

**Introduction to Indian Art – An Appreciation**  
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**Module – 05**  
**Islamic Architecture: Sultanate and Mughal Period**  
**Lecture: W2 - L5**

Welcome viewers to the MOOCs online course on Introduction to Indian Art and Appreciation. This is the fifth module of the second week on religious and cultural diversities of Indian art and in this module we will be looking at the emergence of Islamic architecture and what is also known as the Indo-Islamic architecture in India will be looking at some of the finest specimens from sultanate and Mughal period.

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Indo-Islamic Architecture refers to the art of Indian Architecture that resulted from the cultural intermingling after the advent of Muslim rulers into the Indian sub-continent.

The most important innovation that the Turkish rulers introduced was the use of the arch and the dome on a larger scale. The Arabs had borrowed this from the eastern Roman Empire at Byzantium. The new architectural form, made possible by mortar of a superior kind used geometrical and floral decorative designs which were partly derived from an established tradition of indigenous architecture. The Muslim rulers however, did not decorate their buildings with human and animal figures and filled the panels with inscriptions of Quranic verses, floral or geometric patterns.

Now, Indo-Islamic Architecture refers to the art of the Indian architecture that resulted from the cultural intermingling after the advent of the Muslim rulers into the Indian subcontinent. So, far good it is also true that some of the very important innovations that this Turkish rulers introduced was the use of the arch and the dome on a larger scale because of certain architectural innovation and certain technological (Refer Time: 01:36) this in Indo-Islamic architecture you find huge scale in terms of scale the really huge domes and arches and because of certain requirements of this new society this huge

structures were able to satisfy these demands most perfectly most satisfactory.

Now, the Arabs had borrowed this from the eastern roman empire at bys in time as far as the huge arch and dome is concerned the new architectural form made possible by mortar of a superior kind use geometrical and floral decorative designs which were partly derived from an established tradition of indigenous architecture the Muslim rulers however, did not decorate their buildings with human and animal figures and fill the panels with inscriptions of Quranic verses floral or geometric pattern.

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Needless to say that Taj Mahal is considered to be one of the finest specimens of Indo-Islamic architecture in India. Now since there are many in Agra, in Fatehpur Sikri, in Delhi, in old Delhi even in eastern part of India you go to Gulbarga in south in Karnataka there are plenty of such beautiful Indo-Islamic architectures and they have become like permanent features of Indian culture.

Now, this needs to be understood though Indo-Islamic architecture began to emerge on the landscape of Indian culture.

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Due to the arrival of the Muslim leaders from roughly 12 century AD on wards and that is why we have sultanate dynasty and that is why we have the famous mighty Mughal empire, but when you look at this architectures very carefully when you study this architectures very carefully you can gradually find out that these architectures are not foreign architectures on a foreign land and it has to be issued.

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Why first of all just think about this fact that though these architectures in terms of its design and concept are absolutely new Indians have not seen something like this before this is true, but who were the masons, who were the craftsmen, who were the people, who were actually building this up not architects and craftsmen imported all the way from Persia they all these peoples were local craftsmen, local artisans, even local masons, local architects.

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So, it is quite natural that within the fold of Islamic architecture a lot of pre Islamic Indian elements would also get a chance to infiltrate and merge into the entire conception. And that is why we consider this entire tradition not as Islamic architecture or Muslim architecture. We categorically use the term Indo-Islamic architecture. It is Indo-Islamic truly it is a combination of two kinds of cultural elements within one fold, but at the same time.

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It is Islamic also because these architectures as I just mentioned came up to meet the new set of requirements from a new kind of society previously you did have Stupa, but after Stupa was not a mausoleum I mean it was not a dome though it is believed that in some of the Stupas relics of Buddha were kept relics not the entire body of Buddha.

So, if you have a sultanate emperor a sultanate king or a Mughal emperor after death if you want or if the son wants to build a huge mausoleum a huge dome in respect to pay a homage to the great man the disease man so you have mausoleum you have domes you have most wonderful beautiful mosques.

