



Fragrance

A retrospect of the design, formality and grandeur of the Mughal gardens.

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ABSTRACT

The gardens of the Moghul period in India belong to a historical tradition of formal gardens. The standard theme consists of linking vegetation, water, and land in an aesthetic and harmonious whole. The origin of Mughal gardens can be traced to the first irrigation systems that was developed. Enclosed *baghs* or orchards and other horticultural plots were irrigated by narrow runnels of water crisscrossing across. The water had to be brought down the mountains using extraordinary engineering skills to the arid plains by a complicated canal system. The *Char-Bagh* design means the garden is divided into four lush plots with a network of grids and interlaced with exotic elements like fancy water fountains with bases of marble statues to increase the pleasurable experience. This helped in horticultural production too. The Moghuls were inventive and skilled in water management and irrigation. Water falls, negotiating significant differences in levels falling on to stone terraces creating a magnificent sound and appearance was an interesting early invention. There were four types of Moghul gardens, the Tomb gardens, the Pleasure gardens, the Palace gardens and Plain gardens. The traditional Mughal style of garden design incorporates sunlight and its effects which was also a crucial factor of structural design. Textures and shapes were specifically chosen by architects to harness the light. India's dry heat makes shade important in gardens, which would be unusable without it. Trees and trellises feature as a biotic shade; pavilions and walls are also structurally prominent in blocking the sun. The heat also makes water important, both in the design and maintenance of the garden. Irrigation may be required and may be provided via a form of underground tunnel called a *qanat*, that transports water from a local aquifer. Well-like structures then connect to the *qanat*, enabling the drawing of water. The surviving gardens now face challenges of urban development, pollution, traffic congestion, and lack of visitor amenities. Highways and bridges built close by represent a negative visual impact. However, the grandeur, colour and the fragrance of these gardens lingers around and remains a dominant part of Indigenous heritage and landscape.

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Introduction

‘The gardens of paradise are the place of the highest aesthetic enjoyment.’

The **Mughal** sovereign, princes, and the well to do people have tried to realize the image of the promised ideal garden of paradise formed by the mind in the shape of the early gardens. **Delhi** is a city of gardens, ‘Gardens extended on the three sides of Delhi in a straight line and the western side is bordered by a mountain.’ But the most famous gardens which still exist, though in changed form or in ruins, were laid out during the dynasty founded by Babur, the prince of gardeners. During this dynasty of the Great Moghuls, the art of gardening became a fine art in India. All of these gardens have special common features.

The gardens of the Moghul period in India belong to a historical tradition of formal gardens. The standard theme consists of linking vegetation, water, and land in an aesthetic and harmonious whole. The origin of Mughal gardens can be traced to the first irrigation systems that was developed. Enclosed *Baghs* or orchards and other horticultural plots were irrigated by narrow runnels of water crisscrossing across. The water had to be brought down the mountains using extraordinary engineering skills to the arid plains by a complicated canal system. The **Char-Bagh** (Picture 1- Char Bagh) design means the garden is divided into four lush plots with a network of grids and interlaced with exotic elements like fancy water fountains with bases of marble statues to increase the pleasurable experience. Three themes formed a harmonious whole to form

a pleasure garden.
 The presence of flowing water channels,
 The accessibility to a water source to the garden plot,
 The use of grid-plotted internal spaces for multiple uses to be used for ceremony, recreation and aesthetic pleasure.

This helped in horticultural production too. The Moghuls were inventive and skilled in water management and irrigation. Water falls, negotiating significant differences in levels falling on to stone terraces creating a magnificent sound and appearance was an interesting early invention.

The Mughal gardens are either square or rectangular in shape. They were further divided into smaller subdivisions or parterres that were filled with fruit trees and flowers. Larger trees defined the main axis of the garden, stretching along the perimeter walls. The gardens were always enclosed by high walls pierced by imposing gates, with some of the larger gardens featuring gates on all four sides. Water played key role in the garden, for irrigation and cooling effect during the sizzling summer months. The water from canals would then flow into a large tank called Hauz. Pavilions intended for leisure and relaxation were usually placed in the center of the largest of these pools and served as a retreat from the sun. Typically, a large masonry platform was built under a tree and served as the venue for entertainment. Mughals were obsessed with symbol (Picture 2 – Symbols in Mughal gardens) and incorporated it into their gardens in many ways. They include trees of various sorts to provide shade merely and others to produce fruits, flowers that were colourful and sweet smelling. Grass usually growing with song; the whole cooled by a pleasant breeze. The garden might include a raised hillock at the center, reminiscent of the mountain at the center of the universe in cosmological descriptions, and often surmounted by a pavilion or palace.

