ILLUMINATING AN EMPIRE: SOLAR SYMBOLISMS IN MUGHAL ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

ILLUMINATING AN EMPIRE: SOLAR SYMBOLISMS IN MUGHAL ART AND ARCHITECTURE

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Studies on Mughal art and architecture and studies on the solar symbolisms and sacred kingship separately constitute established routes in academia and continue to inform our understanding of both the topics with established points of convergence and divergence. However, these two lines of scholarly analysis have seldom interacted and converged. Within this framework, in order to attempt to bridge this gap, the thesis aims to contextualize the characteristics of solar symbolisms that had developed and evolved throughout the reign of the Mughal dynasty. Considering that solar symbolisms rose to prominence in the mid sixteenth century and started its decline from late seventeenth century, the study firstly aims to understand what caused the rise and decline of solar symbolisms and its association with sacred kingship in the Mughal Empire. Additionally, the thesis also examines how solar symbolisms had shaped and informed Mughal art and architecture through analysing the many instances of its appearance in both fields. In doing so, the study also attempts to offer a coherent narrative on the sparse literature on solar symbolisms and add to the grand corpus of research on Mughal art and architecture.

Keywords: Mughal Empire, solar symbolism, sacred kingship, art and architectural history

ÖZ

BİR İMPARATORLUĞU AYDINLATMAK: BABÜRLÜ SANAT VE MİMARİSİNDE GÜNEŞ SEMBOLİZMİ

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Babürlü sanatı ve mimarisi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar ve güneş sembolizmi ile kutsal hükümranlık uygulamaları üzerine yapılan çalışmalar ayrı ayrı olarak akademide iki farklı araştırma alanı oluşturmaktadır ve belirli noktalarda birleşip ayrışarak bu konulara ilişkin anlayışımızı şekillendirmeye ve yönlendirmeye devam etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bu iki ayrı araştırma alanı nadiren etkileşime girmekte ve bunun sonucunda da bir noktada birleşememektedir. Bu çerçevede, mevcut tez çalışmasında literatürde tespit edilen söz konusu boşluğun doldurulması hedeflenmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, Babürlüler hanedanlığının hakimiyeti süresince gelişen ve evrimleşen güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin karakteristik niteliklerinin bir bağlama oturtulması amaçlanmaktadır. Güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin 16. yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren belirgin hale geldiği ve 17. yüzyılın sonlarından itibaren de giderek düşüşe geçtiği göz önüne alınarak, çalışmada Babür İmparatorluğu'nda güneş sembolizminin yükselişi ve düşüşünün altında yatan nedenler ile birlikte kutsal hükümranlık uygulamalarıyla olan bağlantıları da incelenmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, Babürlü sanat ve mimarisinden birçok örnek analiz edilerek güneş sembolizminin her iki alanı da nasıl şekillendirdiği ortaya konmaktadır. Böylece, güneş sembolizmi ögelerine ilişkin

kısıtlı literatür tutarlı bir anlatı olarak sunulmakta ve Babürlü sanat ve mimarlık tarihine ilişkin geniş külliyata katkıda bulunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Babürlüler, güneş sembolizmi, kutsal hükümranlık, sanat ve mimarlık tarihi

To all beings, past and present, who has never had a work dedicated in their name...

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1526, when the army under Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur decisively defeated the forces of Ibrahim Lodhi at the battle of Panipat, just 56 miles from Delhi, Babur may not have anticipated it to be the beginning of an empire that would go on to rule most of the Indian subcontinent at its zenith while spanning more than three centuries.[1] He was after all originally from the Ferghana valley (in modern day Uzbekistan) and the land he had won over from the Lodhi dynasty comprised of a significant non-Muslim majority (largely Hindus) dominating its population, something which set apart the Mughal Empire at the outset itself from its contemporaries- the Safavids and the Ottomans.[2] By the end of the seventeenth century, the Mughal Emperor ruled over an area spanning most of the Indian subcontinent, consisting of a staggering population close to 150 million, abundant resources and an estimated GDP of 24% of the world economy, making it one of the wealthiest empires of its time.[3] Furthermore, the empire achieved this prosperity while ruling over a vastly diverse populace, which varied immensely along religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic lines, something which led to the development of an eclectic and unique blend of syncretism which paved the way for a composite culture

[1] Richard M Eaton, *India in The Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 204; Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1; Lisa Golombek and Ebba Koch, "The Mughals, Uzbeks, and the Timurid Legacy," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood and Necipoğlu Gülru, 1st ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), pp. 811-845, 811;

[2] John F Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1; Asher, 1, 19.

[3] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2003), 256; Richards, 1.

and society.[4] Well aware of the challenges that ruling such a diverse people entailed, the Mughals actively employed a multitude of measures across social, economic and cultural spheres to cogently administer their realms. To this end, actively attributing sacredness to the emperor through imbuing qualities of divinity, i.e. practices of sacred kingship, helped to strengthen legitimacy and inspire loyalty in a way that power alone seldom could.[5] Subsequently, the Mughals employed such practices of sacred kingship for this purpose. However, in the Mughal case, it was of a curious composition where the divinity of the Mughal Emperor came to be overtly and closely associated with the sun.[6] The blending of this ideology with the different systems and traditions from these varied cultures led to exceptional results where these solar symbolisms were prudently utilised in arts and architecture by the Mughals to extend and sustain sacredness with the imperial identity.