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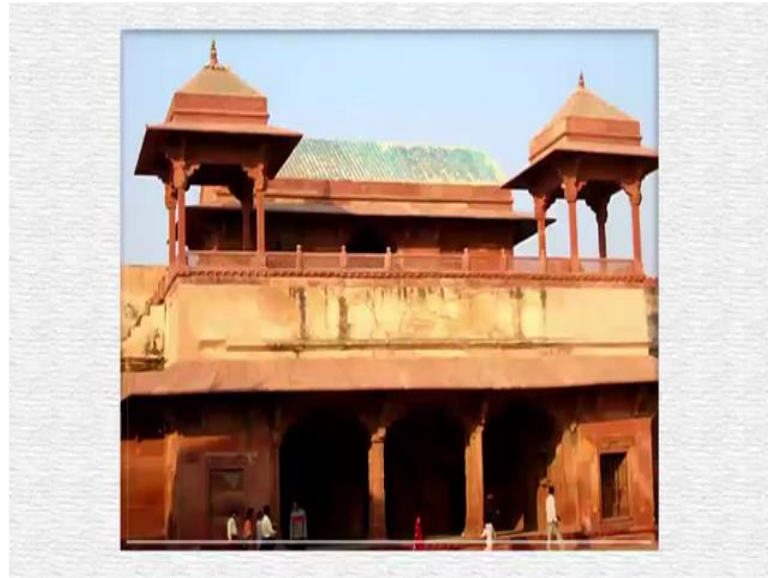


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Built by the patriots from sultanate and Mughal period you also have palaces you also have gate ways so different kind of architectural concepts now came into being as a part of this Indo-Islamic culture. They all became part of the Indian cultural landscape. So, it is now today impossible to imagine old Delhi without Jama Masjid. So, look at this Jama Masjid how it has become one of the most popular and well known symbols of Delhi.

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So, like Taj Mahal like Fatehpur Sikri like Agra fort these are not foreign architectures on foreign land now we were talking about domes and arches as far as the Jama Masjid and Taj Mahal and many other Indo-Islamic architecture are concerned. But at the same time there are examples like this one from Fatehpur Sikri where it is not arched or dome, but rectangular spaces and pillars which are direct influences of the pre-Islamic Hindu or Buddhist architecture or indigenous Indian traditional architectural events.

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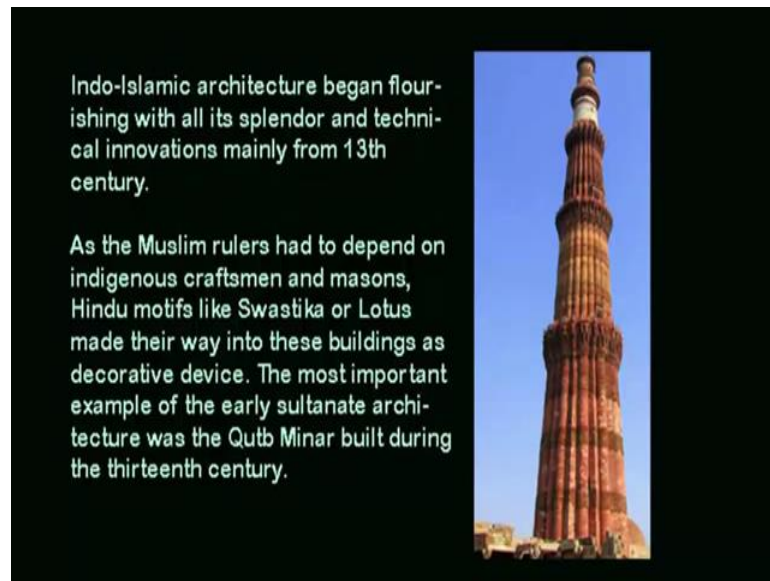
And in other words most of this Indo-Islamic architecture particularly if you are looking at the Mughal architecture you will find that the Mughal architects never ever felt hesitant to borrow from the Indian indigenous tradition to assimilate Indian indigenous elements within or as a part of their architectural concept and that is why the term Indo-Islamic architecture is absolutely fitting.

So, apart from mausoleums, mosques, domes, Mughal palaces we also have another very interesting kind of architecture which was perhaps not there before the advent of Muslims in India that is fort. So, we have Agra fort we have Delhi fort we have Daulatabad fort and then of course, we have Marata forts in the Vidarbha region, but these are all extensions of that traditions prior to these forts date Indians have any concept of fort please find out yourself I am not giving you answer to this question.

