecture have created a beauty. In Mughal architecture, such as the Stupa architecture and Temple architecture in India, the leaves, flowers, birds, animals, as well as figures of human male-female has been used as a motifs of design. But, in Mughal architecture, leaves, flowers, animals, birds and human figures were not used in the design for the beautification of mosques and Masjids because they did not fit into their religion. So, they decorated the Mughal architecture by using beautiful letters in its place. Not only that, while adopting this ornamental practice, they also propagated and spreads the religion through it, and what is the importance of the king, what's his liking, what is the importance and knowledge of the king.

It is also noted that, they have also used colourful stones to beautify and decorate these monuments, which added to the beauty and charm of Mughal architecture. This is how calligraphy has been transformed into design, and from here calligraphy is inspired to use in today's modern design like Print advertisement.

In this topic visual and aesthetic characteristic of Arabic calligraphy of Mughal Architecture is observed. Throughout this the study shall of assist to conserve and restore the calligraphic inscriptions in Mughal buildings as they are failing (Deteriorating) day by day due to negligence which will also help

designers, architects and calligraphers as calligraphy is still associating as one of the important element of contemporary religious buildings.

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