Within this framework, this thesis aims to find answers to the following research questions: What explains the rise and decline of solar symbolisms and its association with sacred kingship in an empire such as the Mughals? How did solar symbolisms shape and inform Mughal art and architecture? How could adding the layer of solar symbolisms to academic analysis of Mughal art and architectural history change the existing scholarly narratives on these subjects? In seeking answers to these research questions, this thesis will study the solar symbolism that was employed by the Mughals through analysing instances of its appearance in Mughal art and architecture while trying to explain how the ideology in itself came into being along with its connotations for cosmological thought and architectural history. In the process, the study will ultimately attempt to offer a coherent narrative on the sparse literature on solar symbolism in Mughal cosmological thought, which otherwise remained as highly particular case studies of specific aspects of solar imagery across academia.

[4] Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 115.

[5] Eaton, 249.

[6] Catherine B. Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine." In *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 171, 172.

1.1. Nature of Sources and Literature Review

The corpus of material that exists on the history of the Mughal Empire is colossal. The continuing relevance of the Mughals in today's world is visible in the fact that diverse aspects of Mughal history continues to be a subject of detailed study in both academia and in publications aimed at a broader audience. Under this enormous umbrella of Mughal history comes the studies on Mughal art and architecture, which in itself expands into different subsections. Fortunately, a bulk of the primary and secondary sources on these subjects remains accessible today in the digitized format across different mediums and a large section of it exists in the English language, enabling an ever more diverse range of academics to undertake research on the Mughals. As part of the research for the thesis, the gamut of primary sources that enabled a careful analysis of Mughal solar symbolisms can be broadly classified into archival documents and visual sources. Since the thesis focuses on the evolution of solar symbolisms in art and architecture, Mughal miniature paintings and architecture constitute the bulk of primary visual sources utilised for this thesis. Archival sources in the form of autobiographies and biographies of the Mughal Emperors, court records and written correspondences formed the other unavoidable set of primary sources that enabled a further understanding of both the Mughal perspective and how others viewed them.

An initial glance into the existing research on Mughal history in general, and on Mughal art and architecture in particular, allows recognising that this branch of academia is a well-established field that has withstood the trials of time and continues to evolve while maintaining its relevance. In stark contrast, detailed studies on Mughal ideologies and cosmological doctrines are limited and infrequent, particularly when it comes to the topic of sun or light veneration. With sun veneration in the Mughal case often receiving merely a passing mention in many comprehensive works, only a few scholars had ventured out to fully investigate how and why these symbolisms came into being. Catherine B Asher's book chapter, "A Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine", continues to be a seminal work on this topic which analyses the origins of sun

veneration in the Mughal Empire and the reasons for its proliferation.[7] However, since the chapter focuses primarily on the principal factors for the development of the ideology during the reign of Akbar and its continuation to some extent in the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the evolution of these solar symbolisms in the later period, particularly the decline of the ideology, remains unexplored. Anna Malecka's paper, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones: A Preliminary Note" is another prominent study focused on solar symbolisms which analyses the Mughal thrones through literary and visual evidence to establish how it was viewed as the celestial seat of the solar emperor.[8] While Ali Anooshahr's paper "Science at the court of the cosmocrat: Mughal India, 1531–56" provides an in depth look at some of the solar based practices in the court of Humayun,[9] Audrey Trushcke's paper "Translating the solar cosmology of sacred kingship" explored the role of the sun in Mughal sacred kingship under Humayun's son, Akbar.[10] Furthermore, Azfar A. Moin's book *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* explored different aspects of sacred and millennial kingship that had developed through the blending of sainthood and monarchy in the Mughal and Safavid empires in the early modern period.[11] While this book was highly informative on many aspects of the cosmological ideologies and belief systems prevalent in these empires at the time, the emphasis does not remain on the solar symbolism element that was part of the sacred kingship aspect of the Mughal emperor. Of the many studies by Ebba Koch that aided in understanding diverse aspects of both Mughal art and architecture for this

[7] Catherine B. Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine." In *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[8] Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones: A Preliminary Note," *Arts Asiatiques* 54, no. 1 (1999): pp. 24-32.

[9] Ali Anooshahr, "Science at the Court of the Cosmocrat: Mughal India, 1531–56," *The Indian Economic & Social History Review* 54, no. 3 (2017): pp. 295-316.

[10] Audrey Truschke, "Translating the Solar Cosmology of Sacred Kingship," *The Medieval History Journal* 19, no. 1 (2016): pp. 136-141.

[11] A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Anooshahr, Ali. "Book Review: A. Azfar Moin, The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam." *The Medieval History Journal* 18, no. 1 (April 2015): 183–91.

thesis, Koch's book chapter on "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque" was pivotal for its contributions towards understanding the relationship of Mughal audience halls and the sun.[12] Works by many other prominent scholars touched upon some aspects of solar symbolisms in their works but their research do not take solar symbolisms as the point of focus.[13]

Comprehensive works on Mughal history played a decisive role in aiding the attempts to understand how kingship and the imperial identity evolved across the years in response to the varied developments of the time. In this regard, Richard M. Eaton's book, *India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765,*[14] has been outstanding as a source that covered history of the Indian subcontinent across a large period which included the majority of the Mughal reign, and consequently, is a crucial reference for many sections of this thesis. Asher's book, *Architecture of Mughal India*,[15] and Ebba Koch's works on Mughal architecture provided the comprehensive outlook necessary for understanding architecture in the empire.[16]

Coming to the decline of the solar symbolisms that commenced during the reign of Aurangzeb, Audrey Truschke's book, *Aurangzeb: The Life and Legacy of India's Most Controversial King,*[17] and Samira Sheikh's paper on "Aurangzeb as Seen from

[12] Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, ed. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt, 313-38. (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[13] Gülru Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): pp. 303-342; Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[14] Richard M Eaton, *India in The Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019).