Let us find out whether the very concept of fort existed in India I mean visible physical evidence we need physical evidence to prove that yes there was fort before the Indo-Islamic architecture. So, if we find one then it would be very interested to compare those forts with the Indo-Islamic forts like this one Agra fort.



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Or go to any other forts in Delhi and old Delhi our Maharashtra Daulatabad and find out yourself. So, Indo-Islamic architecture began flourishing with all its splendor and technical innovations mainly from the 13 century. As the Muslim rulers had to depend on indigenous craftsmen and masons something that I mention just now Hindu motives you will not believe something like a swastika, something like lotus made their way into many of this Indo-Islamic architectures as decorative devices the most important example of the early sultanate architecture was the Qutub Minar build during the 13th century.

So, far we have been talking about the overall structural appearance or look of this Indo-Islamic architecture now since we have just mentioned Qutub Minar let us look at the details at least of Qutub Minar for example, the surface details,

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The decorative details, the ornamental details, and their varieties in Indo-Islamic architecture are as important as the structural shape and the overall concept of the architecture unless you go very close and look at the details carefully from distance it is difficult to believe that the entire Qutub Minar has very, very intricate carvings that the entire Qutub Minar has detailed ornamental decorations with variations all over its surface. So, on the one hand it is the large massive appearance of Indo-Islamic architectures on the other hand it is also about the details the motives.

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The decorations the in like stones the use of very colorful stones on many such Indo Islamic buildings. So, it is a combination of the powerful appearance of the architecture and very delicate designs on the surface this combination is what Indo-Islamic architecture is all about to some extent.

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Islamic architecture had grown under completely different civilization and was alien architecture for India, having principles and sense of beauty totally different from Indian traditional architecture.

Sultans and his ministers were well-grounded in their own architecture and wanted to build mosques and palaces same as in their home countries. Since craftsmen who constructed those buildings actually were often Indians, a strong assimilation began to appear between the pre-Islamic Indian and new Islamic elements. Then, what was the difference between Indian traditional architecture and Islamic architecture coming from outside?

Then of course, we should also be experiencing the space inside such architecture it is very difficult to articulate in words the kind of experience you have when you enter let us say for example, homeinstone where you enter Jama Masjid when you enter Agra fort when you enter Fatehpur Sikri please find that out yourself when you visit any such place next time, what exactly what kind of physical experience exactly you are having once you are inside such building from outside we can talk about the architectural qualities the characteristic features the surface details that is fine.

But what about the interior what is experience of being inside such a huge architectural piece or a building this needs a different study all together for the time being let us remind ourselves of the fact that is Islamic architecture had grown under completely different civilization as far as the Persian, Turkish architectural traditions are concerned and it was alien architecture for India to begin with having principles and the sense of beauty totally different from Indian traditional architecture needless to say.

Now, sultan send his ministers were well grounded in their own architecture and they wanted to build mosques and palaces same as in their home countries, but gradually or I would say not so gradually quite quickly they realized that they need to transform they need to kind of evolve it would be completely a mistake to stick to what they use to do back home to make the architecture suitable to the Indian soil they need to go for some change over and that they did and who did not the main architects or the sultan, but the craftsmen the local craftsmen once again we should be paying our great respect and homage to this anonymous unknown hundreds of local craftsmen without whom these wonderful architectures would not have happened at all.

So, that is how this assimilation we were talking about took place. So, since craftsmen who constructed this buildings actually were often Indians. So, strong as assimilation began to appear between the pre Islamic Indian and the new Islamic elements then this is also next question that what was the difference between Indian traditional architectures and the new Islamic architecture that is coming from outside we need to compare. And see we do not really need to go into the technical details right now we need to look at the appearance. We need to look at the proportion we need to look at the requirements the kind of demands these new Indo-Islamic architectures were able to satisfy and how this

demands were different from the demands the pre Islamic Indian architectures were able to satisfy.

