

Influence of Mughals on the Indian Culture

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Abstract: *The arrival of the Mughals paved the way for a highly important evolution in the history of our motherland. The impact of their rule and the legacy they have left behind has been eternally etched in our lands. Along with one of the wonders of the world- the Taj Mahal and various other monuments, the Mughal dynasty has contributed immensely into the life style, attire and cuisine of our country. This research paper focuses on the various factors that have influenced our social, cultural attitudes of us Indians and how it is exhibited even today.*

Key Words: *Indian, Mughals, culture, style, cuisine, evolution.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Mughal dynasty was a dominant power in the Indian subcontinent between the mid 16th century and the early 18th century. Founded in 1526, it officially survived till 1858 when it was supplanted by the British Raj. This dynasty is sometimes referred to as the Timurid dynasty as Babur was descended from Timur. The name Mughal was derived from the original homelands of the Timurids, the central Asian tribes once conquered by Genghis Khan and known as Moghulistan.

India's ancient culture did not perish before the onslaughts of the Muslim. Under the influence of some of the Delhi sultans of the middle ages there was persecution and we have read of temples being razed to the ground and Brahmins put to death for practicing their devotions in public; but in general the Muslims were reasonably tolerant, and at all times Hindu chiefs continued to rule in outlying parts of India, paying tribute to their Muslim overlords. Conversions to Islam were numerous, though only in a few regions were the majority of Indians persuaded to accept this new faith.

Nevertheless, the Muslim invasions, and the enforced contact with new ideas, did not have the fertilizing effect upon Hindu culture which might have been expected. Hindus and Muslims lived side by side and, after a few centuries, the Hindus in those parts of India dominated by Muslims often accepted the situation as normal. But Hinduism was already very conservative when the lieutenants of Muhammed of Ghor conquered the Ganges valley. In the Middle Ages, for every tolerant and progressive teacher there must have been hundreds of orthodox Brahmins, who looked upon themselves as the preservers of the immemorial Aryan dharma against the barbarians who overran the holy land of Bharathavarsa. Under their influence the complex rules of the Hindu way of life became if anything stricter and more rigidly applied.

Nevertheless traces of Mughal culture can be easily noticed in the language, architecture and certain cuisine prevailing today in our Indian culture.

2. ANALYSIS:

2.1. MUGHAL'S INFLUENCE ON INDIAN ARCHITECTURE:

In the 16th and the 17th centuries the Mughal emperors practically unified the whole of north India and much of the Deccan, and built up an empire such as had not been since centuries. The Mughal period was one of great splendor, which has left its mark on India in the form of many lovely buildings, wherein Islamic and Hindu motifs often blended in a perfect unity. The Taj Mahal at Agra, the Mughal capital, is of course the most famous memorial of the times. The Mughal architecture influenced by giving elaborate structures and designs to their buildings and even later many palaces were built according to this style by the Rajputs and Sikhs. Other world heritage sites included the Humayun tomb built by Akbar known for its intricate designs and patterns, Fatepur Sikri, the red fort and Lahore fort etc.

2.2. MUGHAL'S INFLUENCE ON WOMEN:

The Purdah system that exists even today remains as a major trace of the Mughals. Soon after the inhabitation of the Mughals in India, well to do Hindu families adopted the system of "strict parda" from the Muslims and made their women folk veil their faces from the public. Even in certain parts of India both Hindu and Muslim aristocracy regarded their women by keeping them hidden within walled spaces of anathapura and harem while poor Muslims used common clothes to cover their body.

3.3. MUGHAL'S INFLUENCE ON LANGUAGE:

Although Persian was the official and dominant language of the Mughals, the language of the elite later evolved into Urdu. The Hindus having accepted the, Muslims as their co inhabitants gradually began to get influenced by their language and style. It could be termed as a mutual influence. Hindus began to learn Persian and Persian words found their way into the vernaculars. Modern Hindi, which uses Sanskrit based vocabulary along with Urdu loan word from Persian and Arabic, is mutually intelligible with Urdu. Today Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and also an important co official language of India. It can be rightfully said that Persian art and culture amalgamated with the Indian art and culture through the combined usage of both the languages.

3. 4. MUGHAL'S INFLUENCE ON INDIAN FOOD AND COOKING:

The development of Mughlai cuisine which is still relished by the Indian population is another one of a trace left by the Mughals. They had a deep and fundamental effect on Indian cooking. Similar to the Mughal dishes today, the Indians use as many as twelve ingredients into making a single dish. The usage of expensive items namely saffron, cardamom, cinnamons and cloves were introduced by the, Mughals.

The trace of Mughal influences can be noticed in the kebabs, tikka and haleems. The Indian word 'pulaao' comes from the Persian word for the same 'polo', the concept came into India via Mughals who loved delicate rice dishes along with meat and vegetables.

The cooking styles used in north India especially Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, and Pakistan as well as in parts of Dhaka in Bangladesh and the Indian city of Hyderabad strongly represent the Mughal style. The taste of Mughlai cuisine strongly vary from extremely mild to spicy, and is often associated with a distinctive aroma and the taste of whole and ground spices.

There was an outburst of many-sided cultural activity in India under the Mughal rule. The traditions in the field of architecture, painting, language and music created during this period set a norm and deeply influenced the succeeding generations. The Mughal influence can also be seen in the centralized, imperialistic government which brought together many smaller kingdoms. Although the land the Mughals once ruled has separated into what is now India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afganistan, their influence can be still seen today. In this sense, the Mughal period can be called a second classical age following the Gupta period.

4. CONCLUSION:

To conclude, this paper has tried to focus on the specialities which have been inculcated by the Mughals into our Indian culture. Even when one finds it difficult to accept our culture, traditions and attitudes keeps evolving and we have to learn to live with that. Food, attire, worship that have passed down from generations are but an amalgamation of Indian and various other immigrants that travelled into our country. And by far it seems the Mughals have drawn an impressive infiltration into the Indian land.

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