

The Garden as a Metaphor for Paradise.

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In this half thesis the use of the garden as a metaphor for paradise has been explored.

The English word “paradise“ was derived from the Greek word “*paradeisos*” which in turn was derived from the Old Avestan^a “*pairi-daeza*,” meaning an enclosure. In Ancient Persia the concept applied to an enclosed garden in the modern sense of the word. For this reason the thesis begins with an examination of the development of the garden in this desert region.

A more-or-less continuous chain of development in both the physical and allegorical nature of the garden is traced through history from these Ancient Persian beginnings to the height of Mughal architecture (epitomised by the Taj Mahal), by way of the Muslim expansion through Central Asia and Europe. While the core elements of garden design were set in Ancient Persian times, and recur throughout the period studied, the impact of Islam on the local Persian culture brought about a new development of allegorical meaning associated with the garden. This allegorical development reached its apex, too, in the Taj Mahal in which, it is argued, the metaphorical representation of paradise in the garden tomb was made astonishingly explicit.

The research for this mini thesis was gathered from secondary sources, including many published books and academic papers, photographic and diagrammatic evidence of extant ancient gardens, and reproductions of carpet designs.

^a Old Avestan was a language which developed in Ancient Persia. It predated Old Persian.

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INTRODUCTION

In this half thesis the use of the garden as a metaphor for paradise has been explored. The approach might have been a philosophical and esoteric one; it is instead historic. The word “paradise“ was derived from the Greek word “*paradeisos*” which in turn was derived from the Old Avestan word (a language predating Old Persian) “*pairi-daeza,*” meaning an enclosure. In Ancient Persia the concept applied to an enclosed garden: a little green haven, shutting out the harsh desert. It is for this reason that the thesis starts in chapter one, with Ancient Persia. The development of the garden in this desert region has been examined, as the quadripartite form of the garden developed here. Although there is not much evidence from actual existing gardens, where possible, ruins, descriptions and a carpet have been used to derive information from.

Of necessity this chapter is very short because of this lack of available physical evidence. It is, however, clear that these gardens became a prototype taken up after the Islamic invasions, and this was carried then from ancient Persia to the various countries that Islam influenced: from India in the east, to Spain in the west.

As the prototype of the Ancient Persian garden was spread by Islam (again mostly to desert-like areas), chapter two goes into some detail about the life of Muhammad the Prophet of God and the concept of paradise in the Koran.

To minimize confusion, a chronological order is given of the various dynasties and peoples like the Turks and the Mongols who conquered parts of the Middle East. This summary

covers a very complex situation. The rise and fall of the caliphates, of kingdoms and kings, and the vast area spanned by the Islamic conquests, need a thesis in themselves.

In chapter three, the gardens of Islam are investigated. These gardens are indeed a metaphor for Paradise. Islam took literally the revelation to Muhammad by God of the Garden of Paradise (afterlife): four rivers, water, shade, fruit and pavilions to rest in. “*Paradise*” was physically manifested in the gardens in every corner of the vast territories which are Islamic.

Clearly, there are regional differences and consequently three gardens from three of the main regions have been discussed. These are: in Spain in the West, the Alhambra, in Iran the Bagh-e Fin and in Kashmir in the Far East, the Shalamar Bagh.

In these gardens a number of characteristics become evident as similar: the use of the quartered garden (representing the cardinal points in Ancient Persian gardens and the four rivers of Paradise in the later Islamic gardens). In these desert regions the miracle of water, as used in the Ancient Persian gardens was taken and used by the Islamic peoples to represent Paradise, the place of bliss after death, as this garden filled all the requisites for a desert people, namely, shade, seclusion, pavilions, scents, calming sounds, and most importantly water.

Chapter four focuses specifically on the Taj Mahal as the pinnacle of the development of the Ancient Persian garden in the Islamic world. The Taj Mahal emerges as a direct representation of paradise, concretising the metaphor that had been growing through the development of these gardens as traced in previous chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

The physical landscape of the Ancient Persians¹ was, with few exceptions, a huge dry desert, bounded on three sides by mountains. It is a flattish plateau, which ranges in height from three to five thousand feet to mountains of more than eighteen thousand feet. These high ridges prevented rain from falling on the plateau, with the result that seventy percent of the region was uninhabitable desert, which is bitterly cold in winter and driven by hot sandy winds in summer. Between these seasons there is a short, but beautiful spring, which brings a carpet of wildflowers to the desert, including many ancestors of the cultivated flowers of the West.

The extent of the aridness had restricted cultivation to a few hidden valleys, the Caspian coastline and some scattered oases. In his book on Persian gardens, Khansari (1998; p. 22.) says, "...it comes as no surprise that throughout the region, as throughout the Middle East, water was early understood to be the source of life. It made civilisation possible, and the energies of the civilisations were devoted to its provision." This is something the nomadic peoples who had migrated into this region around 1000 BC² experienced. They had to settle in the valleys where there was water. However, settlement in the dry lands below the mountains was more difficult, as there was little water in the rivers to provide for the traditional open-channel irrigation systems and dams.

This problem of water, or rather the lack of it, is the context in which the Ancient Persian gardens developed. Unlike the gardens of the West, any garden, or cultivation in the Ancient Persian context comes in direct opposition to the land and creates islands of



Illus. 1: Typical Persian Desert Landscape.
(Khansari. 1998; p. 32.)

greenery in a sea of sand. In this land of sand and stone with little vegetation or water, the importance attached to both water and the gardens it produced, is not surprising.

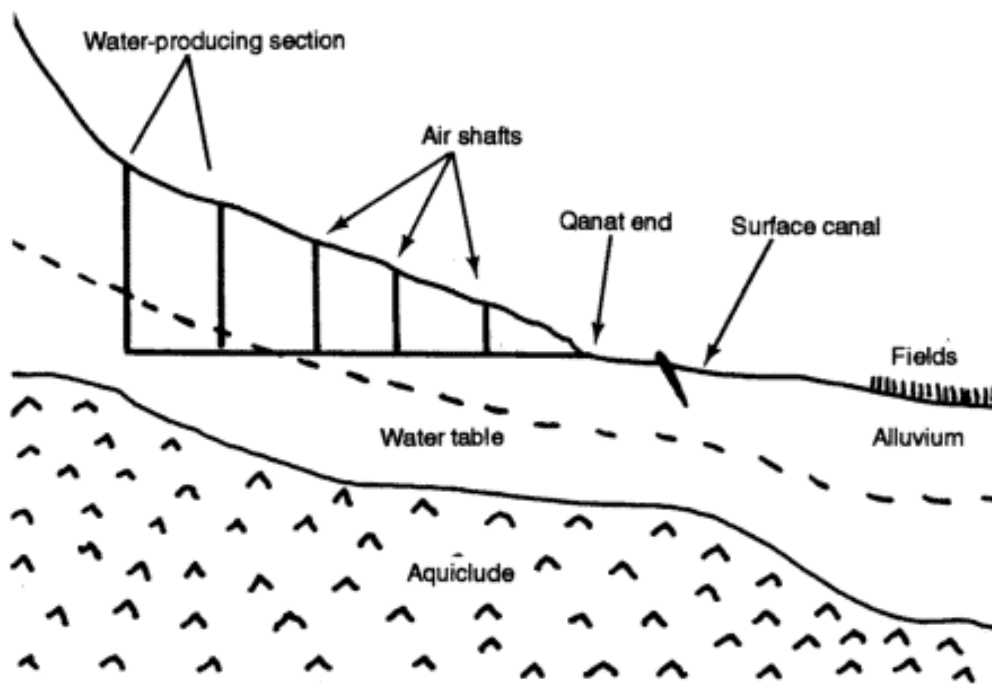
Vita Sackville-West, described this harsh landscape and the garden beautifully in her book *Passenger to Tehran* (1926)

Imagine you have ridden in summer for four days across a plain; that you have then come to a barrier of snow mountains and ridden up the pass; that from the top of the pass you have seen a second plain, with a second barrier of mountains in the distance, a hundred miles away; that you know that beyond those mountains lies yet another plain, and another; and that for days, even weeks, you must ride with no shade, and the sun overhead, and nothing but the bleached bones of dead animals strewn the track. Then when you come to trees the running water, you will call it a garden. It will not be flowers and their garishness that your eyes crave for but a green cavern full of shadows and pools where goldfish dart, and the sound of a little stream. (Brookes. 1987; p. 14-15.)

In the context of the hostile vastness of the desert, the garden is a fertile, safe place out of the intense heat and dust.

It is speculated that the garden developed out of the contemplation of the effect of crop irrigation on the desert. Its pattern was probably dictated by the geometric plan of open channel irrigation. These gardens were laid out within protective walls, where the primary content was irrigation channels and trees beneath which to rest.

There is no actual evidence of early Ancient Persian gardens dating back to approximately 1000 BC. Wilber (1978; p. 3.) mentions pots depicting a world divided into four quadrants, some of which contain a pool at their centre. The Ancient Persians along with other ancient civilisations ascribed a symbolic value to the number four. This could be linked to the four cardinal points, as well as the four elements. This quadripartite design was



Illus. 2: Diagram of a Qanat System.
(US Army. 1994)

adopted as a feature of the plan of the Ancient Persian garden. It was known as a *chahar-bagh* meaning 'four garden'. (Wilber. 1978; p. 3.)

Settlement was largely determined by water and a way of moving water to a particular area. At this time, nothing short of an engineering miracle would have produced enough water to sustain life away from the valleys in a way in which it wouldn't all be evaporated before reaching its goal. This miracle was achieved by the people of the Kingdom of Urartu, (the city of Uhli, present day Marand, just north of Zagros) who used underground conduits to channel snowmelt to the dry plateau. These underground irrigation channels are known as *qanats*³. The *qanat* system is a simple one, using gravity as its basic force. They required huge armies of people to build and maintain them.

They derived their water from the snow-fed subterranean water at the base of the Persian mountains, for which a master shaft had to be dug vertically for as much as forty-five metres down to the permanent water table. A horizontal tunnel was then painstakingly dug from wherever the water was needed, possibly kilometres away, to this master shaft. This tunnel had to be slightly inclined so that the place in need of water was at the bottom of a slope from the source. This allowed the water to be propelled by gravity along the tunnel. This tunnel was met about every five metres by a vertical shaft, dug down to it, to facilitate the removal of dirt and to allow the free flow of oxygen for the digger of the tunnel. Once completed the shafts allowed access for repairs, which was a continuous process.

The tunnel was sometimes lined with ceramic rings called *kaval*. On reaching the garden or city for which it was intended, the water would have fed directly into irrigation ditches to water gardens and crops. Once completed, the *qanat* would have supplied a steady



Illus. 3: Garden surrounded by the Desert.
(Khansari. 1998; p. 16.)

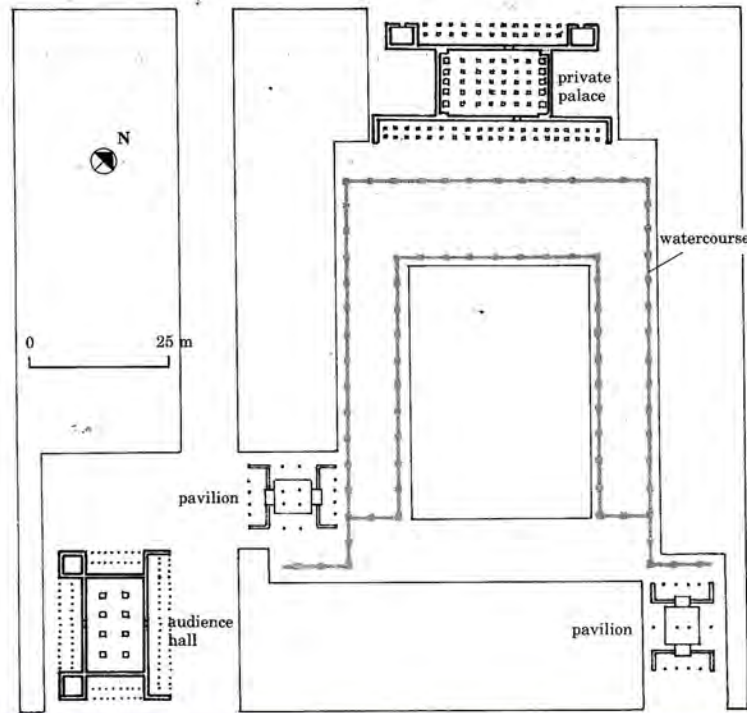
stream of clear water all year round, sufficient for irrigating two hundred acres of farmland. (Wilber. 1978; p. 4.)

The first Ancient Persian dynasty, the Achaemenians, established by Cyrus the Great⁴ adopted this system. The use of *qanats* was then spread throughout his Empire, as far as Egypt and Oman. Later the system had expanded to six hundred and forty thousand square kilometres and produced forty-five million litres of water a minute. A French geologist, Henri Goblot called it “...one of the greatest civil engineering projects in the history of the world”. (Khansari. 1998; p. 24.) Despite this new abundance of water, it still required wealth and power to create gardens in this region. This meant that these would have been reserved for the kings and the very wealthy.

The Achaemenians (559-330 BC) were able to build great palaces and garden complexes. With the system of *qanats* they literally made the desert bloom. Khansari says that although they reigned for only two centuries, the shape of their gardens survived in all the Ancient Persian gardens which were to follow. (1998; p. 34.)

There were two distinct types of gardens: the first was a walled park, quartered by water channels and with pavilions in which to rest; these were well stocked for hunting. The second was a more formal garden, also quartered by water channels and integrated with the palace of the king.

The earliest remains of a garden or park dates to this period and is known as Pasargadae or ‘The Persian camp,’ built by Cyrus the Great (559-530 BC). He chose this village as the site for his capital and he built a complex of palaces around a formal garden. The main building was surrounded by the garden and was approached through a huge gatehouse,



Illus. 4: Plan of the Gardens of Pasargadae.
(Brookes. 1987; p. 32.)

down a tree-lined avenue and over a bridge, leading to the main reception area. The royal garden, at right angles to this avenue, was a rectangle of about two hundred and forty-five metres by three hundred metres. There were two pavilions: one at the entrance to this avenue, and the other at the end of it, on the opposite side.

Pale limestone water channels, were broken every fifteen metres by shallow basins, lined the length of the garden. Their decorative edging was about fifteen centimetres wide with a pattern now barely visible. Trees such as cypress, pomegranate and sour cherry were planted in rows, and the ground was covered with sweet grasses. Flowers would also have been grown here. David Stronach, who excavated this site in the 1960's said that the open design of the palace and pavilions was something new and that the size and ornamentation made them monumental.

[The]...airy openness created a particularly clement desert shelter, halfway between indoor and outdoor. They invited contemplation of the king's paradise, rich with colour and fragrance, united by sacred geometry expressed in water. (Khansari. 1998; p. 38.)

He acknowledges that these ideas are derived from the placement of the king's throne at the end of the length of the garden, from where he could look down its length and behold its beauty.

Where the pavilions look towards the watercourse they were fronted by an extensive colonnade, which was larger than the building behind it. The fact that the garden was to be viewed, rather than used, was constant in all later Ancient and Islamic Persian garden layout. In 1723 Chardin wrote that

...the Persians don't walk so much in gardens as we do, but content themselves with a bare prospect; and breathing fresh air: For this end, they set themselves down in some

part of the garden, at their first coming to it, and never move from their seats till they are going out of it. (Brookes. 1987; p. 32.)

In 401 BC Xenophon (c. 431-355 BC), the Greek historian, wrote about the garden of the Achaemenian king Darius I: "...in all the districts he resides in and visits, he takes care that there are 'paradises' as they call them, full of all the good and beautiful things that the soil will produce...." (King. 1979; p. 21). This is the first historical reference to the so-called *paradeisos*.⁵

Xenophon was familiar with Ancient Persian customs since his military service was with Persian troops. Cyrus the Younger, who lived just before the end of the fifth century BC, was very proud of his park at Sardis, and showed it, amongst others, to a Spartan commander, Lysander.

...[He, Lysander] expressed his admiration of it, observing how fine the trees were, how regularly they were planted, how straight the rows of them were, and how elegantly all the rows formed angles with one another, while many sweet odours attended on...[them and said]..." I look with astonishment on all these trees on account of their beauty, but am still more astonished at the art of him who measured out the ground, and arranged them all for you." His astonishment was all the greater when the delighted Cyrus replied, "It was I, let me say Lysander, that measured the ground and arranged all the trees myself; and there are some of them that I planted with my own hand." (King. 1979; p. 22.)

These Ancient Persian gardens had many functions; they were enclosed, gave shelter and provided privacy. Throughout most of the Ancient Persian world they not only provided a welcome protection from the intense heat and dryness, but also became a source of beauty, provided enjoyment and enrichment of the quality of life: water in streams, canals and in tanks in addition to providing cooling sounds, actually cooled the air and made for a

peaceful prospect. Fruit trees provided fruit and shade; flowers scented the air. (Lehrman. 1980; p. 31.)

A thousand years later, the palace complex of Khusrau II Parvis (591 – 628 AD), a Sassanian⁶ king of a new Persian dynasty, still had similar qualities.

The palace is raised on a walled terrace with a roughly rectangular plan, and this space is in turn enclosed within a much larger walled area, clearly a 'paradeisos' or hunting park. Between the raised palace enclosure and the outside wall of the 'paradeisos' there was an immense pool, probably exactly rectangular and indicating the intention to provide vistas from the palace – or from the arcades of the raised palace enclosure – along the pool. (Thacker. 1979; p. 27.)

According to Edward Gibbon^b, the park was immense and many exotic animals were kept and were turned loose for sport. He credits the royal stables with six thousand mules and horses, and says that nine hundred and sixty elephants were kept for the king's use. (Thacker. 1979; p. 28.)