[15] Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[16] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526 - 1858)* (Munich: Prestel, 1991).

[17] Audrey Truschke, *Aurangzeb: The Life and Legacy of India's Most Controversial King* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

Gujarat: Shi'i and Millenarian Challenges to Mughal Sovereignty"[18] provided much needed insights into the diverse aspects to be considered while assessing Aurangzeb's reign and legacy. An assortment of sources provided further insight into what transpired in subcontinent following Aurangzeb's death in 1707.[19]

Furthermore, the massive collections of Mughal paintings spread out across museums and archives around the world, currently existing in digitized form, was immensely helpful as these paintings are primary sources of how the Mughals saw themselves and as such, excellent sources to see how many of the solar symbolisms were overtly applied. Although not all the sources that were helpful to understanding the topic of study are limited to these aforementioned works, the numerous other scholarly works that gave clarity to diverse aspects coming under each section are credited in references. The chapter breakdown follows to provide a walk through on how to navigate the thesis.

1.2. Aim and Scope

Studies on Mughal art and architecture and studies on Mughal sacred kingship and solar symbolisms separately constitute established routes in academia and continue to inform our understanding of these topics with established points of convergence and divergence. However, these lines of scholarly analysis have seldom interacted and converged. Within this framework, in order to attempt to bridge this gap, this thesis aims to contextualize the characteristics of solar symbolisms that had developed and evolved throughout the reign of the Mughal dynasty (1526-1857), with the focus being on not only its growth and decline but also on its application in Mughal art and architecture. This study will therefore offer a fresh outlook serving to coalesce separate corners of literature on art and architectural history into one connected whole, which will enable the exploration of these topics through the lens

[18] Samira Sheikh, "Aurangzeb as Seen from Gujarat: Shi'i and Millenarian Challenges to Mughal Sovereignty," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28, no. 3 (2018): pp. 557-581.

[19] William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy: The East India Company, Corporate Violence, and the Pillage of an Empire* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019); William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and the Fall of Delhi, 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006); Karen Leonard, "The 'Great Firm' Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, no. 2 (1979): pp. 151-167.

of solar imagery and symbolisms. Additionally, although the most overt instances of these symbolisms burst onto the stage only from mid-sixteenth century and started its slow, but steady, decline from late seventeenth century onwards, the thesis will attempt to cover the life span of the Mughal dynasty in relation to the trajectory of sun veneration throughout its existence in the empire. This approach contributes towards building the most comprehensive case to analyse both the growth and the decline of Mughal sun veneration. By doing so, this thesis will also aim to bridge another gap which persists on this topic, i.e. lack of a detailed analysis of the decline of solar symbolisms, and therefore, be the first study to attempt to uncover the reasons and the implications of the decline of solar symbolisms in Mughal art and architecture.

In other words, the thesis aims to offer a coherent narrative on the sparse literature on solar symbolisms existing in the Mughal empire through analysing the wide range of available evidence, primarily from art and architecture, which otherwise remained as highly particular case studies across academia. The study on solar symbolism and its implications, which often dictated how the Mughal emperors tended to portray themselves, directly holds immense implications on how the art and architecture developed in the empire and the close associations it held with kingship, thus complicating our current scholarly understanding of Mughal art and architecture in itself. As such, the study on solar symbolisms and light veneration in conjunction with sacred kingship in the Mughal Empire attempts to contribute to the corpus of Mughal art and architectural history by bridging the existing gaps in order to generate a more holistic understanding, thereby adding a further piece into the grand jigsaw puzzle that is Mughal history.

1.3. Chapter Breakdown

This thesis is divided into five chapters followed by the conclusion. Chapter 1 provides the framework for the general introduction to the topic of research by establishing the aims, scope, relevance and timeframe under consideration for the study. Furthermore, the existing literature on Mughal solar symbolisms, both primary and secondary, are elucidated to provide clarity on the research approach and hence pave the way for the second part of the thesis.

Chapter 2 serves as the first step into the world of solar symbolisms. The chapter begins with the antecedents to solar symbolisms followed by a detailed analysis on the various factors that propelled the proliferation of solar symbolisms among the Mughals. This allows for a greater understanding of the setting that enabled the development and proliferation of solar symbolisms under Akbar (r. 1556-1605). Consequently, the chapter builds the foundation for a detailed look into the occurrences of solar symbolisms in the art and architecture of the Mughal Empire, which makes up subsequent chapters of the thesis.