The founder of the Mughal empire, *Babur*, described his favorite type of garden as a *Char Bagh*. *Humayun* his son, does not seem to have had much time for building. *Akbar* built several gardens first in *Delhi*, then in *Agra*, Akbar’s new capital. Akbar’s heir, *Jahangir*, did not build as much, but he helped to lay out the famous *Shalimar Garden* and was known for his great love for flowers. *Jahangir*’s son, *ShahJahan*, marks the apex of Mughal Garden architecture and floral design. He is famous for the construction of the *Taj Mahal* and the *Red fort* which contains the *Mahtab bagh*.

There were four types of Moghul gardens, the Tomb gardens, the Pleasure gardens, the Palace gardens and Plain gardens.

Tomb garden - Humayun's Tomb – Delhi, Taj Mahal – Agra & Safdarjung's Tomb

Terrace Garden - Shalimar Gardens – Kashmir, Yadvindra Gardens – Pinjore, Khusro Bagh – Allahabad.

Palace Garden- Anguri Bagh – Agra fort

Pleasure Garden - Mehtab Bagh – Agra (Taj Mahal), Ram Bagh, Agra

The traditional Mughal style of garden design incorporates sunlight and its effects which was also a crucial factor of structural design. Textures and shapes were specifically chosen by architects to harness the light. India's dry heat makes shade important in gardens, which would be unusable without it. Trees and trellises feature as a biotic shade; pavilions and walls are also structurally prominent in blocking the sun. The heat also makes water important, both in the design and maintenance of the garden. Irrigation may be required and may be provided via a form of underground tunnel called a *qanat*, that transports water from a local aquifer. Well-like structures then connect to the *qanat*, enabling the drawing of water. The Persian style often attempts to integrate indoors with outdoors through the connection of a surrounding garden with an inner courtyard. (Picture 3 – Features of Mughal gardens)

Analysis of gardens made by Babur

Babur conquered India in 1526. From his autobiography, a faithful record of his life, we know of his genial nature and his love for gardens. Some of the picturesque gardens constructed by Babur were Bagh-i-wafa in Kabul, The Bagh-e-kilan near Kabul, and the Aaram Bagh and the Zuhara Bagh, both in Agra. His first concern after conquering India was to carry out his traditional plan of laying out gardens.

The greatest draw back the Mughals faced was the lack of running water and the challenge was to make the waters flow by means of wheels erected wherever they settled down, so that grounds can be laid out in an orderly and symmetrical way. With this object in view, they crossed the Jun-water to look at garden grounds. The beginning was made with a large well from which water comes for the hot bath and also with the piece of ground where the tamarind trees and the octagonal tank are. After that came the large tank with its enclosure; after that the tank and the "talar" in front of the outer residence; after that the private house with its garden and various dwellings; after that the hot bath. Then plots of garden were laid out with order and symmetry wit suitable borders and parterres in every corner and in every border rose and narcissus in perfect arrangement.

The Indians had laid gardens from small vaticas to large Udyans, but architecture had not been associated with gardens, water arrangements or landscaping. The credit for this goes to the Moghuls, especially Babur, the pioneer in this art. Overcoming the handicaps of an inhospitable climate, he created exquisite gardens and he guided his able descendants, *Akbar, Jehangir, and Shah Jahan* successfully in this art.

The Agra Garden, Now known as the **Ram Bagh**, is the first Charbagh. Ram Bagh Garden Agra is the oldest Mughal Garden in India, built by the Mughal Emperor *Babur* in 1528 A.D. Planned following the CharBagh pattern. Four main divisions crisscrossed by paths and waterways. Located about five kilometers northeast of the *Taj Mahal*. Water represented life. The garden is a paradise of CharBagh, were pathways and canals divide the garden to represent the Islamic ideal of paradise, an abundant garden through which rivers flow. The Ram Bagh provides an example of a variant of the Char bagh in which water cascades down three terraces in a sequences of cascades.

Analysis of gardens made by Humayun

In the sixteenth century the Mughals began designing tomb enclosures as gardens. It was an original idea. A central mausoleum replaced the garden pavilion and the char bagh layout was formalised into a perfectly symmetrical square plan. They were places to pray but they were also places of resort for the nobility to sip rose-water sherbet and chilled lemon juice, sitting on rich carpets in the cool of the night. The design of tomb gardens was also part-religious and part-secular. Humayun's tomb is planned in the midst of a Charbagh founded with architectural elements such as stone, pathways, canals, lily pond, stairs,

cascades and waterfalls. It was the first garden tomb made in India. The garden is divided into 36 squares by a grid of water channels and paths. These channels of water also facilitates the formation of Charbagh at Humayun's Tomb. (Picture 4 – Humayun's tomb)