The Sassanids had their capital at Ctesiphon, on the Tigris, in central Persia, where the ruins of their principal palace still stand. The throne room of this palace was reportedly very large and it contained a carpet, which was two hundred and sixty four square metres in size. It is the most celebrated Ancient Persian garden carpet, and had been called the *Spring (or Winter) of Khusrau*. Unfortunately this carpet no longer exists and in this sense it is little more than a legend. However, Arab writers after the Islamic conquest described it as follows:

The ground of this carpet represented a pleasure garden, with streams and paths, trees and beautiful spring flowers. The wide border all round showed flowerbeds of various colours, the flowers being red, blue, yellow or white stones. The ground was yellowish; to

^b English historian. His dates are 1739-1794.

look like earth, and it was worked in gold. The edges of the streams were worked in stripes, and between stones bright as crystal gave the illusion of water, the size of the pebbles being what pearls might be. The stalks and branches were gold and silver, the leaves of the trees and flowers made of silk, like the rest of the plants; and the fruits were coloured stones. (King. 1979; p. 66.)

The designing of these carpets is an ancient craft closely linked to the plan of the Persian gardens, as seen from above. As there are no extant Ancient Persian gardens to examine, the carpets and existing ruins, give us an indication of the common denominators of the Persian gardens, namely the central tank, with four channels leading from it, with trees and flowers arranged formally around them. Khansari says that the spirit and shape of these gardens was already at least one thousand years old by the time Khusrau's carpet was designed, and that these (the spirit and shape) did not die, but flourished in the centuries after it.

With the eddying currents of trade and war, Persian patterns and plants travelled east, north, and west to central Asia, to India, and to Europe. The great Mughal gardens at Kashmir, Agra, Lahore, and Delhi are planted in Persian style; so are the gardens of Moorish Spain at Cordoba and Granada. All are descendants of a concept established almost before history began. (Khansari. 1998; p. 12.)

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER ONE

¹ Many parts of ancient Mesopotamia became habitable to man through the development of irrigation channels by means of which they could irrigate their crops and therefore sustain life in these barren regions. In order to combat confusion the terms Ancient Persia and Islamic Persia will be used when appropriate, instead of Iran.

² All dates used in this thesis are Anno Domini (AD) rather than based on the Muslim calendar, which starts 622 AD, as year one of their calendar.

³ These *qanats* were used as late as the 1930's.

⁴ The Medes and Persian peoples appeared in this region approximately 1000 BC. Cyrus the Great established this empire and conquered Babylonia. His successors in the Achaemenid Dynasty ruled a vast area extending from the Indus River to Macedonia. The last king was killed in 330 BC by Alexander the Great, who incorporated Persia into his Empire.

⁵ Sir William Temple defined its original meaning of the word paradise in his essay *On the Gardens of Epicurus* in the seventeenth century:

“A paradise seems to have been a large space of ground, adorned and beautiful with all sorts of trees, enclosed, or planted after; either cultivated, like gardens, for shades and for walks, with fountains or streams, and all sorts of plants usual in the climate, and pleasant to the eye, the smell or the taste; or else employed like our parks for enclosure and harbour of all sorts of wild beasts, as well as for the pleasure of riding and walking: and so they were of more or less extant, and of differing entertainment, according to the several humours of the princes that ordered and enclosed them.” (King. 1979; p. 22.)

⁶ The Sassanians were a Persian dynasty founded by Ardashir I in 224 AD and destroyed by the Arabs between 637 and 651 AD.

CHAPTER TWO

The Sassanid Dynasty of Ancient Persia came to an abrupt end when a people with a new religion⁷ burst into this Persian region. These people were the Arabians and the religion, Islam. In fact Islam is remarkable

...above all for its rapid territorial expansion. From its origin in 622...[AD]...with Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina, within two generations it...[had]...reached the Atlantic on one hand and central Asia on the other. It is no less remarkable for its subsequent grip on these lands so quickly conquered (with the exception of those in Europe) as well as its later expansion in south Asia and Africa south of the Sahara. (Rogers. 1976; p. 7.)

Islam originated in Arabia. Fifteen hundred years ago Arabia was the scene of political instability and economic chaos. It was in a state of war with its two powerful neighbours, the provinces of the Byzantine Empire on its western border and the Persian Sassanid Empire on its eastern border. In the south, Greater Yemen, having once been the seat of a flourishing civilization, had passed through its greatest time, and was now broken up into innumerable principalities. The Sassanians of Persia had penetrated into Yemen and had obtained possession of Eastern Arabia. Only Central Arabia remained immune from the demoralising effects of foreign occupation. Eventually the conflict became internal and tribal, with much bickering among the various tribes and civic- and war-leaders.

The extensive Arabian subcontinent is made up mostly of desert areas and was inhabited largely by nomadic peoples, who moved with their flocks and depended on the stars at night for their direction. Trade caravans were of more importance than either agriculture or industry. This meant that men travelled far beyond the peninsula to Syria, Egypt,

Abyssinia, Iraq, India and other lands. There were of course some settled and commercial towns as well, such as Mecca, Taifa and Yathrib (Medina).

Mecca was the most developed of the three towns; it alone had a city-state, governed by a council of ten hereditary chiefs who had enjoyed a clear division of power. It was here that descendant of the Babylonian Abraham, and the Egyptian Hagar, was born: Muhammad the Prophet of Islam.

Not much is known about pre-Islamic Arabian religion - probably due to the cleansing influence of Muhammad and his followers. There is some evidence that many gods and goddesses existed and that they worshipped whatever they found awesome or mystical, such as such as stones, rocks, trees, and stars. It appears that some Meccans did possess the notion of the One God, which may have been the influence of Judaism or Christianity; they simultaneously believed that idols had the power to intercede with Him. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 31.) This was to change with the spread of the religion revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by God.

Many dates are offered for the birth of Muhammad; the most widely accepted is the year 570 AD. His family belonged to the clan of the Hashim, who were part of a tribe called the Quraysh. Their clan was not very important within Mecca, but it derived some religious prestige from hereditary offices it held in service at the Ka'ba⁸. His Father died immediately before his son's birth. Little is known for certain about Muhammad's early life and much is anecdotal. After his mother died when he was six, Muhammad went to live first with his grandfather, and then with an uncle on his fathers' side - Abu Talib. This uncle trained him to be a caravan manager. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 2.) At the age of twenty-five he was in

charge of a shipment of merchandise for a widow named Khadijah. She was so impressed with him and his reputation for fairness that she offered to marry him, despite the fifteen-year age difference. They had two sons both of whom died young and four daughters, of whom the best known is Fatimah, the wife of Ali. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 32.)

There is also not much known about the religious practices of Muhammad until he was thirty-five years old, except that he had never worshipped idols. The wealth of his new wife gave him the freedom to pursue his spiritual inclinations, which apparently involved wandering among the hills for meditation and contemplation. When he was forty years old (around 610 AD) on his fifth consecutive year of annual retreats to the hills, Muhammad saw a vision of an angel and heard a voice saying:

Recite in the Name of your Lord, the Creator, Who created man from clots of blood. Recite! Your Lord is the most beneficent One who has taught man the things which he knew not. (Koran. Surah 96:1-4)⁹

From this time till he died, Muhammad received many such revelations, which he believed came directly from God: they were first revealed to him in about 610 AD and the last in the year he died, in 632 AD. He delivered the content of these Revelations orally to his followers who initially committed them to memory and then, as instructed by him, to writing; these were to become the text of the Koran.

At first only a few were initiated into the mystery of the Revelations he had received. Khadijah was one of them, as well as a few men, who, after his death were to become his direct followers known as caliphs¹⁰. Once he had received the command to arise and give warning directly from God, he began to proclaim the Revelations publicly. His fundamental

message was that there is only one God, the Creator of everything, Who alone should be served by correct worship and behaviour. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 4.)

In 619 AD, there came a turning point in his life when both Abu Talib and Khadijah died, as this meant the end of the protection he had received. Another uncle became the head of the clan, and at the instigation of wealthy Meccans, withdrew his protection from Muhammad. This meant that he could no longer spread his message publicly without the fear of attack. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 34.) The ruling Quraysh felt threatened by Muhammad's uncompromising belief in one God, and put his life in jeopardy. As the number of followers increased, the situation deteriorated to such a degree that Muhammad recommended that his followers immigrate to Ethiopia. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 4.)

Two years later the situation in Mecca was so fraught, that his followers in the oasis city of Yathrib invited him to settle there. Yathrib, later known as 'Medina-en-Nabi' or the City of the Prophet, was about two hundred and ninety kilometres northwest of Mecca. He arrived in Yathrib on the 20/24 September 622 AD. In 638 AD the second caliph, Umar, fixed this date of the emigration or *Hijra* as the beginning of the Muslim chronology. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 5.)

Muhammad and his followers now claimed that Islam was the only true religion. The city was purged of all its opponents, given a religious foundation according to the Revelation and governed strictly. "Islam is pre-eminently the religion of unity on all levels: ontological, social, political. Socially and politically, the term used to describe that unity is...*ummah Muhammadiyya*...[denoting]...Muhammad's nation." (Michell. 1995; p. 15.) This concept was a

...social and political revolution: the abolition of the traditional Arab ties of tribe, kinship and blood, which were replaced by faith. This faith in the one and only God stood so high above all human considerations that there could be only one consequence for those who would not accept it - annihilation. The concept of the holy war- *jihad* - developed in Medina for the war against unbelieving Mecca could subsequently be applied to all the campaigns of conquest in the name of Allah. ¹¹(Machatschke. 1995; p. 6.)

War could therefore be declared against Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet, because it had despised him, threatened him and compelled him to flee. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 5.)

After several attacks on the caravans of Meccans, his followers met them at a place called Badr where the latter were defeated. After a number of battles and treaties, the Meccans negotiated a peace-treaty, which Muhammad agreed to, provided the Meccans formally submitted to Allah. The Meccans accepted the conditions and there followed a number of weeks during which Muhammad settled various official matters and cleared the Ka'ba¹² of idols as well as many shrines to other gods. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 38.) Only the black stone was left. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 6.)

In the last two years of his life Muhammad devoted himself to the dissemination of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula. The Bedouin tribes accepted the new faith, and gradually the beginnings of an Islamic constitution¹³ developed.

In 632 AD Muhammad led an enormous procession of ninety thousand pilgrims to Mecca. Shortly after his return to Medina he fell sick, and on 8 June 632 AD, died in the arms of his favourite wife Aisha. With his death the Revelations came to an end. He also died without having made any arrangement for his succession. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 7.)

This left the Muslim community in a crisis. The resulting battle over the leadership led to the schism¹⁴, which was to affect Islam greatly. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 39.) (The tribal Arabs

did not accept primogeniture, nor take the primacy of any individual family for granted, or allow descent through the female line. Leadership was therefore not automatic as it had been in the West.) (Rogers. 1976; p. 32.) A Companion (*Rashidun* in Arabic, meaning rightly guided or Perfect.) of Muhammad's, Abu Bakr, therefore, became the first caliph.

In 633 AD, Umar, who was later to become the second caliph, suggested to Abu Bakr, that there was a very real danger of losing the Revelations. With great difficulty, the first complete manuscript was compiled from bits of parchment, thin white stones, leafless palm branches, and the memories of men.

However it was during the time of Uthman (651 AD), the third caliph, that a final, authorized text was prepared and completed. This was the first version of the book now known as the Koran.

Two decades after the death of Muhammad a collection of God's Revelations existed. However, the Arabic language consisted of consonants only; therefore the text was not clear, as the vowels were added much later. This led to a great deal of confusion and a number of interpretations. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 8.) It was only in the fourth century of Islam (the tenth century AD), that just seven versions of the text were accepted as valid.

The Koran, is at the centre of Islam, and is believed to be the direct word of God, as Revealed to Muhammad. The English meaning of the word "Koran" is 'recitation' or 'reading'; this may originally have denoted separate readings of the Revelations. Now, however, the word refers to the whole Revelation, as a book.

The text was divided into one hundred and fourteen sections or Surahs. With the exception of the first Surah, they are ordered according to their length, with the longest at the beginning and the shortest at the end. All the Surahs except for one start with the words ***“In the name of Allah, the Merciful.”***

In addition to the Koran, there is the *Hadith* or the Tradition, which is a source of law. It is second in authority to the Koran. The Hadith contains collected stories relating to Muhammad’s own commentaries on the Revelations. It was originally also an oral tradition till written down after his death (Rogers. 1976; p. 142.) ”These are the sources and guides of all Islamic thought and life. In them one finds what the Messenger of God prescribed regarding every situation in life, be it domestic, social, or religious.” (Nigosian. 1987; p. 41.)

In Islam the sources of infallible religious truth are the Koran and the Hadith or prophetic tradition and *Ijma* (universal and infallible agreement of the universal Muslim community. This is based on *vox dei, vox prophetarum* and *vox populi*). The last two merely supplement the authority of the first, as they were only inspired: the Koran bases its infallibility on it’s being the literal word of God, uncreated by man and co-eternal with Him. (Michell. 1995; p. 16.)

Islam is frequently translated as “submission,” although “unconditional surrender” comes closer to the semantic content of the word in Arabic. It is a contractual relationship between man and God: man acknowledges his vassalage or slavehood to the overlordship of God. The terms of this contract are spelled out in the Koran. These terms are not only a charter for the individual, intent on his/her own salvation, but also the constitution of a state. In this sense the Koran, like the Jewish Torah, is not only a book of law but also the

criterion where by the individual is able to distinguish right from wrong, lawful from unlawful, the ritually pure from the ritually impure.

The way to enter this contractual relationship with God is by pronouncing the *Shahada* or 'attestation' of faith: **"There is no God but God. Muhammad is his Prophet."** Through this statement one becomes *mukallaf* or subject to ritual obligations. The rest of the Law then follows starting with the observation of the 'Five Pillars.'

The 'Five Pillars' stand at the heart of Islamic law. The Arabic word for Five Pillars literally means 'corners'. However, this does not mean that the edifice of law is pentagonal. The Pillars are disposed in a quincunx: the First Pillar, the *Shahada* (attestation of faith) is at the centre with the remaining four peripheral. They are *Salat*, (prayer), *Siyam* (fasting), *Zakat* (payment of the poor-tax) and *Hajj* (pilgrimage). These Five Pillars are accordingly, Obligations, with a partial exception of the *Hajj*. The *Hajj* depends on one's means to attempt such a long journey. (In Islam there is nothing that corresponds to a "church" in the Christian sense. Instead, there is the '*ummah*' - the community of the believers - whose cohesion is guaranteed by the sacred law. (Michell. 1995; p. 16.)

The Koran promises believers who perform these and other righteous acts **"[that]...the Garden of Paradise shall be their hospitality, therein to dwell for ever, desiring no removal from them"** (Joyce. 1986; p. 112.) In fact, paradise which is described as a place **'under which rivers flow.'** It is the ultimate goal of every Muslim, and is particularly inviting to a desert people.

**God hath promised to believers,
Men and women, gardens
Under which rivers flow,**

**To dwell therein,
And beautiful mansions
In gardens of everlasting bliss.**
(Koran. Surah 9: 72)

In Surah 47 God promised Muhammad a paradise in which four rivers flowed: one of unpolluted water, one of forever fresh milk, one of wine and one of honey.

After capturing Mecca in 630 AD, Muhammad planned to extend the faith, if need be, by the sword. He died before this could be done. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 28.) In the spread of Islam:

Two factors favoured the Arabs: Byzantium and Persia were weakened by the war between them, and Arab mercenaries who had fought on both sides had returned home with an excellent knowledge of modern warfare. But above all this there was the impetus of faith. Allah required that his followers convert unbelievers and promised great rewards for those who took part in the holy war. ***“As for those who are slain in the cause of Allah, He will not allow their works to perish. He will vouchsafe them guidance and ennoble their state; He will admit them to paradise....”***(Surah 47) (Machatschke. 1995; p. 28.)

Two great empires therefore gave way to the Arab/Islamic conquests. The Persian Empire fell to the Arabs and the troops of Byzantium, (the Orthodox Greek Christian Empire), with its capital in Constantinople, were pushed out of Syria and Iraq by the Muslim armies¹⁵.

The Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian¹⁶ and Sabaeen¹⁷ peoples in these lands were not greatly affected, since the existing cultures were largely left alone. (Martin. 1982; p. 20.) Islamic tolerance towards other religions may seem surprising, in light of the *jihad*¹⁸. However, this was a policy based more on financial logic than religious indifference. Although, from a religious perspective, an all-Muslim population would obviously have

been ideal, the new Islamic government needed the funds provided by the poll taxes and land-taxes paid by all non-Muslims. Had they actively attempted to convert large numbers of their new subjects to Islam, it would have severely curtailed these funds. In addition, the Muslim conquerors did not want to trigger a revolt as they were so outnumbered by non-Muslims in their new territories. For these reasons, the Islamic rulers did not usually promote proselytising of their religion.

The initial expansion of territory in the name of Islam took place under the first four caliphs in the years following Muhammad's death. (Martin. 1982; p. 23.) They were Abu Bakr, Umar I, Uthman, and Ali.

Abu Bakr had to discipline rebellious tribesman who had felt that their allegiance to Muhammad and the obligation to pay taxes had ended with his death. On his deathbed Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor in 634 AD. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 46.)

Before his assassination by a Persian slave in 644 AD, Umar was able to establish the foundation of an Islamic Empire. He also put into place two policies: one for the conquered non-Muslim people and one for the Muslims. The non-Muslims were to pay the Muslims taxes in return for protection, and the Muslims were to occupy the quarters supported by the taxes of the non-Muslims. The death of Umar marked the end of the first phase of Islamic territorial conquest. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 46.)

The successor to Umar was Uthman. He put family members in key positions, which caused internal strife and opposition to his policies. He also took money from conquered lands to use for himself. Although his unpopularity led to his assassination, he was the one

who organized the compilation of an authoritative text of the Koran. (Nigosian. 1987; p. 47.)

The period of the Rashidun was a period of transition from a simple community to an empire.

Uthman's successor was Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law Ali. His election, however, was contested by Mu'awiya, the governor of Syria. According to Nigosian (1987; p. 29.) the civil war, which broke out over his succession, stopped Arab expansion for a while and ultimately led to the division of Islam into the Sunni and the Shi'ite.¹⁹

Ali was assassinated in 661 AD. Mu'awiya succeeded him, became the caliph, and established the dynasty of the Umayyad caliphs (661-750 AD), who ruled from Damascus, Syria. This was a time of consolidation of power and gradual growth, including extension into Spain. Their aim was no longer conversion but rather the development of an Arab Empire. Arabic became the state language. A uniform coinage was introduced to reinforce centralisation. The rule of the Umayyads was characterised by tolerance to those of other beliefs, i.e. Christians and Jews. These had to pay a poll tax and land tax and in return could enjoy the protection of the Islamic state, which, unlike the Byzantine Empire, did not force its faith on them. This was also true for Christians in Palestine and Egypt. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 2.)