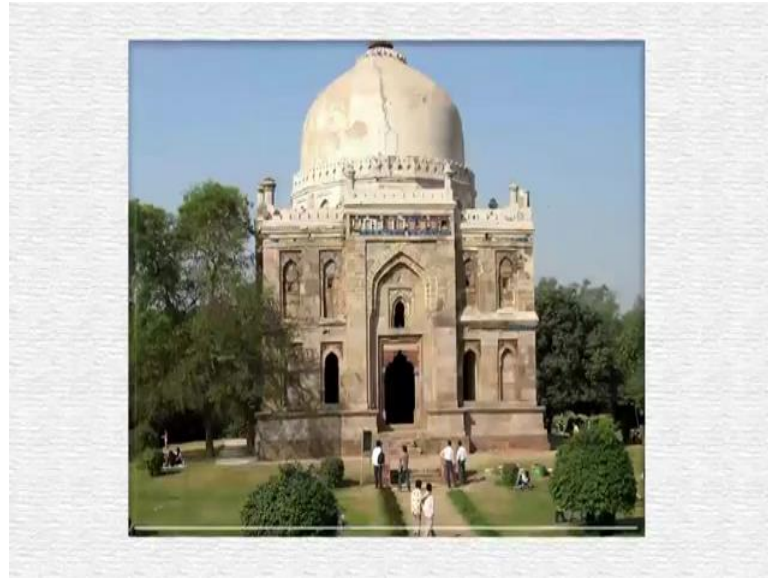
Because after all architecture is not a piece of sculpture only to be aesthetically enjoyed and understood architecture is something that is very functional something that serve the society serves people it is something very pragmatic very practical. So, we need to approach Indo-Islamic architecture from this prospective as well how these architectures are able to satisfy the new demands of a new society and what those demands were.

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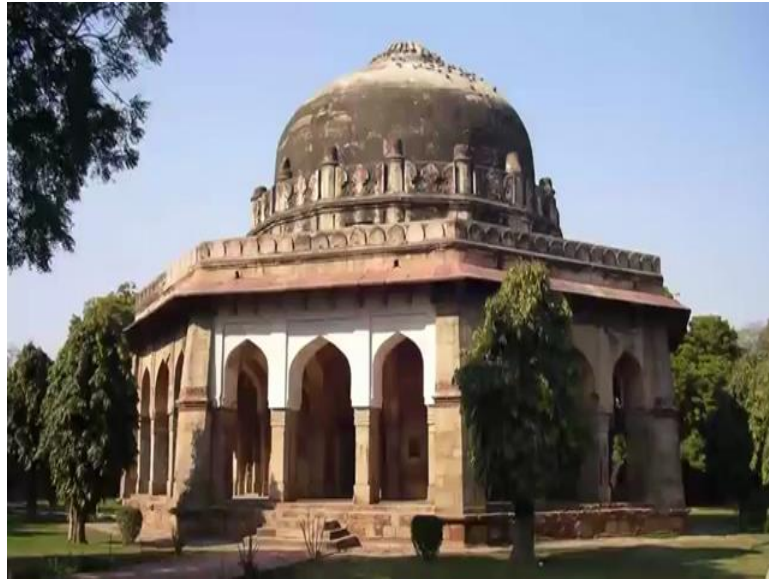
Now, another interesting element introduced in Indo-Islamic architecture was this idea of gardening it was not there initially, but as a they found out that they were having let us say a dome or a mausoleum within a compound which is very huge why do not we develop that space as a garden then what kind of garden not a British or a French garden it is a very Indo-Islamic garden and we should be giving credit particularly to the Mughals. Because this Mughals they paid lot of attention to this idea of garden go to Kashmir go to Srinagar go to Agra you will all these places where go to Lahore all these places where Mughals lived they built beautiful gardens with predicts of having a may be a small little dome or a mausoleum it.