Chapters 3 and 4 analyse instances of occurrences of solar symbolisms in Mughal art and architecture respectively. Through the parameters analysed in both these chapters, the possible answers to the research question on how solar symbolisms shaped Mughal art and architecture is evaluated. The general theme followed in the organisation of subsections in both the chapters begin with the parameters that would have been most public and accessible to the subjects of the empire and then proceed to the most private, which in this case belongs to the realm of the emperor. Chapter 3 begins with solar symbols on Mughal imperial flags, insignia and coinage and progresses onto various instances of solar imagery in Mughal miniature paintings which circulated only within a select upper section of Mughal society. The chapter goes on to analyse the case of the various instances of solar fauna that had penetrated various fields and culminates by examining the solar symbolisms present in imperial thrones. Similarly, Chapter 4 opens with the analysis of the daily public ceremony of jharokha darshan and how it shaped space. Other parts of the chapter include analysis of solar symbolisms in the audience halls and culminates with the effects of these symbolisms on Mughal tomb architecture.

Chapter 5 analyses the eventual decline of the solar symbolisms throughout the life of the dynasty, which begins with Aurangzeb's rule (1658-1707) and goes on to dissipate following the disintegration of the empire after him. The chapter will look to identify the reasons that caused this downfall in sun veneration while trying to ascertain how much of the decline could be attributed to changes in Mughal policies and outlook. Chapter 6 pertains to the conclusion where the findings and inferences of the study are elaborated. All chapters taken together allow us to discern possible inferences on the research questions of how the rise and fall of solar symbolisms

occurred in the Mughal Empire and how the analysis of solar ideology can contribute to the scholarly understanding of Mughal architecture and Mughal art.

CHAPTER 2

THE ADVENT OF MUGHAL SOLAR VENERATION

2.1. Antecedents to Mughal Solar Symbolisms

While sun veneration and worship was part of many cultures since the earliest times, for the purpose of this study, the emphasis is kept on the possible antecedents that would have most likely contributed to the development of both the ideology as well as related motifs in the Mughal dynasty. In this regard, it is essential to explore the antecedents to solar symbolisms in the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia and Iran, in order to obtain a more comprehensive outlook on the solar ideologies that had transcended and survived in organised religions and societies that most likely influenced the Mughals in the early modern period.

At the outset, the land that the Mughals established their domains in, i.e. Indian subcontinent, had a long history with sun worship commencing from at least the Vedic period (1500-500 BC) if not before, which had a profound influence on several aspects that contributed to development of solar symbolisms among the Mughals. In India, the Sun God (Surya) (Fig.1) was one of the principal deities in Vedic Hinduism[20], while kingship was equated with the sun,[21] with its practice in the region including the norm of Indian kings claiming lineage from the sun and therefore a place in the solar dynasty (suryavamsha).[22] This solar dynasty was also

[20] David Adams Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 369.

[21] Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), 228; Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 69.

[22] Audrey Truschke, "Translating the Solar Cosmology of Sacred Kingship," *The Medieval History Journal* 19, no. 1 (2016): pp. 136-141, 140.

believed to have some important Gods who were born in it, which included Ram, who is an avatar of Vishnu and the hero in the Indian epic of Ramayana.[23] Leeming notes that some of the qualities and aspects that were initially associated with Surya in the Vedic period came to be associated with Vishnu later.[24] This is important because Audrey Truschke, from her detailed study on Persian and Sanskrit texts in the Mughal court, notes that the Mughal Emperor Akbar was identified as an incarnation of Vishnu in these texts,[25] whereby Akbar was in a similar position as Ram who belonged to the solar dynasty.[26] While these instances from Akbar's reign will be covered in detail in the upcoming sections, it is important to understand that the king was considered as a God by the later Vedic period,[27] which was summed up in the legal text from the period, Manusmriti, as:

> Because a king is made from particles of these lords of the gods, therefore he surpasses all living beings in brilliant energy, and, like the Sun, he burns eyes and hearts, and no one on earth is able even to look at him. Through his special power he becomes Fire and Wind; he is the Sun and the Moon, and he is (Yama) the King of Justice.[28]

This passage from the Manusmriti is important as the concept of the king shining forth divine light is something that can be observed in other cultural backgrounds that the Mughals had roots in as well. For example, this practise finds resonance in the Mongol custom of referring to the "golden face" of the ruler that shone forth "sun-like brilliance".[29] We find the similarities to this case in the early Mughals in

[23] Leeming, 335.

[24] Leeming, 369.

[25] Audrey Truschke, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 205, 209, 213; Truschke, "Translating the Solar Cosmology of Sacred Kingship," 140.

[26] Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, ed. Joseph Campbell (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 218.

[27] Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 68.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Peter Golden, "Courts and Court Culture in the Proto-urban and Urban Developments among the Pre-Chinggisid Turkic Peoples". In *Turko-Mongol Rulers, Cities and City Life*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 56.

both Humayun, who is described as "with the light of the world-adorning Sun of his face," and whose "forehead shines like the Sun",[30] while Humayun's wife, i.e. Akbar's mother, is also described to have emitted divine light from her forehead when she was pregnant with Akbar.[31] From both these instances, it is possible to see that Akbar was claiming these solar qualities from both his parents. In this regard, it seems that Akbar leans to both his Central Asian roots and Hinduism to associate himself with the sun.

Figure 1. Surya, the Sun God.
Description: Painted in the Punjab Hills by Guler or Basohli in 1740-1750.
Source: © Christie's 2021. Accessed August 21, 2021, https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-6195346.

[30] Khwandamir, *Qanun-i Humayuni*, trans. Baini Prashad (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940), 38, 65.