In Asia enormous areas were won for Islam. From Persia, Islamic armies penetrated to central Asia and conquered areas including the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. In central Asia the Muslims came in to contact with various Turkish peoples. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 33.)

The Umayyad period was followed by the rule of the Abbasids. Initially these caliphs (750-1258 AD) were able to keep the brewing tensions between the Shi'ite and the Sunni Muslims under control. They ruled the Empire from Baghdad until the time of the Mongol conquest. This caliphate was famed for its encouragement of learning and culture. The huge diversity of peoples and beliefs were, however, too much to control and it had a "centrifugal effect" whereupon the caliphate began losing control over peoples so far from the capital. (Martin. 1982; p. 24.) Thereafter the decline of the Abbasids meant that the caliphs ruled in name only.

The capital (Baghdad) fell in 1258 AD to the Mongols, who under Genghis Khan (1162 – 1227 AD) laid waste to Mesopotamia, destroying the ancient systems of irrigation. The Age of the Caliphate came to an end.

The Mongols originated in eastern Siberia and swept through Russia, China and central Asia and then into the Middle East. Although the Abbasid caliphate was destroyed, it was just a few decades before the Mongols themselves became Muslim and the Islamic civilization continued in a stable way without the caliphate at its centre. (Martin. 1982; p. 25.)

Not all the lands of Islam fell to the Mongol hordes: in Egypt and in Syria independent governments were set up, which were able to resist the Mongols. These leaders were known as the Mamluks. This period was very productive with respect to art and literature.

At this time further to the east, there were Turkish and Afghani warlords moving into India and it was here that the Mughal Empire was later to develop. (1526-1730 AD)

India was the last of the three countries to experience the transformation to Islam and wasn't invaded by Muslims until 1200 AD when they united the region that was previously ruled by independent city-states. However in terms of gardens a much more important date to remember is 1526 AD when the Mughal Emperors of Turkish descent arrived and set up a dynasty. Here assimilation of the local culture was probably the most difficult of all the countries and Islam clashed noticeably with the established culture of Hinduism. Nevertheless the Mughals, first headed by Babur, brought with them the Persian *chahar-bagh* concept of the garden to be employed in India. As was the case with Spain and Islamic Persia, India transformed this Muslim concept into an eventual unique type of garden containing both Islamic ideas and local traditions.

Brookes describes the Mughal style as follows:

... [It is a] ... combination of arches, pilasters, perforated marble screens, pavilions decorated with arabesques, inscriptions, flowers in relief or inlay, and semi-precious stones of turquoise, purple and blue, of fountains and canals in an expanded form of the traditional *chahar-bagh*. (Brookes. 1987; p. 122)

It was influenced by various sources: the Indo- Muslim philosophy, the curving architecture of Bengal, the white marble of Gujarat and the floral decoration of Kashmir. This combination of styles culminated in the Taj Mahal at Agra and should have developed further by an expansion and inclusion of new ideas. This, however, was prevented by Aurangzeb's increase of Orthodox Muslim policy which started a slow decline in art culture which led to the needlessly intricate and over-ornate decadence of the later Mughals. (Brookes. 1987; p. 122-3.)

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER TWO

⁷ Muhammad did not see himself as the creator, but as the perfecter of a religion which had been revealed to Abraham, Moses, Elijah and other Jewish prophets, and finally to Jesus. Muhammad imagined the source of the Islamic doctrine of salvation as a book in heaven, the 'mother of books': a 'primal version' of the holy scriptures of the Jews and Christians, who had falsified the Word. It was Muhammad's duty to re-establish the original message and to proclaim the pure doctrine. (Machatschke. 1995; p. 10.)

⁸ Originally a cubic construction covered with a black veil, housing a black stone possibly a meteorite. The second Surah of the Koran, indicates the Ka'ba as Abraham's place, which had been desecrated by idolaters. This place became the focal point of the *Hajj*. It is required of all Muslims, if possible, to make a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba once in a lifetime. This is known as the *Hajj*.

⁹ All direct quotes from the Koran will be in bold *Italics* in order to differentiate them from ordinary quotes.

¹⁰ A **caliph**, anglicised from the Arabic word *khalifa*, means 'vicar' or 'successor'. He was the supreme head of the Muslim community. Under the Umayyads the caliph was treated as a secular monarch. With the death of Muhammad the Revelation had, of course, come to an end. These caliphs were therefore leaders of the community, rather than Prophets. (Rogers. 1976; p. 140.)

¹¹ According to the author Maulana Ali, a great misconception exists about the role of 'Jihad' in Islam. The word in fact means "the exerting of ones power in repelling the enemy". He explains that this battle can be a personal battle exerted against the enemy, i.e. the devil, and while the spread of Islam is the duty of the Muslim this should not be done by force. He continues, that the idea of the 'spread of Islam by force' has no root in the Koran, it says that 'there is no compulsion in religion.' The use of force against the unbeliever was necessary only when the unbeliever threatened the Muslim nation. He calls this fighting "*in the way of Allah*, because fighting in defence is the noblest and justest of all causes." (Ali, 1983; p. 529 -535.) However Surahs 2:5 and 2:191 of the Koran states, "**...so when the sacred months have passed away, slay the idolaters wherever you find them.**" And "**...kill them wherever you find them.**" Ali maintains however that these verses referred to unbelievers who had attacked Muslims first. (p. 540.) Ali's arguments do not however, explain the Muslim conquest of western North Africa, which at the time had been the Kingdom of the Vandals, nor Spain, which was then the Kingdom of the Visigoths (after the fall of the Roman Empire in the West), or the invasion of the Frankish Kingdom, repelled by Charles Martel in 732 AD near Poitiers. The possibility of "war for booty" is often mentioned by non-Islamic scholars!

¹² See endnote 8.

¹³ Initially a theocracy. Subsequently by caliphs, sultans, kings and emperors according to Koranic law.

¹⁴ This schism consists of various sects, which differ from orthodox Sunni Islam. The Sunni's base their teaching on the Koran and its interpretation, the *Hadith*, traditions reputedly associated with Muhammad himself, and the teaching of the four orthodox schools of law, the *madhhabs*. The word Shi'ite is a term used for sects which, against the traditional orthodox view, insisted upon the recognition of Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law as the legitimate caliph or successor to him. They exalted the spiritual and moral quality of their *imams* and rejected the claims of the Umayyads to power. They were initially most powerful in Iraq: their particular association with Persia/Iran was only sealed by the triumph of the Safavids in the early sixteenth century AD. (This explains the theocracy in present day Iran) (Rogers. 1976; p. 148.)

¹⁵ The rapid spread of Islam after the death of Muhammad is not as surprising as it may seem. Certainly, according to the Revelation by God to Muhammad, the wars against Byzantium and Persia were "righteous wars": they were enemies. The ease of the conquests, however, needs some explaining. The Byzantine provinces were only partially Hellenised, taxation was crushing and enslavement common, and, particularly in Egypt and Syria, where most of the population was Monophysite (denying the humanity of Christ), the interference of the Greek Orthodox Church was bitterly resented. Islam, in comparison to the almost incomprehensible (to ordinary peoples) theological discussion and disputes of Byzantine orthodox Greek Christianity, seemed blessedly simple and comprehensible and easy to accept. Conquest of the Byzantine provinces often occurred with the active support of the local population. The picture of pre-Islamic Persia is not as clear as in pre-Islamic Byzantium. However, the Sassanian dynasty had never really recovered after

the defeat of Khusrau II Parvis (591-628 AD) by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius at Edessa/Urfa. The vast and heterogeneous territories of the Persian Empire were subject to internal religious and social strife. Apart from this, Syria and Iraq, in the sixth and seventh centuries AD were already considerably Arabized, with 'native' dynasties controlling large areas of these two regions, for example the Ghassanids in Syria and the Lakhmids in Iraq. (The Ghassanids were an important Arabian tribe who settled as client Kings in ca490 AD in Syria, the eastern section of the Byzantine Empire. They became Monophysite and quite powerful. Their power was crushed by the Sassanians in 613-14 AD. The Muslim conquest of Syria was therefore not unwelcome to them. The Lakhmids were an Arab Dynasty of Yemeni origin, who established themselves in Iraq, in the fifth century AD. By the sixth century they had also controlled parts of Syria. Their fame and influence in the later conquests and Empire were derived from their patronage of famous poets from the Arabian Peninsula, and their architecture of the capital Hira and a castle outside Khawarnaq. Under the Umayyads, these buildings and the poetry the Lakhmids inspired, became for the classical Islamic poets a symbol of their glorious past.) (Rogers. 1976; p. 26-27, 141,144.)

¹⁶ Zoroastrianism: A Persian religion founded in the sixth century BC by the prophet Zoroaster. It was characterized by worship of a supreme god Ahura Mazda who required mankind's good deeds for help in his cosmic struggle against the evil spirit of Ahriman.

¹⁷ Sabaeans: Star-worshippers at Harran, in what used to be the Mesopotamian region.

¹⁸ See endnote 11.

¹⁹ See endnote 14.

CHAPTER THREE

Ancient Persia was one of the first states to be conquered by the new forces of Islam, when the reigning Sassanian dynasty was defeated in battle in 642 AD. The Persian Empire had been a major power in the Middle East for many centuries; Arabs had, in fact, been vassals to the Persian rulers before Islam became a force to be reckoned with. Islam offered a philosophy and organisation for living which was added to the Ancient Persian culture. The metaphysical Islamic ideas were, therefore, a good complement to the well-established Persian lifestyle, which, with its cultural traditions, continued as before, and in which the garden held an established part.

As a result of the marrying of these cultures, many of the central characteristics of the Islamic garden are, in fact, attributable to the earlier Ancient Persian garden. As was the case in the broader sphere of life at the time, Islam contributed a metaphorical richness to the Ancient Persian garden tradition through the clear association with the Paradise of the Koran, which was portrayed as a garden (Hasan. 1999).

In the Koran the garden is repeatedly used as the symbol for Paradise, with shade and water being the ideal elements (Brookes. 1987; p. 17.). Likewise, the Ancient Persian garden stood in sharp counterpoint to the desert environment, providing a place for reflection and quiet, with water and shade as its predominant characteristics. (See chapter 1.) The Islamic garden was, therefore, a continuation of the Ancient Persian emphases.

In the Koranic Paradise, fountains are unfailing, and the blessed recline upon soft couches. In the garden “...***they shall feel neither the scorching heat nor the biting***

cold. Trees will spread their shade around them, and fruits will hang in clusters over them". (Surah 76:13-14) In Surah 47 we read,

This is the paradise, which the righteous have been promised. There shall flow in it rivers of unpolluted water, and rivers of milk forever fresh; rivers of delectable wine and rivers of clearest honey. They shall eat therein of every fruit and receive forgiveness from the Lord.

This place is clearly the ideal reward for believers who came from the desert environment in which Islam had developed. The Paradise described in the Koran is so similar to the Ancient Persian garden that it could well be describing it.

Because Muhammad described Paradise as being watered by four rivers, four canals or channels of water, often with a pool or fountain at their juncture, usually divide traditional Islamic gardens. Muhammad had also described paradise as a place of plenteous shade; in a desert climate shade is much more highly valued than bright flowerbeds. Both because of their connection with paradise and their practical value in hot climates, Islamic gardens are usually gardens of water and shade and they are usually geometric; but different styles developed in various parts of the Islamic world. (Johnson. 1999.)

Water was used in many ways in gardens throughout the Islamic world. Its variations are endless and while it remained scarce, "...in every garden and courtyard it is unmistakably the focus of attention, a profound satisfaction, and a supreme delight." (Lehrman. 1980; p. 39.)

The choice of a site for the gardens was clearly influenced by the availability of water. If necessary, however, water was brought from primary sources to the chosen site by means of underground tunnels or clay pipes, to be stored in artificial reservoirs, tanks or cisterns. It was not uncommon in smaller settlements for the mosque to have the only water supply. The wealthy could have their own cistern and tanks, normally kept in their basements to

prevent evaporation; from here the water would be pumped to elevated tanks to create the necessary pressure to feed their private fountains.

Within courtyards or gardens, channels of some sort would distribute the water directly to the flowerbeds, plants and trees. This prevented the loss of precious water through uncontrolled distribution to trees and plants. In Spain an example of this type of irrigation can still be seen in Seville in the south. The original Islamic courtyard, adjacent to the Great Mosque (built in 1171-6 AD and replaced by a cathedral in the fifteenth century AD), has numerous orange trees irrigated by stone-lined channels set in the brick floor and running from tree to tree, preventing any wastage of water.

On flat terrain the water channels generally divided the garden into four by radiating out from a central tank, in a controlled cruciform. The Ancient Persian prototype of the *chahar-bagh* and the Paradise garden as described in the Koran, as well as the irrigation technique used, clearly influenced this design. (Lehrman. 1980; p. 37.)

Although fountains were often a feature of tanks in flat-terrain gardens, Islamic gardeners regularly intended the calm surface of a tank to become an object of beauty and contemplation in itself. Frequently they deliberately sloped the edges of the tanks outward, so that the edge of the tank and the edge of the water became indistinguishable as separate entities. An inscription on a fountain in the Alhambra (Spain) reads, "...look at the water and look at the basin, and you will not be able to tell if it is the water that is motionless or the marble which ripples." (Lehrman. 1980; p. 37.)

In gardens built on sloping sites, water could be moved, splashing and rushing in water-channels, which were often interrupted by a deliberately broken or patterned stone-lined incline to break up the surface of the water into a flashing design, which further increased the visual and audio effect. (Wilber. 1978; p. 15.) The sound of the rippling chutes and the spraying fountains played an additional role in forming a barrier, masking noise and physically creating a partition separating one space from another.

Where water was plentiful (like Kashmir) and a site level, fountains were often employed to create the sound of falling and splashing water. Depending on the size and shape of the nozzle, water could be transformed into a mist, a thin vertical line, a plume, a fan or a mushroom. Jets of water were used in both indoor and outdoor pools. The great garden of the Hazar Jarib at Isfahan, had some five hundred jets of water. These jets were fed by lead pipes, which could be opened and closed in various combinations to create patterns of water. The use of jets was as varied as the shapes of the pools, some issuing forth from the mouth of lions, some from columns (Wilber. 1978; p. 14.).

The edge, or shape, of the water was usually the most attractive part of an Islamic garden.

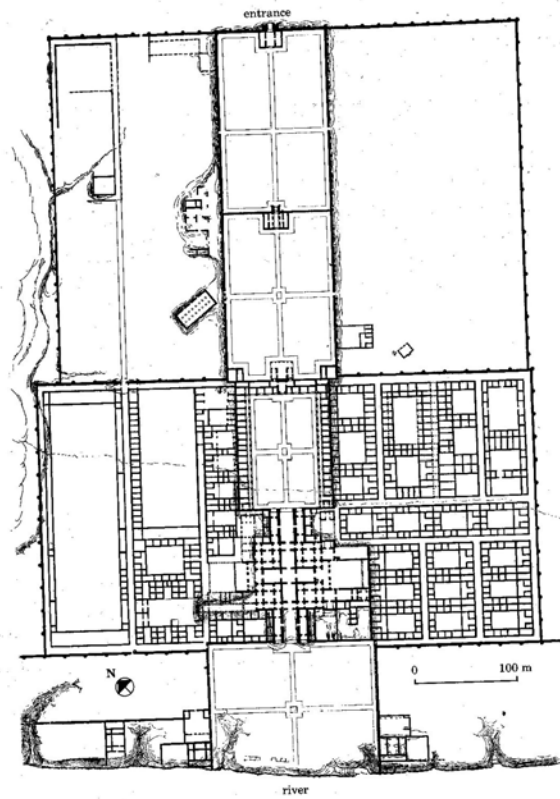
While so-called free-form shapes do not occur in pre- or post-Islamic Persian art, the shapes of pools occur in many combinations of, predominantly, the circle and the rectangle, with the rectangle being the most common Persian shape.

In Islamic gardens, the variety of shapes used can be seen in painted miniatures of Islamic Persia, with the most common shape being a lobed or scalloped shape. Another shape often used for the tank is the octagon in the form of the eight-sided star (made from two

over-lapping squares or an overlapping square and circle). Eight is a very important number in Islam as it symbolizes the eight paradises, larger than the seven storeys of hell - showing that the mercy of God is more than his wrath. There are also eight angels supporting the throne of God. (Brookes. 1987; p. 87.) Ponds, tanks and pavilions²⁰ often occur in variations of these shapes.

A characteristic of the Safavid period (c. fifteenth century AD) at Isfahan (central Islamic Persia) was the use of tiered pools with as many as four tiers, each with different shapes to those of pools below. Usually, however, the surface of the water in tanks and pools was used to create a particular effect: pools of water can multiply the images they contain, and distort their reality; like the typical Islamic architectural decoration, they mirror, they are immutable, yet constantly changing; fluid and dynamic, yet static. (Jones in Michell. 1995; p. 173.) “In general, the sheen of water in the larger pools was admired for its dark reflecting quality.” (Wilber. 1978; p. 15.) While some channels were lined with blue tiles, larger pools were intended not to be clear but rather to be dark and unfathomable. Sometimes the surface of the water was decorated, not with reflections, but with reality, in the form of rose petals or candles floating on the surface of the water. Wilber describes the delight of a nineteenth century traveller who witnessed a pool “...the surface of which had been divided by switches or rods into a number of compartments. In each compartment floated different flowers.” (Ibid.) Wilber also suggested that the effect was possibly inspired by the interest in imitating carpet patterns and colour in other media. (Ibid.)