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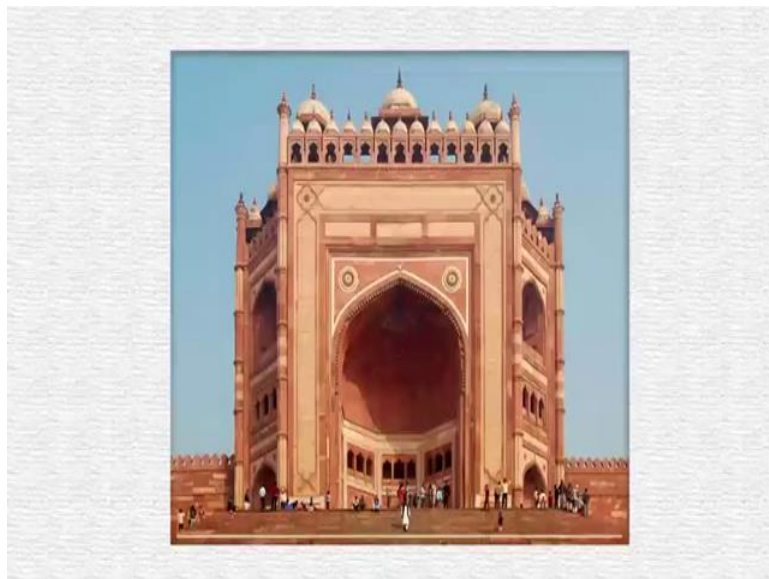


Often appears that the dome is not so important more than the dome it is the garden the (Refer Time: 18:02) garden around the dome that becomes visually aesthetically and also environmentally very charming. And they started experimenting with the garden the layout of the garden what kind of trees they would be so and gardening becomes an essential part of Indo-Islamic architecture. So, next time whenever you visit such a place do not ignore the garden through which you walk and reach the mausoleum because the gardens surrounding the building is an essential part and it did become an essential part of the building itself.

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So, there are plenty of such like Sikandar the dome then the Golgombaz in Golkonda then the Fatehpur Sikri and everywhere you go you see gardens apart from that like this one the Buland Darwaza the Fatehpur Sikri is neither a mausoleum nor a dome it is not a mosque it is not a palace. So, what is this a Darwaza a gate way even a gate way a simple gate way can assume the scale of a huge architecture and it is considered to be the largest

gate in Asia may be in the world I do not know I mean it is huge it is massive.

So, the whole idea when we do have see for example, if you go to South India and study the South Indian dravida type of temple architecture you do have Gopuram. Gopuram are kind of entrance to the main temple like in you go to Kanchipuram you go to (Refer Time: 19:48) you go to Hampi and look at the Virupaksha temple you everywhere you find huge Gopuram, but these are all later temple architectures, but as early as like Fatehpur Sikri during (Refer Time: 20:03) time he got this huge gate way built there were purposes I am not discussing that right now.

But I am talking about the impression that you have when you stand not in front of the gateway, but down you looking up the flight of the stair case leading to the gateway which is the huge gateway known as Buland Darwaza. So, these are the new absolutely stunning new novel contributions of Indo-Islamic architectures to Indian tradition.

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And there are many portions within Fatehpur Sikri for example, which resembles somewhat like a temple. So, these architect of Indo-Islamic architecture they really felt free to accommodate elements which originally did not belong to their faith as a result many of this Indo-Islamic architectures are not only eclectic in nature, but they assumed



the kind of vibrancy a kind of liveliness, because of this plurality of elements because of this multiculturalism that is not to be found in the Islamic architectures outside India generally speaking.

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Then within Agra forts there are details there are portions there are certain corners where you find as I was telling you in the context of the Qutub Minar surface design or surface decoration. So, in order to appreciate Indo-Islamic architecture you need to look at the scale the overall impression for example like Buland Darwaza or Qutub Minar or Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal obviously, looks brilliant from distance, but it also looks marvelous from proximity because there are beautiful details which need to be noticed and appreciated.

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This is from Bijapur from south India it is called Ibrahim Roza. Ibrahim Roza is another example main stone dome and this dome where I am they try to create a beautiful garden around the main structure garden therefore, becomes essential within the context of Indo-Islamic architecture.

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The different religious beliefs are also reflected in the mode of construction and architectural styles. The Islamic style also incorporated many elements from the traditional Indian style and a compound style emanated. The introduction of decorative brackets, balconies, pendentive decorations, etc in the architecture is an example in this regard.