[31] Abul Fazl, *The Akbar Nama of Abu-l-Fazl*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 1 (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1907), 44.

Central Asia had sun veneration as early as the sixth century, seen in the case of the Eastern Turks (552 – 744 CE) who ruled the Mongolian steppes.[32] While their enthronement ceremony is noted to have had a ritual component involving sun worship,[33] more relevant to the Mughal case is a peculiar similarity between mythical lore from both regions. This interesting overlap between belief systems in the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia comes from the legends of Karna and Alanquwa. Karna comes from the Indian epic of Mahabharata where he is the demigod son, born out of the miraculous conception of Princess Kunti with Surya (Sun God),[34] which Truschke notes that the texts from Akbar's reign dwelled on at some length.[35] Meanwhile, Alanquwa is a Mongol princess from Mughal ancestral lore whom Akbar traces his lineage to, who also had divine conception through light.[36]

The aspect of lineage was an important tool used during Akbar's reign that connected many of the antecedents to build the identity of Akbar as an emanation of the light of God and as a superior being specially chosen by God to rule.[37] Akbar's lineage is traced back to Timur and Genghis Khan, and subsequently to Alanquwa, whereby the lineage is further traced back through prophets of the Quran and the Old Testament to reach Adam and ultimately back to the sun itself, the source of

[32] Manabu Waida, "Notes on Sacred Kingship in Central Asia," *Numen* 23, no. 3 (1976): pp. 179-190, 179, 180.

[33] Ibid, 188.

[34] Leeming, 226.

[35] Truschke, "Translating the Solar Cosmology of Sacred Kingship," 140.

[36] Catherine B. Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine." In *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 170; Audrey Truschke, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 205, 209, 213;

[37] Fazl, 37; Irfan Habib, "A Political Theory for the Mughal Empire — A Study Of The Ideas Of Abu'l Fazl," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 59 (1998): pp. 329-340, 333; Asher Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 40.

daylight.[38] In Akbarnama, Alanquwa is said to have given birth to three sons out of which the son named "Nairun" (Light produced) goes on to become the ancestor of the Mughal House.[39] Furthermore, the book goes on to indicate that concealed light was passed on through each generation of rulers in this lineage until it reached Akbar, where it came to be revealed.[40] The references to light imagery continue in references to the divine light described in multiple events around the birth of Akbar as well. These include instances where Akbar's mother, Miryam Makani, was noted to have been blessed by the Light of God that made her forehead emit the divine light while she was pregnant with Akbar and also an instance where Akbar's wet-nurse is reported to have had a divine light approach and enter her bosom.[41] What can be observed from these instances is an attempt to instil divinity to the emperor and use of light imagery as a source for instilling that divinity. In this regard, antecedents from ancestral Mughal lands played an important part.

However, the influences were not restricted to just the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia. Considering the fact that both Babur and Humayun had sought Safavid aid at different points in their reigns,[42] it would not be wrong to assume that the Mughals were aware of sacred kingship traditions in the Safavid case to some extent, which in turn would have had some influences from former Timurid kingship traditions as well.[43] While the Mughals traced their lineage to Timur, it is possible that the Safavid influences on the Mughals would have been more on the subject of

[38] Fazl, 37; Gülru Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): pp. 303-342, 314; Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones: A Preliminary Note," *Arts Asiatiques* 54, no. 1 (1999): pp. 24-32;

[39] Asher, "A Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 170.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Fazl, 44.

[42] A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 104.

[43] Ibid.

sainthood and kingship,[44] rather than one related to sun veneration. However, some traditions from Persia that had associations with the sun due to its Zoroastrian roots, such as the Persian New Year (Nawruz), became an important festival related to kingship that was celebrated by the Mughals.[45]

The approach towards light in Islam and its philosophical refinement among renowned philosophers in Islamic lands was also a likely antecedent that played a role in development of the ideology in the Mughal case. For instance, the Verse of Light (24:35) in the Quran says:

> Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, and the glass is like a glittering star… Light upon light, Allah guides to His light whomsoever He pleases and gives the examples to mankind. Allah has knowledge of everything.[46]

While the Verse primarily indicates the light of religious knowledge that is transmitted from God to prophets and believers, Sufi doctrines on God as prime Light is also referenced here.[47] By the tenth century CE, traditional Islamic literature of the Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa (The Epistles of the Brethren of Purity) gives this concept further form.[48] In their order of the ontological hierarchy of matter, all celestial spheres and stars were ranked above the levels of matter that contained natural objects, but at the same time, these stars and celestial spheres were just below the divine level of Prime Matter and hence closer to it than other levels.[49] While this idea, which translates to the sun being a creation of God that was closer to unity than mankind itself, certainly aligns with the concept of sun veneration among the

[44] Moin, 16; Ali Anooshahr, "Book Review: A. Azfar Moin, The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam." *The Medieval History Journal* 18, no. 1 (April 2015): 183–91, 184.

[45] Moin, 235.

[46] *The Qur'an*, 24:35; Oliver Leaman, *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2006), 352.

[47] Leaman, 352.

[48] Samer Akkach, "Aspect of the Traditional Islamic Philosophy of Art," *The Islamic Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1993): pp. 45-62, 45, 48, 49.

[49] Ibid, 48, 49.

Mughals, there is little evidence to show that these teachings in itself had wide acceptance among the Mughals.