Another important aspect of the Ancient Persian garden, which carried through into the Islamic garden, is the use of a quartered garden or a *chahar-bagh*. An example of the use of this form is the Bulkawara Palace, in Samara (south-east corner of former U.S.S.R.),



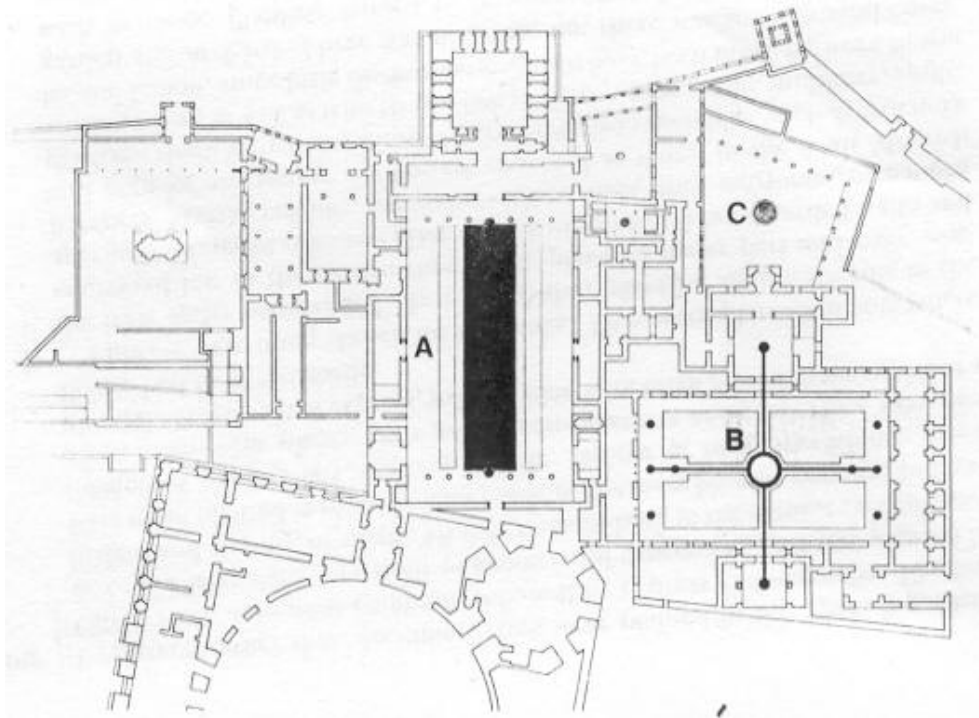
Illus. 5: Plan of the Bulkawara Palace at Samarra, built in 849 AD.
(Brookes. 1987; p. 36.)

built in 849 AD. Brookes (1987; p. 36) says that this is one of the earliest examples in which the concept of the *chahar-bagh* can be seen in the Islamic garden. In this garden the main forms of the Persian gardens are clearly evident: the paradise, or hunting park, and the smaller decorative garden area have been incorporated into the Islamic garden, integrating the two into one garden-form. In this garden four clearly laid out *chahar-baghs* can be seen running along the central axis of the garden from its entrance down to the Tigris River. On entering the garden in the north, (Top of the diagram left) one would pass through the first three to reach the large palace area, beyond which the fourth leads down to the river bank which is to the south (the bottom of the diagram at left).

On the West Islam expanded into the Iberian Peninsula, and the gardens of Spain display similar characteristics to this palace: the use of quartered gardens and walled enclosures.

Spain was conquered by Islam in the early eighth century AD. After the conquest of Syria, the armies of Islam moved on Egypt in 640 AD. In 711 AD the first Muslims had crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, and by 750 AD a caliph was crowned over al-Andalusia, as they called Spain.

The Muslims now "...welded the indigenous and new populations into a single whole, bringing in fresh methods of cultivation, including irrigation, and creating new wealth through commerce." (Jellicoe. 1975; p. 40.) In 1238 AD Cordova was taken back by the Christians. Ten years later the building of the fortress of the Alhambra in Granada was begun as a last Muslim stronghold. (It was not until 1492 AD that the Muslims were finally expelled from Spain.)



Illus. 6: Plan of the Alhambra with: (A) the Court of the Myrtles,
(B) the Court of the Lions, (C) the Court of Daraxa.
(Brookes. 1987; p. 95)

The Alhambra in Granada, Spain, was a royal residence established on a plateau of the same name. Its full name in Arabic is Qal'at al-Hamra or the Red Fort, because of the red clay found in the area. It is a fortified complex situated on a hill called Sabikah overlooking Granada. The complex had several patrons including Yusuf Naghrallah, a Jewish vizier, who built his palace there in 1052 AD, and Muhammed I (1230-72 AD) founder of the Nasrid dynasty. Some buildings had been built by later successors, like Yusuf I (1333-54 AD) and Muhammed V (1354-91 AD). After the Islamic control of Spain passed into Christian hands, Charles V (1516-56 AD) and Philip V (1700-46 AD) also made additions and alterations to the complex.

Historians described this city itself as "...a goblet full of emeralds" (Lehrman. 1980; p. 89.) The climate and terrain of this area shares some similarities with Kashmir, although the overall shape of garden/palace complexes here tends to be irregular. This is a characteristic which makes them quite unique in Islamic garden design.

The total effect of the red-orange buildings of the Alhambra with the rocky slopes below and the snow-capped Sierra Nevada behind create a dramatic picture.

On approaching the Alhambra no garden can be seen, except for the odd tree or bush visible over the walls that surround this complex. All three gardens are enclosed in courtyards. One enters through the main entrance of the Alhambra into the Court of the Myrtles (*Patio de Los Arrayanes*), which is also known as the Court of the Pool. The original entrance was a court at right angles to the Court of Myrtles and quite a distance from it. This entrance and three of the courts no longer exist. The Court of Myrtles lies in an almost north/south orientation, with the entrance in the north. From the southeast



Illus. 7: Basin feeding into the pool in the Court of Myrtles.
(Brookes. 1987; p. 96.)

corner of this garden one enters the Court of the Lions (*Patio de los Leones*). The third garden, the Court of Daraxa (*Lindaraja*), lies to the north of this.

The trees in these gardens are evergreen rather than deciduous. In the first garden there are Myrtle hedges. Box and cypress trees were planted at a later stage in the third garden. There were no flowerbeds in the gardens; flowers were often chosen for fragrance and were planted in pots to save water. These pots were generally placed in courtyards, and rarely played a role in the gardens. To western eyes these gardens appear sparse and formal, with only hedges and water for decoration.

As water was always a central element of decoration in the Islamic garden, the first garden in the Alhambra, the Court of the Myrtles, had one long pond down the centre of the garden in which goldfish swam. This long, wide rectangular pool was bordered by paths and clipped myrtle hedges (hence the name), and was fed at each end by low fountains in flat basins. Each basin was not very large and was round, surrounded by a slightly raised lip. A small, gentle spout of water fell down into the basin, filling it. A tiny channel lead out of each basin into the pool. The still surface of the pool was barely below the level of the surrounding paths, and clearly mirrored the surrounding buildings. The north and south ends of the pool were lined with arches leading into the palace behind them.

The second garden in the complex is the Court of the Lions. In contrast to the Court of Myrtles, the serenity of the court and the beauty of the buildings and arches decorated with mosaics is "...jewel-like in its richness." (Lehrman. 1980; p. 95.) The court is surrounded by narrowly spaced arches on slender alabaster columns. Two small square pavilions extend into the east and west ends of the enclosure.

This garden is the only quartered garden (*chahar-bagh*) in the complex. The garden is quartered by four narrow channels radiating from a round basin in the centre. The basin is supported by twelve carved stone lions. Thin streams of water spout from the mouths of the lions into the water that encircles the basin in a narrow channel. The narrow channels, cut into the paving of the courtyard, run into the rooms surrounding the court, linking them to the central basin. Small fountains in the rooms cool them and fill the rooms with the soothing sound of the water.

Typical of the Islamic consciousness of water and how precious it is, the basins and channels are small and shallow, and the fountains low to prevent the water from evaporating, since the Spanish climate is quite dry and hot.

One can only speculate about the original planting of this courtyard. At present there is grass around the paved areas. It is possible that the level of the garden was once a metre lower, thus allowing the tops of flowers and bushes to be seen and appreciated from the paths. This would have prevented the plants from hampering the view of the architecture, as well as allowing the garden to be seen as a type of carpet. Jones in (Michell. 1995; p. 163.) says:

...flower beds in Islamic gardens...are sunk so as to be seen from above like a carpet. At the same time carpets must look like gardens. The 'garden ' carpets, especially, reproduce the formal arrangements of gardens, their geometrical divisions, and their watercourses. If one imagines such types of carpets with their intricate floral designs laid on a patterned floor in a garden pavilion, it is possible to come close to the ideas fundamental to Islamic architecture of a continuity of space suggested by surface decoration.

The third garden, the Court of Daraxa, is the only court that is irregular in shape, being somewhat kite-shaped. The plantings in this garden date from a somewhat later period. It

is planted with cypresses, orange trees, and box hedging. The centre fountain is two-tiered, a design typical of many Islamic fountains. The base is eight-sided, with four of the sides round and four corners, as if a circle were placed over a square. The upper level is round, and from this spouts a fountain. (Lehrman. 1980; p. 96-97.) Light from the basin below reflects onto the scored and faceted underside of the basin above.

In other Islamic gardens, for example Farahabad in Isfahan, the pavilions are generally freestanding in the garden. In the gardens of the Alhambra, however, the pavilions are different: they surround and contain the gardens completely, rather than being isolated and themselves contained. The palace actually formed the walls around the gardens. The Torre de Comares towers over the north end of the Court of the Myrtles and rests on the light arcade below. This arcade is topped with plaster filigree and behind it is a dado of richly coloured *azulejos* (tiles, prominently blue). The area above the arches is also textured and patterned with a type of diamond lattice, worked into the stone. To the south is a similar arcade, and behind the hedges to the east and west are the two storey wings of the palace. These are plain, but for some elaborate carved stuccowork around some doors and windows.

The columns of the portico are beautifully shaped with ring-like mouldings and decorated caps and imposts on their top ends. The gilded ceilings behind the arches are notable for their detailed stalactite carving.

The height of the buildings surrounding these gardens allows for views quite different to those usually seen in gardens. Since the buildings surround the courtyards so closely in

this complex, they allow for aerial views of the gardens not frequently seen in other Islamic gardens where the palace complex is usually placed at one end of the garden.

Of the three gardens to be discussed in this chapter the Alhambra is the most westerly. The second garden, in the centre of the map, so to speak, is in Islamic Persia, and the last is a garden in Kashmir, the most easterly of the Islamic conquests.

Khansari says, that after the fall of the Sasanians with the invasion of Islam, Persia was “...reborn in adversity, during the hard centuries after the fall of the Sassanians there was a renaissance in which poetry, painting, textiles, architecture and its attendant gardens entered by the infusion of Islamic belief.” (1998; p. 69.)

Between 1471 and 1738 [AD]...[a new dynasty, the Safavids came into power]. ... [T]hese princes ... [were] ... descendants of the revered founder of a Sufi²¹ order who also was a master politician and military leader, ... [and] ... who forged from a chaotic, fragmented territory a great state, strong enough to figure once more in world politics powerful enough to compete against its Ottoman and Egyptian neighbours, and rich enough to attract the eager embassies of Europe. The Safavids extended and defined ... [Islamic Persia's] ... borders. (Ibid. p. 71.)

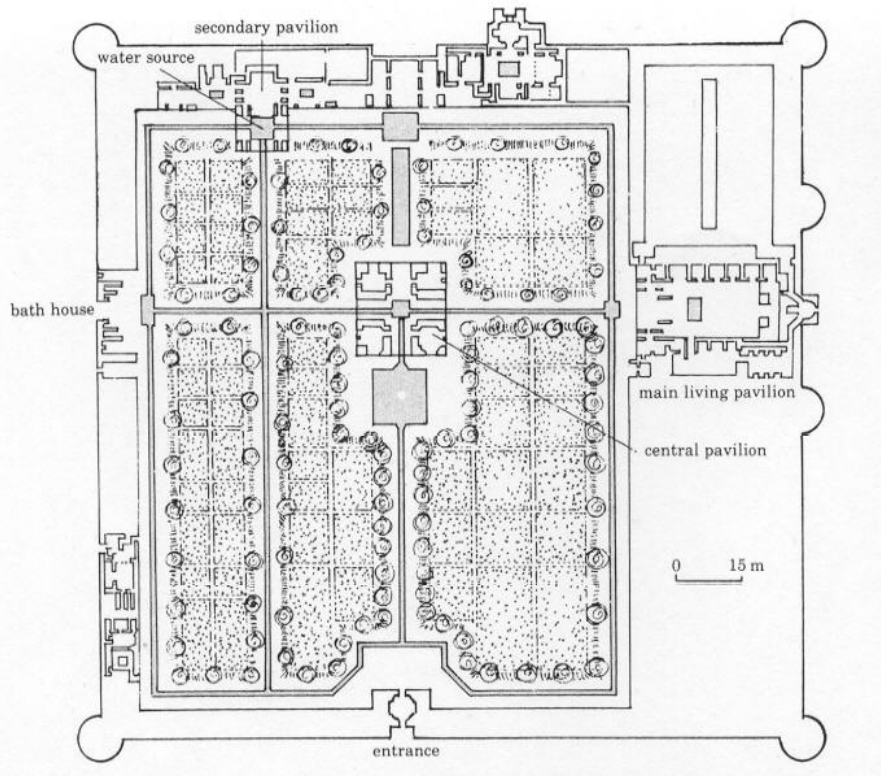
The Safavids created a new military and economic structure and made the branch of Islam known as Shi'ite the state religion. Their greatest achievement was their architecture, which in Persia was inseparable from their gardens, and many of its finest monuments remain today. The architect of many of these monuments was the so-called 'flower' of the Safavid line, Abbas Mizra or, as he is better known in history, Shah Abbas the Great (1587-1628 AD).

The Bagh-e Fin near Kashan is the only extant garden created by Shah Abbas on the Caspian coast. Kashan is on the edge of the great salt desert where the mountains begin,

and remains the oldest living garden in Islamic Persia. Wilber (1978; p. 89.) says "...[it is] ... by far the best example of the large, formal Persian garden." Khansari (1998; p. 82.) says that it "...is among the most beautiful royal paradise gardens of Persia."

The suburb of Fin is about six kilometres south of the town of Kashan, and here Shah Abbas built a garden to honour and glorify the season of spring. Typical of the style of the Islamic garden in general, and as with the gardens in Granada, the garden is enclosed. A high wall surrounds the Bagh-e Fin, and from the outside all that can be seen of it are the tops of the numerous trees planted within. Its south wall is interrupted by a huge two-levelled gateway, with four towers at its corners, through which one enters the garden. The garden is filled with cypress trees; however there is no information regarding the further planting of this garden, except that it was filled with luxuriant gardens.

The layout of the Bagh-e Fin is somewhat different to the other gardens in the sense that it does not use the conventional *chahar-bagh* form. It instead displays a variation on this theme, with a primary and a secondary axis running north/south through the garden. These axes were formed by blue-tiled waterways that ran through and around the garden. One continuous channel ran around the rectangular edge of the garden. The gate in the south wall interrupted the completion of the rectangle by means of this channel. Instead, in absolute symmetry about the gate, the channel bent first deeper into the garden, then bent again to meet at the central channel, closing the rectangle. It is interesting to note that here where the Islamic Persians had the opportunity to simply curve the channel away from the gate, they chose instead to build the channels in a rectilinear fashion. This love for the rectilinear is something that one observes in their architecture, their decoration and in their garden designs.



Illus. 8: Plan of the Bagh-e Fin.
(Wilber. 1978; fig. 78.)

Off this outer rectangular channel run the two main axes that cross the garden north to south: the one in the centre of the garden is the primary axis, running north from the gate in the south to a pavilion situated near the north wall. The other is west of this (on the left hand side of the illustration) running parallel to the central axis. This channel is not complemented on the eastern side by another channel. This lack of absolute symmetry is an occasional feature encountered in Islamic Persian gardens (for example the Hasht Behesht).

The ever-present water of the Islamic garden comes from a natural spring at the north end of the garden. There are folklores of how; “‘...Goshtasp, the father of Darius I (509-494 BC) had the village of Fin built, and brought forth water by means of *qanats*.’ Others attribute this wonderful spring, called Solaymanieh, to the legendary king Jamshid or even Solomon.” (Khansari. 1998; p. 82.)

The first pool to receive water from the spring was situated about thirty metres in from the northwestern corner of the garden, at the ‘top’ of the secondary channel. This was then fed to all the channels and pools in the garden.

The cross axis of the *chahar-bagh* is created by a channel that cuts at right angles across the two vertical channels. It is also this channel (horizontal on the plan) that runs through the pavilion to join with the channel that surrounds the whole garden.

At the intersection of all the axes there are small square pools, each with a tiny fountain in them. Little fountains have also been placed along many of the channels. (In fact there are more than two hundred of these low fountains in this garden). These fountains are



Illus. 9: Small fountains are found at the intersection of the axes.
(Khansari. 1998; p. 83.)



Illus. 10: Tree lined walkway in the Bagh-e Fin with a channel running up its centre.
(Khansari. 1998; p. 81.)

powered by water kept under pressure in subterranean channels, fed by a reservoir outside the walls. This reservoir supplies the bubbling jets of the channels and basins.

All of these channels, fountains and pools lie in the shade of four hundred year old cypress trees. Planting the cypresses ensured that as little water as possible evaporated. In fact four of the pools are, in addition, covered with cupolas “...as a sign of respect for water.” (Khansari. 1998; p. 78.)

In the centre of the garden is the customary rectangle of the *chahar-bagh*, created in this case by a pool and immediately beyond it a pavilion. Water channels run through it on three of its four sides; it even has its own small square pool in the middle of it.

The pavilion is a square building with an arched ceiling supported on four great pillars which, in turn, support large arches providing a view down the shady promenades and channels with running and bubbling water. The walls and ceilings of the pavilion are patterned with typical Arabic designs, which reflect the light on the pool, fountains and channels.

The use of water within the pavilion is a common feature. It was used to calm and cool the people and the air within it. The pavilion becomes therefore, a perfect sanctuary protecting those who sat in it from the heat and dust of the region. It was a type of ‘open air’ living room, and was in keeping with the idea of contemplating the garden, rather than walking around in it.