So, it is true that different religious beliefs are also reflected in the mode of construction and architectural styles the Islamic style also incorporated many elements from the traditional Indian style and a compound style emanated. I mean it is a combination of various styles the introduction of the decorative brackets, balconies, then pendentive decorations, etcetera. The lot of interesting elements in the architectures which the moment you look at you feel you must have seen them elsewhere before the beginning of Indo-Islamic architecture. It is true many of these elements were borrowed and used very intelligently very aesthetically within the fold of Indo-Islamic architecture.

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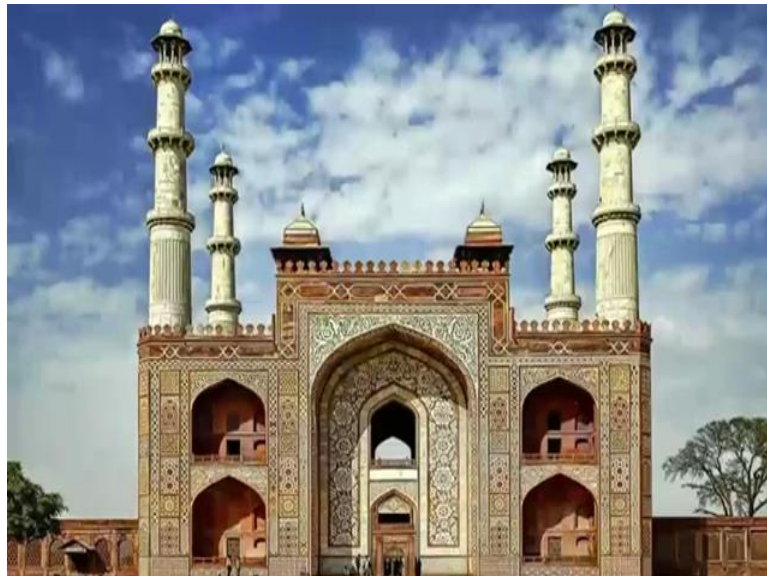
The other distinguishing features of Indo-Islamic architecture are the utilization of kiosks something like a dome a dome like a parasol then of course, tall towers which are known as Minars kiosks are locally known as chhatris and half domed double portals as human worship and its representation are not allowed in Islam you do not depict hereditary no iconographic representation is allowed hence these buildings and other edifices are generally decorated richly with very innovative and elaborate geometrical and Arabs designs.

So, when I was talking about the surface design I am basically trying to draw your attention to the decorative geometrical and Arabic's design they are not very simple

designs mind you when you start looking at them when you begin to study this designs you will find there a very complex and complicated designs. So, they were designers who were constantly researching on the possibilities of geometrical and Arabic's designs to be used on the surface of Indo-Islamic architecture.

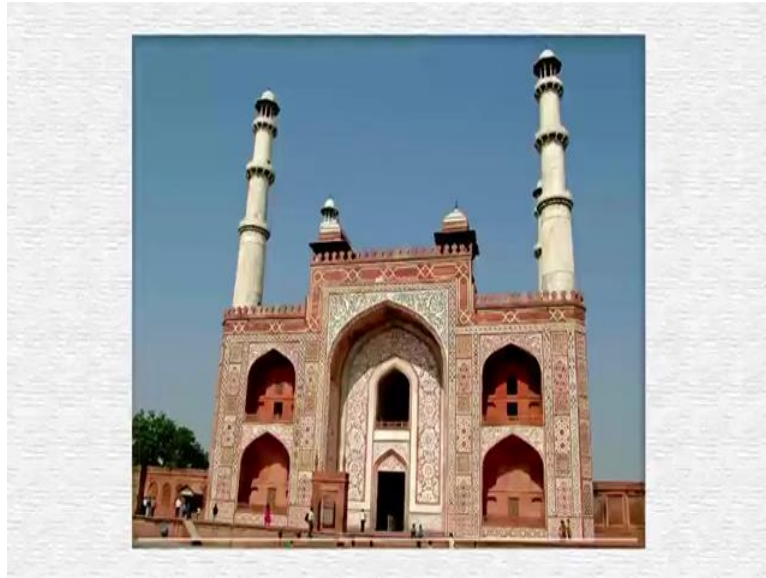
So, these designs were carved on stone in low relief they were cut on plaster they were painted and very frequently they were inlaid say you get to see lot of inlaid box Indo-Islamic architectures the use of lime as mortar was also a major element distinct from the traditional building style.