Analysis of gardens made by Akbar

Akbar was the first great Moghul, who entered the Kashmir valley and founded the *Nasim Bagh* at Srinagar. This became the first in a long series of terraced gardens of the Moghuls after Babur. The garden rose over the Dal Lake, but all the architectural features have disappeared including the walls, canals and the fountains. The same fate has befallen the other early terraced gardens on the Dal Lake. The shrine of *Hazrat Bal* stands now on the site of a ruined Moghul Garden. Emperor *Akbar*'s tomb at *Sikandra* and its adjoining gardens were in contrast not based on Islamic precedents alone but were an amalgamation of outside influences. The construction of the tomb set in a 119 acre of land, aligned to the four cardinal points started by *Akbar* in 1600, was his son *Jehangir* who completed it.

Analysis of gardens made by Jehangir

Jehangir was, like his grandfather, a great and enthusiastic gardener. The Shalimar Bagh at Srinagar is one of the best terrace gardens in the world. *Jehangir* built it in A.D. 1619 on an ancient site at the far end of the Dal Lake, which is connected by a broad canal. It was an elaborate affair in three parts. The Emperor's Garden, the Ladies Garden, and the public garden.

The public garden or the *Diwan-i-Am* was situated over the central canal flowing through it. The Emperor's Garden or the *Diwan-i-Khas* was in the center and the Ladies Garden, which was the most beautiful part of the project in an adjacent terrace. It had a series of cascades and fountains on all sides. The most impressive part of the Shalimar Garden is the central canal, which along with its accessories dominates the garden. For the Moghul temperament, water was of supreme importance: The water courses in the Shalimar are so wide that stepping stones and stone bridges had to be built across them. It was here that fountain jets were introduced which afterwards became a characteristic feature of Moghul gardens. The foaming water cascading down the terraces and the fine fountain jets with Rose trees bordering the edges of the canal and reflected in the placid water with the Cypress a dark green reflection was indeed a heavenly sight. The carved stone bases and a fine platform surrounded by fountains are still seen. Shalimar bagh is well known for *Chini khanas*, or arched niches behind garden waterfalls. The garden is considered to be incredibly beautiful during the autumn and spring due to the colour change in leaves of the famed Chinar trees. (Picture 5 – Shalimar terraced garden). Shalimar bagh Includes all the features of a Mughal Garden, has three terraces. The second terrace garden along the axial canal slightly broader, has two shallow terraces.

Analysis of gardens made by Sha Jahan

The great Moghul **Sha Jahan** is not only associated with monuments, but he was also an enthusiastic garden layer. He laid many a terraced type gardens of the at Lahore, and Delhi. His Shalimar Garden at Lahore is the most spacious and beautiful of all his gardens. It has the Persian pattern of Char Baghs and terraces, and the canal running through the center with water pavilions in which water flowed through courses into tanks. Shah Jahan's innovation resulted in the flower parterres having a curved design instead of the usual straight lines. The design was octagonal and star pattern, flowers being grown in oblong beds and the cypress trees being planted in the octagonal stars. The garden of the *Taj Mahal* is a notable example of a tomb garden. Most Mughal char baghs are rectangular with a tomb or pavilion in the center. The Taj Mahal garden is unusual in that the main element, the tomb, instead is located at the end of the garden. The Taj Mahal is an earthly paradise and the outstanding example of a Mughal Garden. (Picture 6 – Garden of the TAJ).

Built by *Shah Jahan* in 1637, **Anguri Bagh** is flanked by the Khas Mahal on its east and red sandstone walkways on its other three sides. As the name suggests, *Anguri Bagh* was known for its rich harvests of grapes and flowers and was also the central area of the *zenana* - The garden was meant to be a private area of relaxation for the royal ladies. It is made up of a concrete platform with a fountain in the middle. The garden is divided into various subdivisions with elaborate geometric patterns. To the northeast of Anguri Bagh are structures which were used as the royal bath houses or *hamams* and were extravagantly decorated

with fine wall paintings. Gardens were laid down independently on a plain surface on char bagh plan, enclosed on all sides by a *PARKOTA* (*RAMPATS*) with a main gateway in the south and with ornamental gateways on other sides. Divided in four equal parts by four *CANALS* running from central platform with stone or brick paved causeways on both sides, having tanks and cascades sometimes. Perfectly unified homogenous composition. Pleasure pavilion was originally built on the central later sometimes replaced by a tomb of the owner of the garden.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Today, more than 40 Mughal gardens survive in ranging states of conservation, all having been significantly changed over time. Four are under the management of the Archaeological Survey of India. These gardens may not be as well known to travelers as the Taj Mahal, but they are open to the public and represent an extraordinary ensemble of Mughal heritage, as well as providing recreational spaces in a bustling urban environment. The surviving gardens now face challenges of urban development, pollution, traffic congestion, and lack of visitor amenities. Highways and bridges built close by represent a negative visual impact. However, the grandeur, colour and the fragrance of these gardens lingers around and remains a dominant part of Indigenous heritage and landscape.