The recreational and functional aspect of the Islamic Persian garden had its counterpart even as far east as in Muslim Kashmir, on the foothills of the Great Himalayas, and on the edges of the great lakes of this beautiful part of the world. It is here, Lehrman wrote, “...that...it seemed that paradise was truly on earth.” (1980; p. 142.)

Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring or an iron fort to a palace of kings – a delightful flower-bed, and a heart-expanding heritage for dervishes. Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches there are verdure and running water. (Ibid. p. 139.)

Kashmir, with its striking natural sites “...was to provide a new stage in the evolution of the Islamic garden, even though the traditions and strengths of the original...[Persian]...concept was retained “ (Lehrman. 1980; p. 141.)

One of these gardens is the Shalimar Bagh (“abode of love”), built by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1619 AD in honour of his wife, Nur Jahan. According to Brookes, (1987; p. 141.) it is the most famous of Jahangir’s gardens.

In this part of the world, gardens were situated mainly on the lower slopes of the foothills of the great mountain ranges. It was, of course, not only more practical to build gardens on sites like these rather than on mountain tops, but snowmelt from the mountains also gathered here in the great lakes which gave this region its abundance of water. This abundance of water separates the Shalimar Bagh from Islamic gardens in the arid regions. The situation of the garden allowed wonderful views of the surrounding countryside, which, generally speaking, was also unusual for Islamic gardens, which tended to look inward.

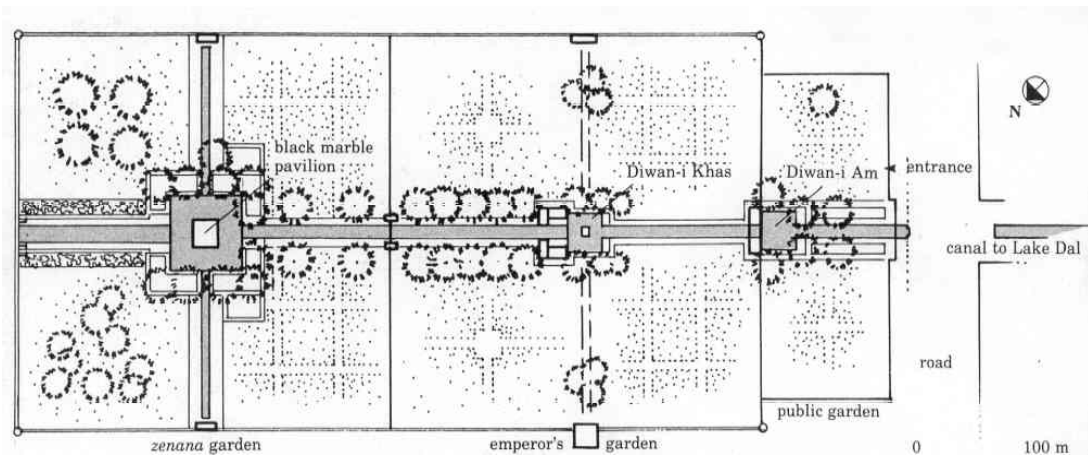
The Shalimar Bagh is located on an ancient site at the northeast end of Dal Lake, to which it is connected by a canal. The garden can be reached by road, although the "...finest approach is by a quiet and slow skiff (*shikara*) across the lake, finally leading into an entry canal, to which the garden forms a fitting climax. Indeed, one finds that...lake and garden are in recollection, inseparable." (Lehrman. 1980; p. 170.) Brookes also encouraged this manner of approach to the garden; "...it should be approached across the water at leisure, for this is how the emperors visited their gardens." (Brookes. 1987; p. 141.)

Walls enclose the garden, which runs back from the lake towards the northeast, with its entrance in the southwest. One enters these gardens at their lowest point, facing three successive terraces rising on the mountain slopes.

The main entrance leads, by way of the lowest rectangular garden of the Shalimar Bagh, to the Diwan-i-Am or public audience hall. It is here that the emperor would sit on a black marble throne, beneath a brightly painted ceiling, to meet with his subjects or visitors.

The Diwan-i-Am was surrounded by its own gardens: these are the 'outer' or semi-public gardens, which are now cut off by a modern road. Many varieties of trees were planted in this garden including the poplar (from Italy) the oriental plane or chenar tree (from Asia minor), the cypress and the willow. Flowers such as roses, violets, sunflowers, lilies, lotus, lilacs, tulips, and jasmine were also planted here. Fruit trees included apples, oranges, figs, mangoes, coconuts, and bananas. (Lehrman. 1980; p. 144-145.)

As the walls did not obscure the view, the garden of the Diwan-i-Am had a magnificent view of the surrounding countryside. This garden was not only used to entertain friends



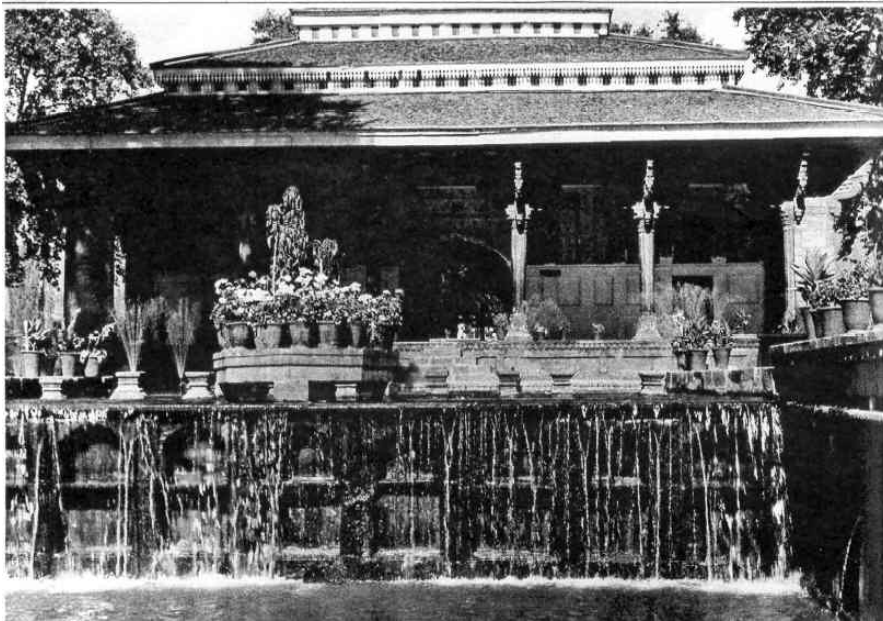
Illus. 11: Plan of the Shalimar Bagh, Kashmir.

(Brookes. 1987; p. 140.)

and family of the court and nobility, but also proved a worthy setting for court ceremonies. The trees provided shelter and shade as well as supplying fruit; awnings made of wax cloth and canvas shaded the carpets, brocades, velvets and embroidered silk furnishings below. (Lehrman. 1980; p. 143.) In the open grassed areas shaded by the trees, royal parties were held: Courtiers reclined on carpets and watched dancing that was accompanied by a sitar, or listened to the recitation of poems by Sadi, Hafez and Khayyam. (Lehrman. 1980; p. 171)

The Shalamar Bagh is laid out in the *chahar-bagh* style. After the outer (first) garden, the Emperor's garden and the zenana (women's area of residence) follow in sequence, with the zenana furthest from the entrance. Water channels divided the whole garden into four sections. The main channel, running down the length of the garden (south-west to north-east), divides all three terraces longitudinally in half. This broad central canal, which dominates the garden, is fed from a river diverted from the rice fields beyond the far boundary wall. The main canal runs from the back of the garden to the front, its water falling in cascades over gently changing levels, and out through the entrance. There are many jets and fountains in the canals, moistening and cooling the air. Small waterfalls, or chutes through which the water falls separate each terrace. Stepping-stones and stone bridges cross the falls so that the visitor can meander over and around the water that leads one through the garden.

The second garden is a *chahar-bagh*, quartered by the main canal and a walkway. At the end of this walkway on the western side is a *hamman*, or steam bath.



Illus. 12: The Black Marble Pavilion at Shalamar Bagh.
(Brookes. 1987; p. 142.)

In the third garden there is a further canal that crosses the main one at right angles, quartering the garden. This canal is terminated at both ends by gateways in the wall. The two canals together form a cross shape that divides the third garden, the zenana, into four. This cross canal also divides the entire garden into a quartered garden. These canals at right angles represent the four rivers of paradise and also the Islamic idea of the meeting of man and God. (Lehrman. 1980; p. 62)

The three pavilions of the Shalamar Bagh are all situated on the main axis. While the first pavilion, or Diwan-I-Am, is situated at the end of its terrace, the next two pavilions are in the centre of their respective gardens, each situated at the intersection of two axes. The Diwan-I-Am pavilion has water running through it. At the centre on the side where the water falls into the tank below, stands a small throne. The water allows for a cool spot for the emperor to sit in: **“...but on this day the believers will laugh at the unbelievers: on thrones (of dignity) they will command (a sight) (of all things)”** (Koran. Surah 83:34-35)

The second pavilion, the Diwa-I-Khas is the private audience hall. Much of this building has been lost but the platform surrounded by fountains still remains. The third and greatest pavilion is in the garden of the zenana or woman's residence, to which only the emperor had access.

This pavilion is made of black marble and was commissioned by Shah Jahan, the son of Jahangir. The pavilion is surrounded by row upon row of fountains and water in a huge square tank about nine times the size of the building within it. The water sparkles and glitters off the black marble. Brookes (1987; p. 142) describes this pavilion as follows:

...[it]...is the culmination of the garden layout and is ringed about with delicate plumes of water, an exercise in quiet delicacy and meticulous detail, a casket for the jewel. Behind the last pavilion the mountains rise up, and in front there is a quiet descending order of harmonies in pavilion and water within an avenue of massive chenars, until at the end of the canal sits the tranquil lake.

The black marble pavilion now has a wooden roof of a later date, but the original marble columns still remain. Behind the cascade that falls below this pavilion were small recesses, in which dahlia heads would have been placed by day, and candles by night. Stepping-stones cross the water just before it cascades in a sheet into the lower canal. (Brookes. 1987; p. 143.)

These gardens are clearly intended as a metaphor for Paradise as evident by the inscription in the Shalamar Bagh: "If there be a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here." (Jellicoe. 1975; p. 49.)

Khansari (1998; p. 69.) quotes the following from the Koran but does not give the Surah and verse. "***There will be green, green pastures, fountains of running water, fruits and palm trees and pomegranates.***" He also says:

In words such as these, the earthly gardens gained eternal resonance. There already existed a visual vocabulary for it, one with sacred undertones. Now the garden was part of complete and perfect creation, both in itself and as an image of heaven. It was at once a pleasant, private place to take one's ease and a reflection of the cosmos; a setting for dalliance and a supreme object for contemplation. The garden became the perfect union of the earthly and divine. (1998; p. 70.)

These gardens anticipated the paradise that was to come as a reward to the faithful, as described in the Koran by Muhammad. They included as much as possible of what could be expected; they became an escape from the world, from the reality of the heat and dust

and noise of every day life, they presented a place in which one could contemplate God and indeed the hereafter - Paradise.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER THREE

²⁰ A pavilion was a place in which to sit, out of the sun, and in order to contemplate the garden. It often had a fountain or some type of water feature within it. A pool or a pond is a decorative water feature, which can vary in size, usually sunken and sometimes used to swim in. A tank is usually the central water holder in the garden and while it may initially have been used only to store water in. It later had both an aesthetic and functional role in the garden. A fountain is pre-eminently something with a nozzle that sprays water; a jet is an example of a nozzle type.

²¹ Sufi (in Arabic, the word literally means “woollen” because of the robe they wear) is a mystical or ascetic order in Islam united under the authority of a Shaykh or distinguished scholar who draws his teaching from a chain or *silsila* of tradition handed down by his predecessors, comparing the individual teachings of a particular order of dervishes. Sufism became apparent in Islam as early as the eighth century AD and is not necessarily either Shi’ite or Sunni. (Rogers. 1976: p. 148.)

CHAPTER FOUR

The pleasure gardens and pavilions of the living are not the only metaphors for paradise for the Muslim. Funerary gardens (*Rawda* in Arabic) operate within a framework of eschatological reference in which the role of such symbols is crucial.” (Michell. 1995; p. 46.) One of the most fascinating hypotheses concerning the physical manifestation of such symbols is that of Begley and other academics²² with reference to the tomb complex of the Taj Mahal in Agra, India.

The Taj Mahal is, of course, a very well known monument and according to the French traveller Bernier “...deserves much more to be numbered among the wonders of the world than the pyramids of Egypt.” (Begley. 1989; p.xix.) In popular imagination it has always symbolised the great love that one man had for his wife - so much so that he built this vast mausoleum as “...a noble embodiment of unparalleled marital devotion,...[and]...undying love” (Eleanor Roosevelt, quoted in Carroll. 1972.)²³

The complex was built by Shah Jahan (1592-1666 AD), the Mughal Emperor of India, as a memorial to his dead wife, Mumtaz Mahal (1593-1631 AD), apparently as a deathbed promise “...that he should build such a mausoleum over her, the like of which was not to be found anywhere else”. (Chowdhuri. 1937; p. 379.)

Mumtaz was a lady of high birth, the granddaughter of the Vizier (prime minister) of the Emperor Jahangir (1605-1627 AD), who betrothed her to his son, Shah Jahan, in 1607 AD. They were married in 1612 AD, making her the second of his three official wives. Apparently she was his favourite and, except for one daughter by his first queen, all

fourteen of his other children were by Mumtaz Mahal (meaning 'Elect of the Palace.'). She died on the 17th June 1631 AD, a few hours after giving birth to their fourteenth child. (Moin-ud-din. 1905; p. 2-5.) The elaborate rhetoric of the official court accounts, written in the style of Persian literature, described Shah Jahan's overwhelming grief: for example, that his beard turned white overnight, that he did not appear in public for over a week, refused to eat or drink, and that those who sat at his door heard a low continuous moan coming from the room. His grief had "...crumbled his mountain-like endurance" (Begley. 1979; p. 8.)²⁴

According to Chowdhuri (1937; p. 379.) the second deathbed promise that Mumtaz Mahal extracted from her husband was that he should have no more children by his other wives. This led to another legend in which it was claimed that he had remained celibate for the rest of his life – another thirty-five years - and faithful to her memory.

Stemming from these highly exaggerated seventeenth-century accounts of Shah Jahan's grief, the notion of his undying love for his wife apparently assumed its present guidebook form sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, during the heyday of romanticism when emotion and intense feelings were exalted as ends in themselves. (Ibid. p. 379.)

It is therefore understandable that his 'great love' had been legendary for centuries. Modern scholarship²⁵ has cast doubt on these legends. For example, gossip by Europeans at Court in the 1650's described how Shah Jahan indulged his sexual appetites with wives of his officials. He was also supposed to have had an incestuous relationship for a few years after Mumtaz's death with his eldest daughter, Jahanara; a relationship allegedly sanctioned by Muslim law and doctors on the grounds that "... it would have been unjust to deny the king the privilege of gathering fruit from the tree he himself had planted." (Begley.

1979; p. 100) The traveller Manucci²⁶ maintained that Shah Jahan's illnesses in 1658 and 1666 AD, when he died, were both a result of a urinary disorder known as strangury, brought on by overdoses of aphrodisiacs which the ageing ruler had used "...out of vanity, to bolster his waning sexual powers". (Begley. 1979; p. 10.)

The first promise, namely that Shah Jahan was to build over his wife such a mausoleum "...the likes of which no one had ever seen," is, as a 'deathbed promise', also disputed by modern scholarship.²⁷ This tomb complex, they argue, is much more than just a tomb built by a grieving husband for a beloved wife, but is rather a symbol of the pride of a man.

Begley (1975; p. 10.), for example, said that in light of Shah Jahan's great vanity, it was intended to symbolize his own glory, not just his grief. Others (not mentioned by Moin-ud-din) have suggested that it was built due to the King's own fancy, or that its beauty could be ascribed to the King's²⁸ natural taste for architecture. (Moin-ud-din. 1905; p. 13-14.) According to Saran (1989; p. 9.), who described Shah Jahan's upbringing at the court of his grandfather, the Emperor Akbar, in great detail, Shah Jahan had a very liberal education. This education included not only subjects like statecraft and military strategy and tactics a future ruler would need, but also architecture. "...by the time he was fifteen he...[Shah Jahan]...was already asked to remodel old palaces and design parts of new ones" (Saran. 1989; p. 9.) in fact, architecture remained a passion with Shah Jahan,²⁹ and The Taj Mahal is but the first of a number of great buildings constructed during the thirty years of his reign. The Red Fort at Delhi, for example, is after the Taj Mahal perhaps the best known of many buildings which marked his reign.

Moin-ud-din's (1905; p. 13-14.) own opinion was that the Taj Mahal had been built at the time of Shah Jahan's 'vigorous manhood,' at a time when the crown had much gold and silver in its coffers during a period of peace in his dominions. The list of money, precious stones and metals, as well as numerous costly items in the treasury at Agra alone, is staggering³⁰. (Saran. 1989; p. 17.)

The Taj Mahal was certainly no innovation as far as tomb architecture was concerned. Prototypes of Mughal mausoleums of this type had been built since the fifteenth century AD, for example the tombs of Ulugh Beg (1393-1449 AD) and particularly those of Humayun (Delhi 1530-1556 AD), Akbar (Sikandra 1556-1605 AD) and Jahangir (Shadara near Lahore 1605-1627 AD.)³¹

Modern scholarship (Hoag and Begley amongst others) maintains, however, that Shah Jahan and the architects/designers of the complex of the Taj Mahal took the project much further than its prototypes. The plan of the complex and the use and symbolism of the Koranic inscriptions, in particular, when taken together, suggest that the Taj Mahal had an allegorical significance which far exceeds its literal funerary function.