However, a philosophical treatise that had a wide acceptance in the Mughal court was the illumination principles of Suhrawardi (d. 1191). Asher notes that the presence of scholars in Akbar's court who were followers of the divine illumination philosophies of Suhrawardi was a crucial parameter that enabled for proliferation of solar symbolism ideology.[50] While the concept of light was integral to this ideology as it equated all existence as a reflection of God's brilliant light, it also indicated that the wise, just, benevolent and powerful ruler was one who was imbued with divine light, which were qualities associated with Akbar when he was presented as a divinely illumined being in the Mughal case.[51] Furthermore, the tracing of lineage was also brought under the purview of this ideology as divine light was considered to be passed on through each generation.[52] This was seen in the previous paragraphs regarding Akbar's parents, but it also included tracing the trail of this divine light through Mughal ancestors of the likes of Timur, Genghis Khan, Nairun, Alanquwa, going all the way back to Adam and subsequently to the sun itself.[53] Furthermore, teachings of other philosophers such as Ibn al Arabi (d. 1240) also played a part for its pantheistic doctrines that had found a fascination in the Akbar's reign, which moved away from a more narrow understanding of Islam followed by the clergy.[54]

In essence, establishing of Mughal domains in northern India set the stage for a pastiche where varied cultural influences from the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia and Iran came together, allowing for its moulding under Akbar to build a kingship identity connected to light and the sun, a theme that existed in one form or the other in all these lands. In other words, the antecedents to solar symbolisms, although

[50] Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 161, 162.

[51] Ibid, 169.

[52] Ibid, 169, 170.

[53] Ibid, 170.

[54] Richard M Eaton, *India in The Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 241.

arising from a large spectrum of cultural identities spread out across diverse cultures, both in distance and time, had some areas of intersection that enabled its collation as necessity required of it. While this is not an exhaustive list of all possible antecedents that would have been known to the Mughals at the time, it addresses the fundamental factors that are most likely to have influenced the formation of this ideology. Subsequently, rise of solar symbolisms among the Mughals and its proliferation follows the summary of the major political developments in the empire in the hundred years between mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries.

2.2. Concise Summary of Relevant Developments Between 1555 and 1657

Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, had an impressive lineage descending from both Timur and Genghis Khan.[55] Following Babur's conquest of North India in 1526, the Mughals settled in to rule over Lodhi territories while setting the stage for Mughal successors to expand in all directions.[56] The land that Babur had won over comprised of a significant non-Muslim majority (largely Hindus) dominating its population, [57] which meant that if the Mughals intended to rule for long, they had to devise a way to effectively administer a vibrant population which differed in most aspects, from religion and ethnicity to language and culture. One part of the solution to this type of a problem generally involved building an identity for the sovereign that attributed sacredness whereby the sovereign could transcend boundaries and rule effectively. However, a prerequisite to being able to build such sacred kingship identities and traditions was the overall stability of the realm and time for the ruler to consolidate the domains and its people. In Babur's reign, spent mostly conquering and consolidating demesne, time proved to be inadequate as Babur's untimely death (d. 1530) barely four years into getting established in India meant that the mantle of leadership passed on to Humayun.[58] In Humayun's decade long reign, the first

[55] Lisa Golombek and Ebba Koch, "The Mughals, Uzbeks, and the Timurid Legacy," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood and Necipoğlu Gülru, 1st ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), pp. 811-845, 811; Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, 7.

[56] Golombek and Koch, 811; Asher, 1.

[57] John F Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1; Asher, 19.

[58] Eaton, 213.

instances of attempts at building a sacred kingship identity that involved glimpses of sun and light veneration become visible, which is explored in detail in the next section. However, losing his domains in 1540 to the Sur dynasty and seeking refuge in the Safavid court meant that this project was put on hold.[59] While Humayun's return and recapture of former territories in 1555 reopened the possibilities again, it was cut short following Humayun's early demise in 1556.[60] Although Humayun lived hardly a year after the re-conquest of his former domains, both the army in his possession and the systems that were in place by 1555 allowed his son, Akbar, to undertake successive conquests in the upcoming decades.[61]

Akbar, the third monarch of the Mughal dynasty, succeeded his father Humayun as the emperor in 1556, at the age of thirteen.[62] The territories he had inherited from his father were at the time fiercely contested by various groups in a tumultuous period of conquests.[63] During his nearly half century long reign, Akbar greatly expanded and consolidated the empire that led to the growth of the Mughal realm from a regime trying to survive among a multitude of hostile polities to a multiregional empire spanning much of the northern Indian subcontinent.[64] As Akbar prevailed over these initial adversities, an even more daunting task awaited him; one where Akbar had to simultaneously consolidate his rule in his domains and undertake the expansion of his demesne over a populace that was a mosaic of religions, cultures and ethnicities. This meant that accommodating the very many diverse groups was the ideal approach to rule that would allow for sustained peace and stability for the nascent empire and Akbar's policies indicate that this was the approach that was preferred.

[59] Richards, 9, 11; Asher, 32; Eaton, 217.

[60] Eaton, 220.

[61] Ibid, 223.

[62] Richards, 12; Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal Throne: The Saga Of India's Great Emperors* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 115, 116; Eaton, 223.

[63] Eaton 223; Richards, 13.

[64] Vincent A Smith, *The Oxford History of India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002); Richards, 12.