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Hence for example, if you go and look at Agra which is got a Sikandar near Agra well it is very impressive building it is impressive not just because of its scale and its design it is very impressive also because of its surface design. So, next time you are in Agra do not forget to visit Agra which is in Sikandar.

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The tomb architecture is also another feature of the Islamic architecture as the practice of the burial of the dead is adopted. The general pattern of the tomb architecture is consisted of a domed chamber (hujra), a cenotaph in its centre with a mihrab on the western wall and the real grave in the underground chamber. To this general tomb architecture, the Mughals added a new dimension by introducing gardens all around the tomb. The Mughal tombs are generally placed at the centre of a huge garden complex, the latter being subdivided into square compartments, the style is known as char-bagh. The Mughals also built large gardens in various levels and terraces on the char-bagh pattern.

So, this is the main gateway to enter to the Adgbaston complex and like other domes and other architectural complexes this also has a beautiful garden inside the tomb architecture hence is a very important feature of the Islamic architecture as the practice of the burial of the dead is adapted and the general pattern of the tomb architectures is consisted of a domed chamber which is known as Hujra a cenotaph in its center with a

Mihrab on the western wall and the real grave in the underground chamber to this general tomb architecture the Mughals added a new dimension by introducing gardens all around. So, the Mughals added gardens all around the tomb they added gardens around their palace garden thus became a very important element as a part of the architectural concept.

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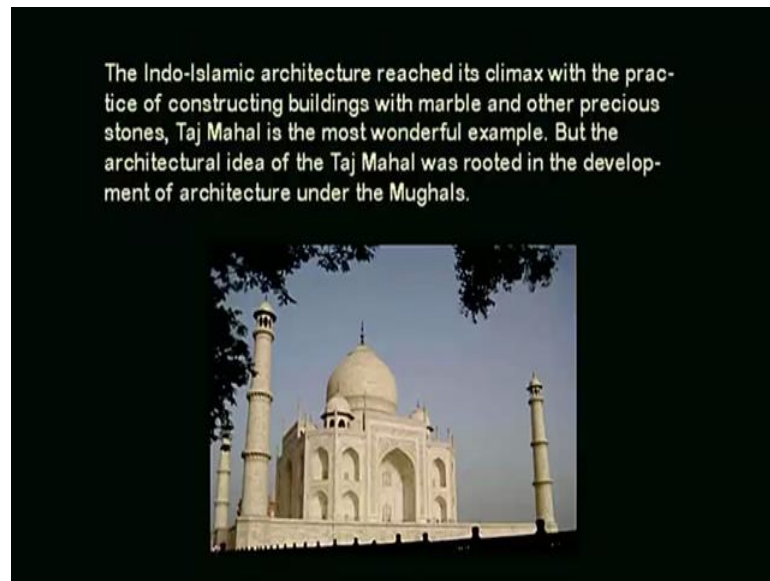
Look at some of these gardens now this is the Humayun tomb the garden is properly laid out and it integrates very well with the architectural design.

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Is the same Humayun tomb of photograph that is taken from top which allows us to see the layout of the garden; so the garden is not just naturally it is not something that is allow to grow naturally it has been properly laid out and this laying out of the garden was determined by the architectural design of the main (Refer Time: 27:27). So, this is how the garden or the landscaping of the complex and the main building get integrated with each other.

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We began with the photograph of Taj Mahal once again we end up also with the photograph of Taj Mahal of course, this is one of the best specimen no doubt, but Taj Mahal is not the only marvelous architecture belonging to the Indo-Islamic architecture tradition. In fact, Taj Mahal gives an idea because it is like it is considered to be a classical example, but when you also need to look at the entire range of Indo-Islamic architecture in order to see that how Taj Mahal looks like a culmination of Indo-Islamic architecture and how there are also other kinds of architecture which are as beautiful as and as marvelous as Taj Mahal, but they need to be more studied more talked about and more appreciated.



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So, we wind up today's lecture by making us aware of this fact that Indo-Islamic architecture has a very strong and beautiful presence in the cultural history of India we need to look at them we need to study them we need to at least appreciate them keeping this in our mind that it is a combination of delicacy and strength.

Thank you.