The placing of the tomb in this complex differed from all previous tomb prototypes: the tombs of Ulugh Beg and Humayun were placed, characteristically, in the centre of the garden, while the mausoleum at the Taj Mahal was sited at the end of the garden. This suggests that the garden played a more important role in the overall architectural conception. The quadripartite layout of the gardens was however, not new, since this typically Ancient and Islamic Persian characteristic was often used in Mughal garden tombs, which were frequently described metaphorically in poetry and in inscriptions as

being 'like paradise'. Inscriptions on the Taj Mahal, however, made no such claims directly, despite the fact that the complex comes closer to evoking the heavenly visions of paradise than any other Islamic architectural work. (Begley. 1979; p. 11-12.)

The Taj Mahal complex is an enclosed rectangular walled garden with the tomb at the far end, opposite a huge gateway: the only entrance to the complex. The tomb and gateway are on a north/south axis, with the gateway positioned in the centre of the northern wall and the mausoleum opposite it. (Saran. 1989; p. 20-21.)

The gateway is about forty-five metres wide and thirty metres high, an immense size, "...meant to serve as a sentinel, necessary to guard the jewels that...lay within." (Saran. 1989; p. 21.)³² It is a three-storey high structure of red sandstone, with white marble inlay and a huge archway dominating the façade. Walking through this vaulted archway one sees the tomb for the first time. Symbolically, the gateway it is the transition point between the inner and the outer world.

The arch is framed by Koranic inscriptions written in such a way that the perceived size of the inscriptions remains the same through the use of compensatory distortion despite the height they reach above the reader.

The four Surahs (89, 93, 94 and 95) from the Koran inscribed on the gate, all have to do with the approaching day of the Last Judgement, as well as with the bounty and the reward of the Lord. The graceful calligraphy of Arabic (the only language in which the Koran should be reproduced), serves both as a means of decoration, and as a means of conveying religious content.

On passing through this gateway one finds oneself in the *chahar-bagh*. The gardens form a square within the rectangle and are quartered by four great canals, each flowing from the raised tank, which is centrally placed in the garden.

Unfortunately much of the garden has been destroyed: for example the tall spreading trees and cypresses were cut down because they obscured the view of the tomb from the gate. One has therefore to rely on the discussions and descriptions of earlier writers to get some sense of what the gardens looked like. Moin-ud-din, who wrote in 1905, said that the gardens were without rival (p. 33-34.). They had rare plants, fruits and fragrant flowers to delight the senses. He gave a long list of flowers, including jasmine, rose, marigold, and sunflower. A variety of fruit trees were also planted, including grape, pomegranate, apple, pear, lemon, pineapple, mango, fig, and walnut. Cypress trees lined the banks of the channels, with a fountain in front of each one.

The rosy light of the morning, the evening shade, the refreshing dew, the flowers in bloom perfuming the air, the cuckoo's cheerful notes the fitful glimmer of the fireflies, the merry dance of the fish in the marble basin, the melodies of sweet warblers in the smiling green, these were the enchantments of the scene. (Moin-ud-din. 1905; p. 34.)

This description of the scene seems very similar to the Paradise, as depicted in the Koran as a reward for the faithful:

***The Companions of the Right Hand³³,
- what will be the Companions of the Right Hand?
(They will be) among Lote-trees without thorns,
Among Tall trees with flowers (or fruits) piled one above another, -
In shade long-extended,
By water flowing constantly,
And fruit in abundance. (Koran. Surah 56: 27-32)***

Not only were the gardens planted with flowers, but the cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal was also inlaid with flowers: a series of panels which run around the base of the cenotaph were carved with motifs. The flowers depicted – roses, narcissus and tulips, among others, are associated with the flowers of paradise in Persian culture. They are the flowers used to describe the features of the beloved in Persian mystic poetry, the beloved being a metaphor for God, and possibly also for the deceased, Mumtaz³⁴. (Asher. 1992; p. 214.)

Each quarter of the large *chahar-bagh*, with its (once) enchanting flowers, shrubs and trees, is again quartered by walkways, therefore dividing the gardens into four sections of four. Michell points out that this is a very typical plan of the Islamic funerary garden where quarters of the *chahar-bagh* are sub-divisible into four. “The repetition of the module results in a pattern immediately visible...formed by the paths...[and channels]...that separate...the flowerbeds. “ (Michell. 1995; p. 47.) The use of a quadripartite garden is, of course, not a new development; it has its origin in the Ancient Persian form and was frequently used in Mughal tomb gardens.

The channels, bordered by paved footpaths and cypress trees, are not narrow, but are instead wide glistening sheets of water that mirror³⁵ the mausoleum in their surface. This is typical of the Islamic use of water as a mirror. In total there are forty-eight jets along the length of the north south³⁶ canal with a large one at the end, closest to the tomb. (Moin-uddin. 1905; p. 13-14.) The four water channels quarter the garden and are, of course, symbolic of the four rivers of paradise. In the Koran, Surah: 47 it is written:

This is the paradise, which the righteous have been promised. There shall flow rivers of unpolluted water, and rivers of milk forever fresh: rivers of delectable wine and rivers of clearest honey.

The raised rectangular tank in the centre of the garden, at the intersection of the four channels, was filled to the brim and contained four jets. This marble tank was probably intended as a model of the tank as seen by Muhammad in paradise, the 'celestial tank of abundance' called the *al-Kawthar*. (Begley. 1979; p. 14.) These metaphors "...form part of a systematic program of symbolic equations, in which every part of the tomb complex is conceived as a specific replica of its celestial counterpart." (Begley. 1979; p. 14.)

The tomb is positioned on a square, white marble plinth within the rectangle which lies at the end of the complex, beyond the garden. There is one pond on either side of the tomb. On the western end of the rectangle against the outside wall there is a mosque and on the eastern end an assembly hall. All of these structures stand upon a red sandstone terrace at the end of the *chahar-bagh*.

The mausoleum is well proportioned, as is in fact the entire complex. The plan was laid out on a systematic grid which allowed the proportional coordination of all the elements of each building to the others, as well as each of the buildings within the entire complex.³⁷ (Begley. 1989; p.xliii.)

The tomb is seated on a marble plinth, which elevates it above the garden and places it at the edge of the river Jumna. On each corner of the plinth is a tower/minaret, a typical feature of Mughal funereal architecture, also seen, for example, at the tombs of Ulugh Beg and Jahangir. (Asher. 1992; p. 213.) According to James Dickie (Michell 1995; p. 47.) the square plinth symbolised the material universe, and the dome the circle of eternity while the Baghdadi Octagon³⁸ could symbolise the transition from one to the other, experienced

by the deceased – a feasible argument since the eight sides of the octagon refer to the eight paradises, the Hasht Behesht.³⁹

The layout of the tomb is intended to symbolize the eight levels of paradise. There are rooms on each of the four corners, each double storied and all communicating with the octagonal central hall. These eight rooms are the eight ‘Paradises.’ The Koran describes this aspect of its paradise as follows:

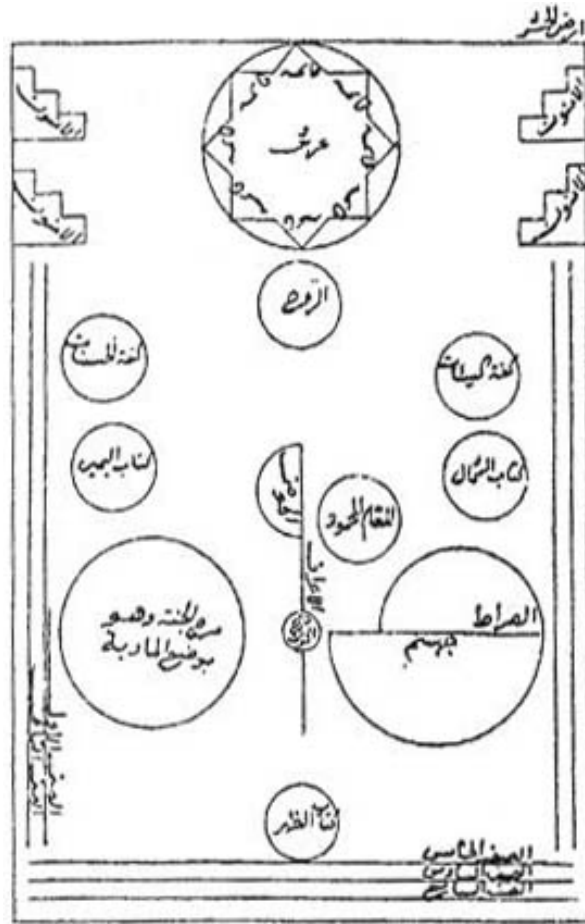
...lofty mansions, one above another, have been built: beneath them flow rivers (of delight): (such is) the Promise of God: never doth God fail in (His) promise. (Koran. Surah. 39:20)

In the above there is really not much that is new about the plan of the mausoleum of the Taj Mahal. The tomb of Humayun was, for example, a prototype, however the Taj Mahal had superior proportions and is infinitely more beautiful.

Wayne Begley has, however, offered a new and well-reasoned exposition on the inherent symbolism of this complex in an article entitled ‘*The Myth of the Taj Mahal and a New Theory of Its Symbolic Meaning*’ (1979). He studied the layout and structure of the Taj Mahal and says:

...The layout of the Taj complex and the apocalyptic imagery running through the Koranic inscriptions strongly suggests that the monument was conceived as a vast allegory of the Day of Resurrection, when the dead shall arise and proceed to the place of Judgement beneath the Divine Throne. (Begley. 1979; p. 25.)

This interpretation should be kept in mind while studying the mausoleum and indeed the whole complex of the Taj Mahal.



Illus. 13: The Plain of Assembly on the Day of Judgment.
(Begley. 1979; p. 25.)

The innovation in the plan for this complex is that, unlike all previous Mughal tombs, the mausoleum is placed at one **end** of the enclosed rectangle and **beyond** the *chahar-bagh*, rather than at the exact centre, as had been custom up till now – seen in the tomb complexes of Mughal rulers such as, Ulugh Beg, Akbar and Humayun.

The Taj mausoleum is, furthermore, placed at the end opposite the only entrance to the complex: namely the massive gateway. It is interesting to note that there is only one gate in and to the complex. Previous Mughal tombs had false gates in the eastern and western walls surrounding the tomb, as well as an open gate in the south wall, opposite the northern entrance. (Dickie in Michell. 1995; p. 43.)

The diagram to the left was drawn by Ibn al-'Arabi (1165-1240 AD), a Sufi⁴⁰ mystic philosopher. It depicts the Gardens of Paradise on the Day of Judgement. The Throne of God is opposite the entrance, which is guarded by the *Rizwan*, the gatekeeper of Paradise.

The layout of the complex of the Taj Mahal is exactly the same. Begley (1989; p. xlv.) says that by adopting this unusual layout, the architect, Ustad Ahmad, seems to have been inspired by this diagram. Ustad Ahmad was a distinguished scholar and intellectual, and apparently made the layout of the Taj Mahal correspond to the celestial model drawn by Ibn al-'Arabi in his book *Futuhat al-Makkiya*. This book was well known in the Islamic world at the time. In fact, the father of Shah Jahan, the Emperor Jahangir, possessed a copy, which he subsequently gave to the father of one of Shah Jahan's most trusted companions and friends.

Shah Jahan's education at his grandfather, Akbar's, court would also have given him a more relaxed and liberal attitude towards religion. Saran says (1989; p. 8.) that Akbar

...had drifted away from orthodox Islam and founded a new religion, *Din-i-Ilahi*. Indeed he even gave himself an air of divinity. He...[had]...a tolerant attitude to other religions...[and]...had learned discourses with theologians from all over the world....Hindus, Zoroastrians, Jains, Taoists and Confusian scholars from China...[and]...Sufis from Bukhara...[came to his court].

It is not unreasonable to assume that the young Shah Jahan sat in on these discussions. His grandfather after all "...adored him and took personal charge of his education⁴¹." (Saran. 1989; p. 8.)

It is therefore quite conceivable that Shah Jahan, who could have been aware of the diagram, either encouraged Ustad Ahmad, or indeed proposed to the architect that Ibn al-'Arabi's diagram be used as a model for the layout of the Taj Mahal. Such a blasphemous scheme, based on the celestial model of God's Throne in the *chahar-bagh* of Paradise on the Day of Judgement, would have been in keeping with the assessment of contemporary Europeans⁴² at Court that the Emperor was full of conceit "...and possessed with such pride as may teach Lucifer." (Begley. 1989; p. 9.) One wonders if the very upright and pious son of Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb, who deposed him and kept him imprisoned in the Red Fort at Agra till he died, was not prompted to dethrone his father on grounds of impiety!⁴³

The diagram by Ibn al-'Arabi is rectangular in shape, with similar proportions to the complex of the Taj Mahal as a whole. As with the tomb, the Throne of God is situated

within a clearly defined space, with a measurable relationship in size to its surroundings and at the far end of the rectangle.⁴⁴

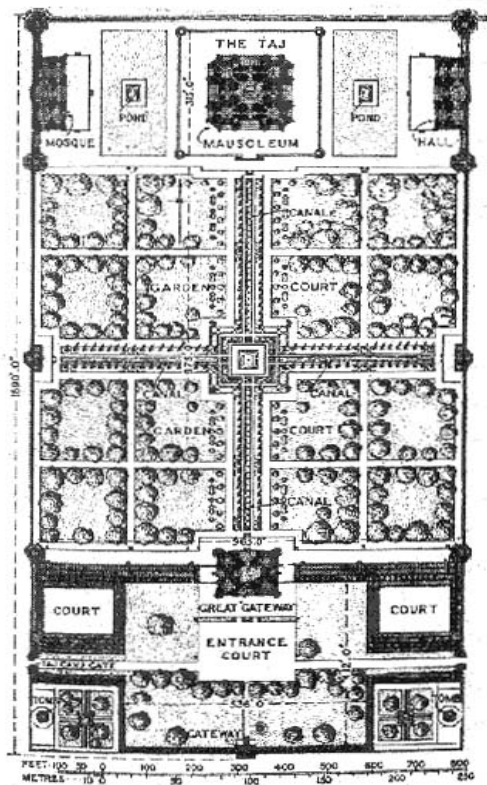
Begley says of the diagram, "...the spatial relations of all the features of the diagram are so specific that it resembles an actual architectural plan,...that is curiously similar to the Taj and its garden." (Begley. 1979; p. 26.)

It is very evident from the two illustrations overleaf (top) that the diagram by Ibn al-'Arabi cannot literally be applied to the Taj Mahal complex as a whole, but similarities in **layout** are striking, particularly when the layout of the Taj Mahal is compared to the traditional layout of Mughal tombs. In the complexes of Humayun and Akbar (overleaf, bottom), the tombs are in the centre of the *chahar-bagh* and not at the end of it.

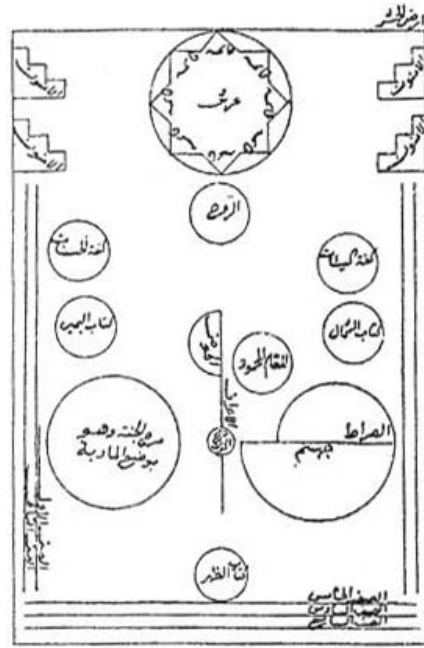
The layout of the Taj Mahal complex is, therefore, the first notable deviation from the norm.

The second innovation in this complex is the fact that the mausoleum dominates the whole scheme, and the most commanding feature of the mausoleum is, in fact, the dome.

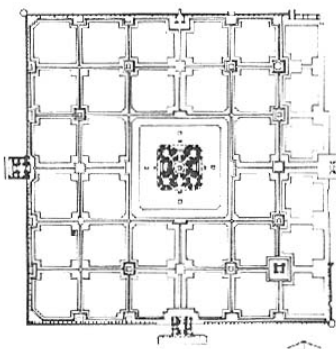
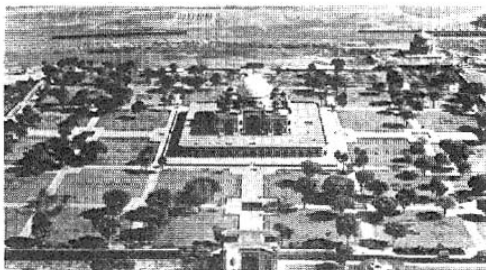
In itself the use of a dome as an element in Muslim architecture was not new. The dome was developed by the ancient Romans and spread all over the Roman Empire, including the eastern Mediterranean, later to become known as the Byzantine Empire. The early contact between developing and expanding Islam and the Byzantines inevitably brought the dome as a structural element to the attention of Muslim architects, who used it with increasing expertise. One only has to look at the roofline of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul to see lavish use of the dome as an architectural feature.



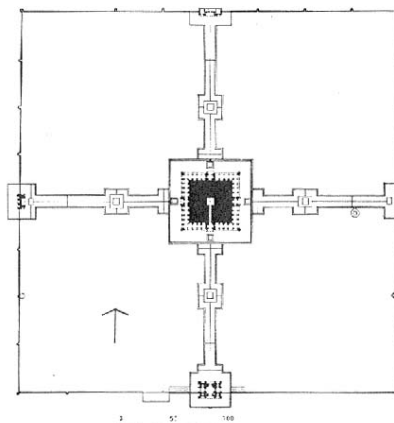
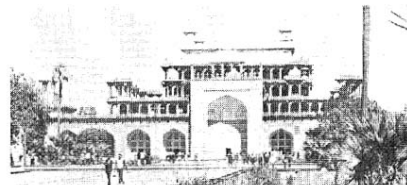
Illus. 14: Plan of the Taj Mahal. (Begley. 1979; p. 25.)



Illus. 15: The Plain of Assembly on the Day of Judgement. (Begley. 1979; p. 25.)



Illus. 16: The Tomb of Humayun. (Michell. 1995; p. 269.)



Illus. 17: The Tomb of Akbar. (Michell. 1995; p. 272.)