CONCLUSION

All the above mentioned gardens are representatives of Mughal Gardens in their highest state of development. These gardens, therefore, apart from being of exceptional beauty, are important and irreplaceable physical evidence to the understanding of Mughal Garden evolution and culmination. As key examples of this tradition these gardens are also an outstanding resource for the understanding of garden history in general and the Mughal Period in India. The spectacular, mountainous natural settings, within which all of these gardens lay, are impossible to be found in any of the other Mughal Gardens of India. Apart from these factors, the Mughal Gardens also demonstrate the excellent engineering skills of the Mughals in making optimum use of the difficult topography and abundant supply of water when laying out these pleasure gardens at the specifically chosen sites. The use of the terraces as raised walkways (*khayabans*) and the numerous cascading chadars are given the topography key features in the Mughal gardens of Kashmir.

A factor common to all the mentioned gardens is ecology and the experience of senses. Rich in verdant qualities, and in particular the Chinars, the gardens experience a change in colour with changing seasons, from the pale green tones of the spring to the rich greens of summers which transform to the warm tones of red, browns and orange in the autumn, before the foliage turns stark and melancholy in the winters. This unique characteristic of the gardens can influence the sense of experience while visiting the gardens.

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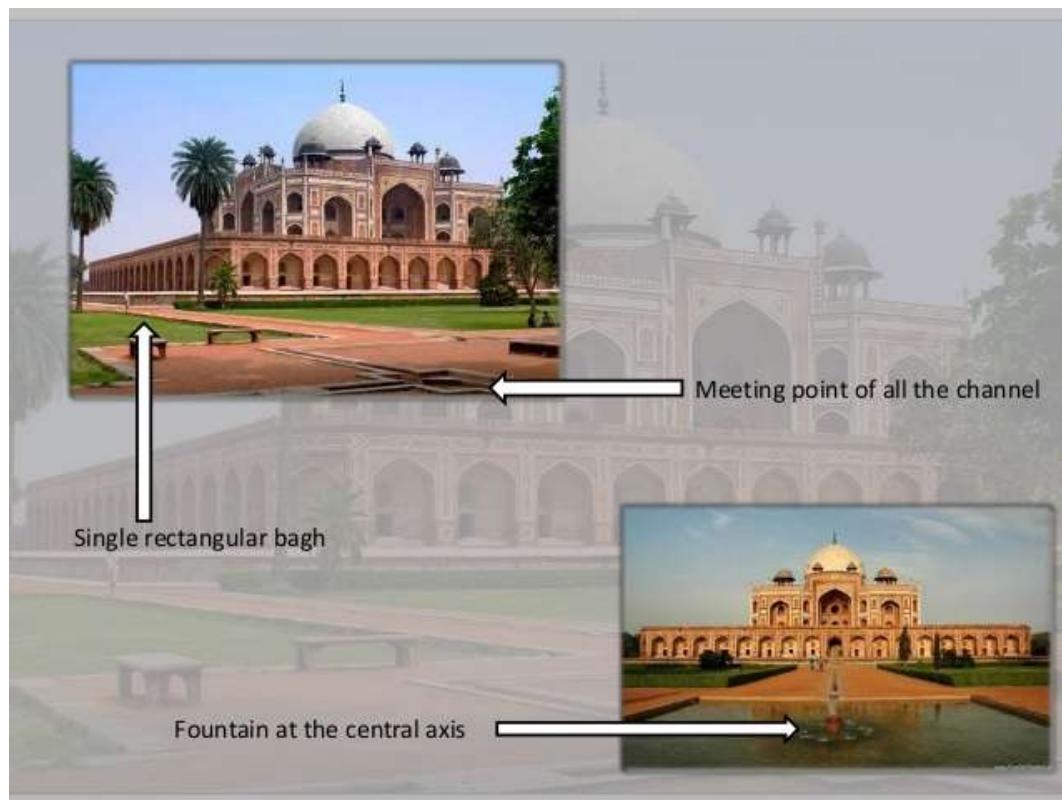
PICTURE 1 – CHAR BAGH



PICTURE 2 – SYMBOLS IN MUGHAL GARDENS



PICTURE 3 – FEATURES OF MUGHAL GARDEN



Picture 4 – Garden of Humayun's tomb



Picture 5 – Terrace Garden of Shalimar



Picture 6 – Garden of the Taj Mahal



Picture 7 – Anguri Bagh



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