This could be observed in policies that were adopted as early as at the start of the 1560s. The most standout among them was forming of marital alliances with the Hindu Rajput chiefs, which subsequently lead to close Mughal-Rajput cooperation that would shape the history of the region and also lead to a greater diffusion of value systems and practices from those regions and religions into the Mughal court.[65] This was clear from how Akbar took measures to abolish discriminatory practices against non-Muslims in his realm, such as abolishing the collecting of both the jizya tax from non-Muslims in 1564 and the pilgrimage taxes on non-Muslims in 1563.[66]

However, the mere absorption of indigenous groups and institutions into the Mughal imperial machinery alone would not legitimise the image of the Mughal Emperor as one acceptable to the majority of the subjects.[67] It is possible that some sections of the populace at the time would have considered Akbar as one among the many rulers who were successively establishing rather short-lived kingdoms. Therefore, while accommodating the various groups through alliances was a necessity for the survival of the empire, there needed to be a change to the ruler's image and his mode of authority itself so as to inspire loyalty and admiration among the diverse groups of subjects. This was where solar symbolisms came into play.

The fate of solar symbolisms among the Mughals also appears to follow the general prosperity of the empire, often concentrating itself around the emperor and his imperial centre rather than farther from it. In this regard, the seeds of solar symbolisms that began with Humayun, went on to flourish and become a solid part of the foundation on which the Akbar's divine identity was built on, which subsequently went on to evolve further under his successors, which is covered in detail later in this chapter.[68] By the end of the sixteenth century, the importance of solar symbolisms in conveying the idea of sacred kingship was so entrenched that

[65] Eaton, 241.

[66] Eaton, 241.

[67] Karen Leonard, "The 'Great Firm' Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, no. 2 (1979): pp. 151-167, 152.

[68] Rise of solar symbolisms during Akbar's reign is explained in detail later in this chapter.

even an heir in rebellion against the emperor, enacted all solar themed rituals including the jharokha darshan and distributing jharokha portraits among followers as part of the proclamations of power.[69] The case in point was Jahangir in 1599 as he rebelled against Akbar.[70] In the case of Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's heir apparent and favourite, another instance of this trend is on display where the heir was already using solar symbols such as a radiant halo to adorn his head while still only a prince, something which Aurangzeb utilised to allege Dara of deviancy during the succession wars.[71]

At the outset, Akbar remained innately curious towards learning and engaging with all religions that he came across, which was mostly the policy that was continued under his son and successor, Jahangir, as he allowed all religions to flourish and even opposed the conversion between any.[72] Like Akbar, Jahangir had ascended the throne in 1605 without direct contenders to compete with since his brother, Daniyal, had died in 1604 from alcoholism while Jahangir's eldest son, Khusrau, who attempted to mount an opposition, did not find support and was subsequently arrested and partially blinded for his troubles.[73] This allowed Jahangir to inherit the empire without having to appeal to the sensibilities of any of the conservative groups within the realm, whose support he otherwise might have required in the event of a succession war. The importance that a succession war gave to various groups, such as the conservative factions that could mobilise support, is best demonstrated from Shah Jahan's accession onwards since there was a contender to the throne mounting a challenge in each case. This pattern goes on to achieve its biggest expression during the succession war among Shah Jahan's four sons in 1657 where Aurangzeb

[69] Kavita Singh, "As Jahangir Contemplates a Portrait of His Father, a Reversal of Our Ideas about Dreams and Reality." Scroll.in. Accessed July 25, 2021. https://scroll.in/article/1000463/as-jahagir-contemplates-a-portrait-of-his-father-a-reversal-of-our-ideas-about-dreams-and-reality.

[70] Ibid.

[71] "Prince Dara Shikoh as a Royal Ascetic," Prahlad Bubbar Gallery, accessed August 21, 2021, https://www.prahladbubbar.com/research/prince-dara-shikoh-as-a-royal-ascetic/.

[72] Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*, 291.

[73] Eaton, 252, 254.

wins support partly due to his self-fashioning as the correct Muslim, which was in stark contrast to his main rival, Dara Shikoh, who had fully embraced the earlier solar symbolism laden sacred kingship traditions of his predecessors and was subsequently labelled by Aurangzeb as a deviant.[74] In essence, among the Mughals in this period, the lack of a contender to the throne during succession who could serve as a rallying point for the anti-incumbency elements often led to the continuation of existing policies as a viable option that ensured greater stability of the empire.

Jahangir's reign of twenty-two years, starting in 1605, commenced on far more favourable conditions than what Akbar had. Jahangir had inherited a well-functioning imperial state that was already well established and even had the foundations on which he could continue to build the sacredness aspect of his identity. By the time Shah Jahan ascended the throne in 1628, he ascended to the helm of an empire that was at its height in terms of wealth, prosperity, stability, territory and cultural attainment, which were perfect conditions for further developing the emperor's exaltedness.[75] However, Shah Jahan treaded a different path from his predecessors in terms of his approach to religion.[76] Shah Jahan opted for an outward appearance of returning 'to an Islamic political culture' whereas he simultaneously went on to further expand on his sacred kingship identity, which could be seen in art and architecture from his time.[77]

Like Akbar, both Jahangir and Shah Jahan would go on to claim to be emperor of both the worlds, earthly and spiritual.[78] However, the growth that the ideology of sun veneration underwent under Akbar's reign, would lose momentum and not change

[74] Ibid, 333-34

[75] Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, ed. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt, 313-38. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 313; Eaton, 280.