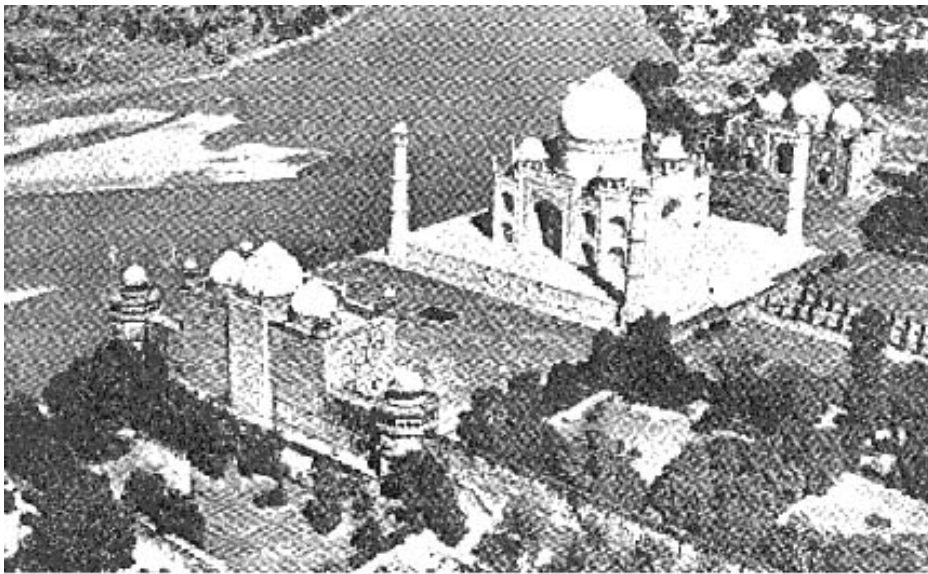
The large, bulbous dome of the Taj could be explained away as having evolved from domes such as the one on the tomb of Humayun (1565 AD). However, it is also curiously similar to the shape of Mughal ceremonial crowns. In a portrait painting attributed to Bichitr (c. 1615-1660 AD) of *Jahangir holding Ceremonial Crown*, now in the British Museum, the similarity between the crown and the dome of the Taj is remarkable. (Begley. 1979; p. 16.)

Begley also points out that the Persian words *Taj Mahal* literally mean “crown palace” and not, as it is generally claimed, the shortened form of the title *Mumtaz Mahal*, meaning the “Elect of the Palace” (Begley. 1979; p. 16.)

Moreover, not only is the domed silhouette of the Taj generally suggestive of the Mughal ceremonial crown, but it also strongly resembles the typical shape of Islamic throne-backs. (Begley. 1979; p. 16.)

Another painting, c. 1640 AD, by Bichitr, now in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, shows the Emperor Akbar in the centre, seated on a throne with such a bulbous domical back, which cannot be mere coincidence. It may, of course, be argued that this painting was painted as an allegory after the completion of the Taj (begun in 1632 AD), since it includes Shah Jahan on the right, to whom Akbar is handing the ceremonial crown, bypassing his (Akbar’s) son Jahangir, on the left, and that the throne back is therefore a copy of the Taj dome, rather than the other way round.

Such an argument would, however, not be accurate. Islamic throne-backs traditionally had a bulbous shape similar to the dome of the Taj seen as a silhouette. In a detail of a painting entitled *Kay Kavus in His Flying Throne*⁴⁵,



Illus. 18: An aerial view of the Taj Mahal complex.
Note the dome, which dominates in this illustration.
(Michell. 1995; p. 266.)

the same throne-back can clearly be observed. This painting was painted a century **before** Mumtaz Mahal died in 1631 AD.

As Begley points out:

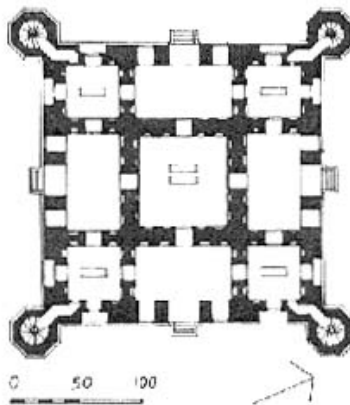
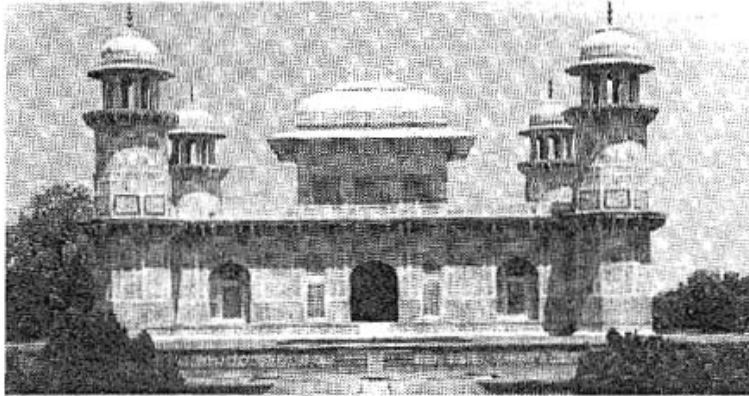
Although Islamic tombs characteristically have domes, the resemblance of the Taj's dome to actual Mughal throne-backs seems more than coincidental, and seems to have been deliberately emphasised in order to allude to the mausoleum's possible celestial prototype. (1979; p. 16.)

As with the Jewish Torah, there are also in Islam proscriptions against the representation of religious images. This had prevented visual representations of the Throne of God. This ban, however, had not stopped Fundamentalist and Mystic 'descriptions' of the Throne of God, which according to them exists literally. (1979; p. 16)

Medieval Islamic cosmology describes the Throne (called '*Arsh* in Arabic) as infinitely vast, situated on a plinth or pedestal called the *Kursi*. Below the *Kursi* is the Terrace and beyond the Terrace, God created the celestial Gardens of Paradise, protected by the Rizwan or gatekeeper of Paradise and the guardian of the treasure under the Throne.

If the description of the complex as a whole, and the mausoleum in particular are taken into consideration, the similarities between this mystical 'description' and the Taj Mahal cannot, surely, be merely coincidental: the tomb is on a plinth of white marble, which in turn is on a terrace at the end of the *chahar-bagh*, with its broad channels and big tank. Opposite the mausoleum is the huge gate, the only entrance to the complex.

If we accept Begley's argument that the bulbous dome of the tomb can, in fact, be linked to the shape of the ceremonial crowns of the Mughal's, as well as to the bulbous domical



Illus. 19: The Tomb of I'timad ad-Dawla.
(Michell. 1995; p. 266.)

shape of the Islamic throne-backs, then surely the hypothesis that Shah Jahan and/or Ustad Ahmad (the architect) tried to recreate the mystical 'description' of the Throne of God in this complex is, at least, worth considering. The similarities are too pronounced to be dismissed as coincidence.

Another feature of the Taj Mahal, which is especially noticeable, is the four minarets. Like the dome, the minaret has had a long tradition in Islamic architecture. Muhammad had disliked the use of the Jewish *shofar* or ram's horn to call the faithful to prayer. He instituted the office of the muezzin, a man who is to chant the *adhan* or summons to prayer. "This was not of course, the origin of the minaret but the motivation for its invention." (Yaqub Zaki in Michell. 1995; p. 40.) The need for a high platform from which to call, led to its development.

Equally, there are a number of prototypes of Mughal tombs with four minarets arranged symmetrically around the dome.

In the example overleaf, the minarets are quite substantial in size and are integrated into the tomb building. The same type of construction may be seen in the tomb of Humayan.

The difference between these tombs and the Taj Mahal is the clear separation in the latter of the minarets from the Baghdadi octagon of the mausoleum. The slender verticals of the minarets also create a strong contrast to the bigger bulk of the tomb.

Henry Corbin, in his *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn al-Arabi* (1969; p. 45.), says that according to the esoteric Sufi mystical treatise of Ibn al-'Arabi, the four supports of the

Throne of God are said to have as their symbolic counterparts the four *Awtad*, or terrestrial “poles” in the Sufi hierarchy of saints. Begley thinks that: “this cosmological conception probably lies behind the Taj’s unusual grouping of the four minarets.” (Begley. 1979; p. 20.)

Abd al-Hamid Lahawri, who wrote a history of the first twenty years of the reign of Shah Jahan, already in 1643 AD called these four minarets the *Awtad*. (Storey. 1977; p. 461.) Lahawri’s almost casual reference to Sufi transcendentalism seems to support the view of Begley *et al* that the Taj Mahal is based on the mystic ‘descriptions’ of the Throne of God.

If the argument is accepted that Shah Jahan and/or Ustad Ahmad tried to recreate the Throne of God in the Mausoleum, basing the dome on the typical Islamic throne-backs, then a more mundane explanation of the four minarets may, of course, be that they are the supports or ‘legs’ of the Throne. In the detail of *Kay Kavus and his flying throne* 1531 AD from Firdawsi’s *Shah-Nama*, four pillars are clearly separated and freestanding from Kay Kavus in his throne with its huge bulbous throne-back.

But perhaps the most convincing evidence that Ibn al-‘Arabi’s diagram of the Throne of God on the day of Judgement played a role in the constitution of this complex is in the epigraphic program. Inscriptions on tombs have had a long tradition in Muslim architecture in general and Mughal mausoleums in particular. These inscriptions are generally, however, poems or songs of praise. Amanat Khan, a poet and the calligrapher of the Taj Mahal, composed and inscribed the following on the gateway of the tomb of the Emperor Akbar, the grandfather of Shah Jahan:

Hail, blessed space happier than the garden of Paradise!
Hail lofty building higher than the Divine Throne!

A Paradise, the garden of which has thousands of Rizwans as servants,
The garden of which has thousands of paradises for its land

The pen of the mason of the Divine Decree has written on its court:
“These are the gardens of Eden, enter then to live forever!”
(Hoag. 1968; p. 243.)

The inscription on the south (entrance) arch of the Taj Mahal forms a stark contrast to Khan’s poem above. For Example the Surah called **The Break of Day** (Surah 89), verses 16-26 read:

***Nay! When the earth is ground to powder –
And thy Lord cometh, and His angels, rank upon rank-
And Hell, that Day, is brought near – on that Day will man remember, but how shall
the remembrance profit him?
He shall say: “ Ah would that I had made provision for this my life!”
For upon that Day, His chastisement shall be such as none other can inflict!
And His bonds shall be such as none other can bind.***

“[This]...summons up a frightening vision of the approaching Day of Judgement.” (Begley. 1979; p. 13.) This Surah, however, also proclaims the rewards which the faithful will enjoy. Verses 27-30 read: ***But O thou soul at peace, Return thou unto thy Lord, well pleased, and well pleasing unto Him. Enter thou among my servants, and enter thou My Paradise.***

The three further Surahs inscribed on the remaining arches of the gate also alternate between the wrath and the benevolence of God. These Surahs are: 93 called **The Brightness**, 94 called **The Expansion** and 95, called **The Fig**.

The Koranic passages inscribed on the mausoleum itself...appear to bear out the allegorical interpretation proposed here: they allude both to the awesome and terrible finality of the Day of Judgement and to the pleasures of Paradise that God has promised as reward for the faithful. Some of these passages are of course conventional in a funerary context, but a significant number are not – being totally or partially unique to the Taj. (Begley. 1979; p. 26-27)

The massive open porch arches (called *iwan*) of the four facades of the mausoleum were inscribed with Surah 36, and called the *Ya Sin*. This Surah is traditionally recited at funerals and is popularly regarded as the heart or *qalb* of the Koran. It indirectly alludes to the ultimate Vision of God promised to the Faithful in Paradise. (Begley. 1979; p. 27.)

The *Ya Sin* is not, however, the only inscription on the exterior of the mausoleum. On three of the four doorways inside the massive *iwan* arches, are the Surahs 81,82 and 84. “[These]...strike a far more terrifying note, as they summon up a very real vision of the cataclysm of the Final Day – hardly the kind of imagery to be expected on the tomb of a beloved wife.” (Begley. 1979; p. 27.)

For example, the first three verses of **The Folding Up** (Surah 81) or *al-Takwir* on the south door read: “***When the Sun shall be folded up when the stars shall be thrown down, when the mountains shall be made to pass away...***” There are twenty nine verses in this Surah, and it is not possible to quote the Surah in full here. There is a *Hadith* or Tradition that Muhammad’s hair turned grey on hearing and pondering the fearful words of **The Folding Up**.

The other two Surahs are similar in tone. In **The Cleaving Asunder** (Surah 82) or *al-Infitar* on the west door, the first three verses read: “***When the sky shall be cleft asunder – When the stars shall be scattered – When the seas shall be poured forth....***” The

Rendering Asunder (Surah 84) on the north door similarly reads: ***“When the Sky shall be bent asunder, and attends unto its Lord, Fitly composed, When the Earth shall be flattened out...”***

As in the case of several of the Taj’s Koranic passages, the question naturally arises as to why these particular passages were chosen to be inscribed in this particular sequence. The answer seems to lie in a tradition recorded in the *Mishkat al-Masabih*, a collection of Hadith that was extremely popular in Mughal India, so popular in fact that it was translated from Arabic to Persian in 1620, by one of the most famous religious scholars of the day. According to the *Mishkat*, the three Surahs 81, 82, and 84 are to be recited by anyone “who would like to look at the day of Resurrection as though it were before his very eyes.” Since the deviser of the Taj’s inscriptional program was undoubtedly familiar with this tradition, the implications of the choice of these three Sura[h]s seem clear: their recitation is capable of summoning up a vision of the Resurrection, along with a concomitant vision of Paradise and the Divine throne, upon which God will be seated in majesty on Day of Judgment. (Begley. 1979; p. 27.)

Begley writes that while some of the designs of the Taj must have been partially coincidental (the shape of the Throne and the paradisiacal associations which were derived from earlier developments), there are certain features that only make sense when explained in terms of an allegory of paradise. One such element is the verses used on the walls. According to Muslim belief, Arabic is the only language which will be used in Paradise and, furthermore, various parts of the architecture in Paradise will have the words of God written upon them, including the gateway and the Divine Throne itself. (Begley. 1979; p. 30.)

On the top of the cenotaph of Mumtaz Mahal in the central hall of the Taj, the following verses from Surah 40 have been inscribed:

O lord! Thy reach is over all things, in Mercy and Knowledge. Forgive, then, those who turn in repentance, and follow Thy Path; and preserve them from the penalty of the Blazing Fire!

And allow them, O Lord! to enter the Gardens of Eden which Thou hast promised unto them, and unto the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their posterity – for Thou art surely the All-mighty, and All-wise! (Verses 7-8)

This seems to be the final prayer for Mumtaz Mahal, who had been confronted with the Day of Judgement before the Throne of God.

Perhaps the final evidence of this metaphor for the Throne of God and the Gardens of Paradise may be found in the epitaph of the grave of Shah Jahan in the crypt. It reads as follows:

The illumined grave and final resting place of the Emperor, dignified as Rizwan [the treasurer and guardian of paradise] residing in Eternity: His most Exalted Majesty, having his abode in *Illiyun*: Dweller in Paradise, Second Lord of the [auspicious planetary] Conjunction, Shah Jahan, the King Valiant. May his grave ever flourish, and his abode be in the Gardens of Paradise...(Begley. 1979; p. 33.)

The Arabic word *Ridwan*, pronounced 'Rizwan' in Persian, occurs in the Koran meaning "God's good pleasure." In popular Islam, Rizwan is the gatekeeper of Paradise, because without God's Rizwan, no one will be allowed to enter God's Paradise. In one treatise, Rizwan is commanded by God to **decorate the gardens**, perhaps implying that he is the **designer** as well as the gatekeeper of Paradise. (Begley. 1979; p. 33.) (Emphasis by the author of this thesis.) This interpretation would indeed be apt, as Shah Jahan undoubtedly had much to do with the Taj Mahal as a metaphor for Paradise. As Asher points out:

All the designers of this unique tomb were highly educated not only in mathematics, engineering and astrology, but in literature and of course theology. They were thus well prepared to formulate the tomb's symbolic program as the ultimate vision of paradise on earth. That such a program would appeal to Shah Jahan is not difficult to accept, for paradisiacal imagery is found in nearly every work he commissioned. (1992; p. 215.)

The realm of *Illiyun* is a place in direct proximity to the Throne of God. The implications of this epitaph would seem to suggest that Shah Jahan's final resting place is beneath the Divine Throne.

Shah Jahan died on the evening of the 22nd of January 1666 AD, after a brief illness, still imprisoned in the Agra Fort. During his imprisonment by his son Aurangzeb, who had deposed him in 1658 AD, Shah Jahan "...was lovingly cared for by his favourite daughter, Jahanara..." (Saran. 1989; p. 19.) It was the Princess, herself a dervish,⁴⁶ who buried her father early the next morning in the Taj, before her brother, Aurangzeb, could arrive from Delhi. It is entirely possible that the Princess Jahanara was also responsible for the epitaph, as she must have been fully aware of her father's allegorical program for this complex. (Saran. 1989; p. 19.)

Begley notes that, "...certain features of the Taj's architectural conception become explicable only when the monument is interpreted as an allegory of Paradise and the Divine Throne." (Begley. 1979; p. 30.) In addition to the incorporation of design elements of previous garden tombs explicitly associated with Paradise, the extensive inscriptional programme of the Taj reflects the Islamic tradition that "...various parts of the celestial architecture in Paradise have the words of God written upon them – including the gateway and the Divine Throne itself." (Ibid.)

The garden of the Taj complex is a very important feature of the allegorical program for the complex. Not only does the garden reflect the typical *chahar-bagh* design typical of Persian gardens and previous Mughal tomb gardens – with their explicit association with

paradise – but it also introduces substantial changes from the tradition – in particular placing the mausoleum itself at the end of the garden rather than in the middle, lending further weight to the allegorical representation of the Divine Throne as discussed above.

Begley ends his premise by saying; “...within this broader context, the Taj seems less a romantic symbol of devotion than a vainglorious, yet profound attempt to define God in Shah Jahan’s own terms, perhaps even to rival him.” (Begley. 1979; p. 35.) Whether or not this is true, it would seem that there is enough evidence to support the fact that Shah Jahan was attempting to create a metaphor for paradise in this garden tomb.

ENDNOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

²² Scholars in agreement with Begley include Hoag, Tavernier, MacDougall, Ettinghausen, Schimmel, Hanaway, Burckhardt, and Stierlin.

²³ It might be remembered that with the break-up of the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales in the 1990's the press photographed Diana alone in front of the mausoleum, symbolising that she had lost the love of her prince! This concept of the Taj Mahal is typical of the popular, romantic idea of this complex.

²⁴ In contrast, Jahangir, the father of Shah Jahan, withdrew for a month from court on the death of his granddaughter. (Begley. 1979; p. 8.) Shah Jahan's grief seems trivial in comparison, considering the romantic legend attached to the complex and his great love for his wife.

²⁵ See endnote 22.

²⁶ Manucci was an Italian soldier and quack doctor who lived and travelled in India for several decades at the end of the seventeenth century. "Manucci's time in India coincided with the completion of some of the greatest Moghal gardens and he, like many others since, was fascinated by their buildings and enchanted by the cool oasis of planted tranquility which they afforded in the searing heat of the plains." (unesco.org)

²⁷ See endnote 27.

²⁸ Shah Jahan was Emperor of the Mughal Empire in India. Although sources often refer to him as 'King,' the title of Emperor will be used in reference to him.

²⁹ Shah Jahan's passion for architecture was **one** of the reasons his son, Aurangzeb, deposed his father. Shah Jahan had been spending too much on architecture, according to his son.

³⁰ When Shah Jahan died, his son asked for an estimate of his jewels and was told that it would take an expert fourteen years to assess Shah Jahan's collection. It included "...750 pounds of pearls, 275 pounds of emeralds. 5000 gems from Cathay, corals, topazes and other less precious stones in almost infinite number, 200 daggers, 1000 gold studded saddles with jewels, 2 golden thrones, 3 silver thrones, 100 silver chairs, 5 golden chairs, 200 most precious mirrors, 100 000 precious silver plates and utensils, 50 000 pounds of gold plate, wrought gold and silver, Chinese vessels, worked necklaces, cups, discs, candelabra, tubs of uncut diamonds, gold images of elephants, golden bridles, porcelain vessels..." (Saran. 1989; p. 17.)

³¹ These were all Mughal emperors before Shah Jahan.

³² The tomb was indeed a treasure-trove of jewels. The actual tomb of Mumtaz Mahal, and later that of her husband, are in the crypt below the central hall, in which the cenotaphs are found. The tombs were lavishly decorated with precious and semiprecious stones. In the upper hall the beautiful arabesque flowers, branches and leaves on the cenotaphs, the marble screen around them, the dado panels and the spandrels of the arches were **inlaid** with jewels from the world over. Sometimes a single flower was composed of as many as forty-eight pieces of precious and semiprecious stones to achieve the required tonal values. (Saran. 1989; p. 26-27.)

³³ The 'Companions of the Right Hand' are the faithful in Heaven. The 'Companions of the Left Hand' are those in Hell.

³⁴ Apart from the fact that Shah Jahan's mother, Nur Jahan, was of pure Persian descent; Mumtaz Mahal or to use her true name, Arjumand Banu, was the daughter of Nur Jahan's brother. Shah Jahan's 'liberal education' also included, of course, Persian, which was the language of the Court. According to Saran the great Persian poet Faizi was at Ackbar's court when Shah Jahan was growing up. The use of the Persian symbolism instead of the Koranic or Arabic is therefore not exceptional in this instance. (1989; p. 9-11.)

³⁵ James Dickie (in Michell. 1995; p. 34.) talks of the stylised tree that grows downwards from the dome in the Dome of the Rock or al'Asqa Mosque in Jerusalem. He says this may seem odd, but that in Islam Paradise is the opposite or mirror image of this world. The principle of reversibility runs through Islam: e.g.

the Koran is but a reflection of the preserved tablet, the supernatural archetype that is in heaven. The Turkish folk Hero Nasr ad-Din Khoja, said: "... when I am dead, bury me upside down so that in the next world I may appear the right way up." The same would apply to the reflecting surface of the water. One could also argue that if the Taj is indeed the Throne of God (or was intended to be it) as the real (mausoleum) is reflected in the broad channels and big tank – the upside down - the inversion of reality which is the supernatural.

³⁶It is interesting that the north/south axis is the exact opposite of the Christian church, which is on an east/west axis. The north/south axis has its origin in the "QIBLA" – the line in the early mosques pointing to Mecca, after the Prophet had decided to replace Mecca with Jerusalem as the goal of pilgrimage, because of the Ka'ba. From Medina the line would obviously have been north/south.

³⁷ Scholars had known for some time that Mughal architects had used grids to design their buildings. No drawings for the tomb had survived, but the reconstruction of the plans clearly showed the grid system. Lahore published a very accurate reconstruction of the grid plan for the Taj Mahal between 1867 and 1872.

³⁸ The Baghdadi octagon had been developed in Baghdad. It refers to an octagon where the walls of the four 'corners' are smaller in size than the four entrance façade walls.

³⁹ Palaces built on this plan are known as a metaphor for paradise, which is also a garden palace near Isfahan in Islamic Persia.

⁴⁰ See endnote 21.

⁴¹ Shah Jahan's own father Jahangir, who ruled for fifteen years, was less tolerant towards other religions. In fact he actively persecuted Hindus. Shah Jahan only adopted this policy towards the end of his reign, apparently under pressure from his extremely pious and orthodox son, Aurangzeb, who later deposed and imprisoned his father. (Saran. 1989; p. 8 and 24.)

⁴² The opinions of Europeans at the Court of Shah Jahan portray him "... as arrogant, petty, ruthless, a man obsessed with power and the emblems of power. Sir Thomas Roe, the first English ambassador to the Mughal court, met Shah Jahan in 1617, and characterised the vain young prince, ... then in his twenties, as 'ravenous and tyrannical' and possessed such pride 'as may teach Lucifer.'" (Begley. 1979; p. 8.)

⁴³ Although Aurangzeb's struggle for power with both his father and his brothers, particularly Dara Shikoh, had obviously to do with his own desire to become emperor, his fanaticism as an Orthodox Muslim also played a major role. If the Taj complex is indeed the Throne of God in the Gardens of Paradise, his Orthodoxy would no doubt have driven him to oust his father, particularly as he had Dara Shikoh (Shah Jahan's favourite and liberal son) executed on a charge of heresy. His struggle for power with both his brother Dara Shikoh and his father obviously had to do with his own desire to become Emperor. Under the rule of Aurangzeb "...the Mughal empire reached its greatest extent, although his policies helped lead to its dissolution." (Encyclopaedia Britannica. Micropaedia. 1974; p. 654) His fanaticism as an orthodox Muslim monarch, his persecution of Hindu's and ban on Hindu education, alienated many of his subjects thus helping to undermine Mughal rule. (1974; p. 654.)

⁴⁴ The drawing by Ibn al-'Arabi is explained as follows in Begley (with this author's emphasis):
On either side the **Throne** is flanked with the **Pulpits for the Righteous** (*al-Aminun*), positioned where the assembly hall and mosque are in the plan of the Taj Mahal. The **Tank of Abundance** (*al-Hawd al-Kawthar*) is in the centre, with next to it the **Praiseworthy Station** (*al-Maqam al-Mahmud*). This is where Muhammad will stand to intercede for the faithful, who will be allowed to enter **Paradise**, which is the circle on the left, while the wicked will fall from the **Sirat bridge** into **Hell**. This is the bifurcated circle at right. The space between the *Kawthar* tank and the **Throne** was apparently conceived as the location of the **Scales of Judgment** (*Mizan*), as indicated by the two sets of circles on the left and the right hand side of the drawing. The upper circles are identified as **Weighting Pans** (holding good and bad deeds respectively); the lower pair of circles is labelled the '**Book of the Right**' and the '**Book of the Left**.' (See endnote 39.) The centrally placed circle, at the bottom of the diagram, is labelled the '**Book of the Back**,' referring to the belief that those who receive their record from behind will be cast straight into Hell. The circle in front of the Throne is for the chief of the angelic hosts, presumably Gabriel, and is inscribed '**The Spirit**' (*al-Ruh*). Seven rows of

angels surround the proceedings, three on the short end of the rectangle, opposite the Throne and two on either side. (1979. p. 26.)

⁴⁵ From the manuscript by Firadawsi of the *Shah-Nama* (the History of Shah), dated 1531 AD, from the former Ardabil Shrine in Islamic Persia.

⁴⁶ Dervish is the common term for Sufis of any persuasion. (Rogers. 1976; p. 141.)

CONCLUSION

In tracing the influence of the Ancient Persian garden on that of Islam, it became clear that the former influenced the latter, although the precise history of the former has been somewhat blurred by time.

The Ancient Persians settled initially in the valleys of the mountains surrounding a flattish, hostile dry plateau. It appears that, hemmed in as they were by tribes in the fertile areas surrounding their sheltered valleys with plentiful water, their only means of expanding their territory necessitated finding a way to transport water across the plateau. As it is, they solved this problem with a system, which has been hailed as 'brilliant' by twentieth century engineers. The *qanat* not only brought the water to any area on the plateau they wished to settle, but also prevented loss by evaporation of the precious commodity.

It could be said that the design of their quartered gardens derived from two considerations: the first to get the water to the plants and the trees without wasting a drop of it unnecessarily. The key to achieving this was channels lined with stone, preventing the thirsty earth canals from soaking up the water. Apart from the fact that the Persians as a nation (before and after Islam) were not interested in the curvilinear, it is easier to build straight rather than curved water channels in stone. Cyrus the Younger (d. 401 BC) for example, planted trees in his garden at Sardis in straight lines to facilitate irrigation. A formal division of the garden remained a feature of both Ancient as well as Islamic Persia. Their inherent taste seems to have been for a rectilinear control of aspects of their environment. (Numerous examples in Islamic Persia and in contemporary Iran show this preference for the rectilinear in architecture, gardens and design.) The eventual quadripartite division of the plot, which was to become the plan of the garden may also be

ascribed to the Ancient Persian interest (as with all ancient peoples) in the four cardinal directions, namely east, west, north and south.

Because of the aridness of the region and the ensuing difficulty in moving water to the gardens of the Ancient Persians, the storage and transferral of water was of importance. The place in which water was stored was usually a tank, a rectangular raised area, from which the rest of the garden was watered. This tank was, with the development of the quadripartite garden, placed at the centre of the garden both for ease of use (for irrigation) and because of its importance. This water was the very life of the garden and without it much of the garden would not exist.

As with the Ancient Persian garden, water was also a central element in the later Islamic garden. In addition to tanks, pools were used for water storage, and sometimes for bathing. The surface of a pool was usually level with the surrounding path so the water could lap up to the very edge. Channels would lead out of pools and tanks and allow the movement of water around the garden, forming the layout of the garden, with the design of the paths and vegetation planned around the all-important water. In these channels would sometimes be found fountains or jets to enliven the atmosphere and cool the air.

Walls enclosing the private haven are another feature of the Ancient Persian garden. In this, however, they were not unique. Many of the ancient peoples of arid areas in the Middle East wanted to shut out the searingly hot and barren desert surrounding their little planted oases. There are extant paintings and plans of Ancient Egyptian gardens dating from the old Kingdom (c. 2400 BC), where walls clearly surround a planted area. This impulse may initially have originated in the Neolithic period in order to protect crops from

wild animals and thieves. In more settled times enclosure walls became an aesthetic feature of the pleasure garden.

It is still a great pleasure to open a door into such an enclosure and to walk into this type of garden: quiet and shaded, shutting out the blinding light reflected off the sand, the bare soil or the salt flats and look at cool water and sit in the shade of trees, out of the burning sun. In a manner of speaking it is “paradise”.

Natural oases in deserts like Arabia have palms, thorn trees and tamarisks growing around a pool of water. The Ancient Persians planted trees, shrubs and flowers (like the sweet-smelling *Rosa Damascena*) around their channels and tanks of water to create their own oases. These gardens did not come about by chance; they were explicitly created to pleasure the senses.

With the development and spread of Islam that followed, the form of the garden as used by the Ancient Persians, was now absorbed and used by the Islamic Persians who, with their religious ideas of Paradise described as a garden, were able to strengthen and develop the form further.

The Revelations, as given to Prophet Muhammad and written in the Koran, describe the Paradise of the chosen quite richly. It is a place beneath which rivers flow, there are abundant streams of water, wine, honey and milk, fruit is available in a never-ending supply, there is much shade and the sound of birds and breezes: it is a perfect garden. Inspired by these Revelations (found throughout the Koran), many Islamic nations set out to recreate these Paradise Gardens on earth.

To the idea of the quadripartite garden, the Islamic Persians could add new meaning; the four rivers of paradise as described in the Koran, and the Tank of Abundance. The central tank with four channels coming out of it thus took on more significance, becoming almost mandatory in the later Islamic garden space (with regional variations). The enclosed garden remained a constant idea since the Koranic paradise is also walled in. Gateways in some instances also became an important feature.

Despite the climatic differences across the breadth of the Islamic conquests, the form of the garden changed little, with certain adaptations being made to cater for the terrain, and of course the availability of water. The gardens in Granada, for example, were shaped to fit onto the top of the hills, thus not allowing for the usual huge rectangular garden found in other areas. In Kashmir the abundance of water allowed for many huge channels and fountains with little concern for the amount of water being lost to evaporation. Yet, at Bagh-e Fin, the channels were narrow and were shaded with huge trees, the fountains were very low and some pools were even covered in cupolas to protect the water from evaporation.

Water remains the focus of these Islamic gardens, with an increased use of fountains and jets, and the size of pond greatly increased in some cases so as to surround whole palaces in a sea of water. Water is also ingeniously used to cool the air with veils of dripping water and mists of it inside pavilions.

Pavilions, too, became a part of the Islamic garden. There are many references to them in the Koran, and they are thus an important part of Paradise. They were usually situated at the centre of a garden or garden terrace. In Granada, the pavilions surrounded the gardens, forming the walls overlooking the garden courts. Because the tank had to be

placed in the centre, the pavilion was sometimes also in the centre, forming part of the tank. The tank was either inside the pavilion, or the pavilion inside the tank, like a medieval castle, protected by a moat.

The plantings of the gardens varied, also depending on the presence of water. Scented flowers were, however, often used to perfume the air. Cypress and plane trees were common to Islamic gardens. The trees were usually planted to line pathways. Flowers, when used, were laid out in balanced patterns within the *chahar-bagh* design. In these gardens, flowerbeds were often sunken so that, when one walked on the slightly raised paths, the tops of shrubs and flowering bushes were laid out in such a way as to create the impression of walking on fine carpets.

Within the shade of trees and pavilions surrounded by sweet-smelling fruit trees and scented plants, with the air filled with the sound of song birds, great kings often had parties in the gardens, seated on carpets and silks. The accounts of these parties witnessed by great travellers are reminiscent of the Garden described in the Koran: the Dwelling Place of the promised ones. The names of many Islamic gardens would seem to back this up, the Bagh-e-Behesht (the garden of paradise), the Bagh-e-Jannat, (the celestial garden) and the Bagh-e-Eram (the garden of heaven).

After studying these Islamic gardens, the closer inspection of the Taj Mahal brought much insight. This complex has been described as the height of Mughal architecture. It would seem to have taken the Islamic garden, the idea of creating a paradise on earth, to the furthest extreme of any known garden.

Built by Shah Jahan as a memorial for his dearly beloved wife, the garden complex of the Taj Mahal on closer inspection has many deep and intricate symbols within its plan.

There seems to be evidence enough to suggest that Shah Jahan was in fact building a replica of Paradise on the Day of Judgement. The complex is laid out according to a well-known diagram drawn by a Sufi mystic, and includes many innovative elements that would seem to back up this hypothesis.

The gateway represents the entrance to Paradise, through which is the direct approach to the Throne of God. The central tank and the channels represent respectively, the Tank of Abundance and the four rivers of honey, wine, water and milk. The plan in itself places the mausoleum in the place of the Throne of God, with the gardens of Paradise and its four rivers in front of it.

The mausoleum has many design elements that support the hypothesis that it represents the Throne of God. Its shape resembles the silhouette of the thrones of the Mughal kings and its floor plan symbolically represents the circle and star of the throne, as seen in the diagram of Ibn al-'Arabi. Also the placement of the sarcophagi would seem to represent the holy pen and writing desk found in heaven from which all things were created.⁴⁷ (Begley. 1979; p. 34-35.)

The four minarets surrounding the tomb could represent the pillars as seen supporting Mughal thrones. They could represent the 'lofty towers', spoken of in the Koran.

Although much of this speculation of the layout and structure of the Taj Mahal is simply that, the evidence available seems sufficient to warrant serious consideration. We will never know the true intention of Shah Jahan, or that of his builder/designer. It nevertheless seems fairly clear that at the very least they intended to make a 'paradise', on earth.

As a symbolic representation, it contains much of the paradise as understood by mankind and revealed in the Koran. It is a garden on earth in which one can walk; it is also the layout of Paradise. It is a metaphor for paradise.

ENDNOTES: CONCLUSION

⁴⁷ “...the pen-box device surmounting Shah Jahan’s cenotaph...may also allude to the mystical significance of the *Qalam*, or Divine Pen. In fact, the cenotaph itself seems to have been intended as a symbolic replica of the pen, paralleling the conception of Mumtaz Mahal’s cenotaph as a replica of the Guarded Tablet. Thus the arrangement of the two cenotaphs within the octagonal screen evokes the symbolism of another of Ibn al’Arabi’s mystical diagrams, namely the diagram dealing with the process of Divine Emanation. In the diagram the process of creation is likened to God’s writing his decrees with the Pen of the First Intelligence (*al-‘Aql al-Awwal*) upon the Tablet of the Universal Soul (*al-Nafs al-Kulliya*). ... Many mystics equated the Divine Pen with the Perfect Man, since both were felt to epitomise the active side of God’s Transcendent Nature. Thus the symbolism of the cenotaphs - and perhaps the entire tomb – seems explicitly designed to reflect Shah Jahan’s exalted image of himself as the Perfect Man.” (Begley. 1979; p. 33-35.)

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