[76] Eaton, 291.

[77] Eaton, 280, 291.

[78] Heike Franke, "Emperors of Ṣūrat and Maʿnī: Jahangir and Shah Jahan as Temporal and Spiritual Rulers," *Muqarnas Online* 31, no. 1 (2014): pp. 123-149, 144, 145.

drastically in terms of ideology in the reigns of Akbar's immediate successors.[79] The significant change that did transpire in solar symbolisms during reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan was on the aspect of visual portrayal and presenting of the emperor with these symbolisms and the subsequent enhancements to the identity of the emperor through this ideology, which had not reached full maturity under Akbar's reign.[80] However, a drastic change in ideology does appear in the reign of Shah Jahan's successor, Aurangzeb, who after winning the fierce succession war against his three brothers, ascended the throne in 1658 while imprisoning Shah Jahan, who would ultimately die in 1666.[81] While the decline of solar symbolisms in Aurangzeb's reign is examined in detail in Chapter 5, to gain an understanding of the beginnings of the ideology and its practices, it is essential to begin exploring the humble beginnings of solar symbolisms under Humayun.

2.3. Early Beginnings Under Humayun

> Humayun, one of the greatest kings in the world, had five lac [100,000] troops and 12,000 elephants. Then … he became so vain as to claim divine powers. His occasional appearance to the people was described as divine effulgence (*jalwa-i quddusi*). In his entire dominion and in his army, the Shari 'at was abrogated and heresy (*ilhad*) and evil prevailed.[82]

Thus wrote Shah Tahmasp, the Safavid Emperor of Persia, to his nemesis, the Ottoman Emperor, Sultan Suleiman, around 1554.[83] Considering the period of tensions that prevailed between both these empires at the time, the mention of "divine effulgence" among the Mughals, who lived at the other side of the continent, is rather peculiar. Shah Tahmasp merely intended to use the example of the Humayun, who had lost his Indian dominions in 1540 and ended up seeking Safavid

[79] Ibid, 145.

[80] Franke, 145.

[81] Eaton, 334.

[82] Riazul Islam, *A Calendar of Documents on Indo-Persian Relations: (1500-1750)*, vol. 2 (Tehran: Iranian Culture Foundation, 1979), 293, 294; As cited in: Moin, 107.

[83] Moin, 107, 291.

aid, to warn the Ottoman Sultan that he could endure a similar destiny.[84] Although Humayun would go on to retake his Indian domains by 1555 with the help of Safavid aid that he had received, Humayun's demise within the next year left his teenage son and heir, Akbar, with the daunting task of consolidating rule.[85] Regardless, this correspondence between the two emperors provided a unique insight into how the seeds of what would later grow into solar symbolisms were viewed by the Safavid ruler. In his rather troublesome reign, what gained Humayun notoriety in Safavid eyes was closely related to the attempts at divinity that he made through creating certain planetary associations with kingship, particularly involving the sun. While these early attempts did not directly materialise into the solar symbolisms of the likes that was visible in Akbar's reign, it did lay the field that allowed the seeds of solar symbolisms to flourish after him. Consequently, instances of these early associations to the sun during Humayun's reign will be the focus of this section.

The initial ten-year reign of Humayun resulted in several attempts to bestow divinity to the emperor, which at times included overt associations to the sun. Khwandamir's book on the reign of Humayun, Qanun-i-Humayuni, describes Humayun as 'the Sun of the heaven' or 'the Sun of heavenly fortune', [86] and that the emperor's face "shines like the sun" or that it "gives light to the Sun" in multiple instances throughout the book.[87] However, associating the emperor with the sun went beyond literary metaphors and came to be applied in even how Humayun's court and its practices were arranged. [88] Humayun's court during the 1530s followed a cosmos theme where the emperor and courtiers occupied places on the courtly carpet which

[84] Moin, 107.

[85] Eaton, 220, 223.

[86] Khwandamir. Qanun-i-Humayuni. Translated by Baini Prashad. Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940, 14, 21, 22, 24.

[87] Khwandamir, 38, 65, 76.

[88] Eaton, Richard M. India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019, 221.

bore a model of the universe with concentric, distinctly coloured circles.[89] In this scheme, Humayun identified himself as the sun and occupied the corresponding central circle in the model, which was coloured golden.[90] Furthermore, the emperor and the court also wore colour-coded clothes that corresponded to each day of the week and its matching planetary associations.[91] For example, Khwandamir states that Humayun used to wear yellow coloured clothing, embroidered with gold, as he attended court on the day accorded to the sun.[92] Khwandamir also notes that the advantage of holding court on Sunday was that "Sunday appertains to Sun, who in accordance with the pleasure of the Almighty regulates the destinies of the rulers and the Sultans."[93] Furthermore, the emperor was also known to have participated in an earlier form of the jharokha darshan ceremony,[94] appearing daily with the position of the sun in the sky, which was codified and developed further into a grand ritual during Akbar's reign.[95]

In essence, it can be noticed that the beginnings of solar symbolisms had its roots during the turbulent reign of Humayun. Although it achieved codification and proliferated only under his son, Akbar, it will not be wrong to assume that Akbar would have had some knowledge about the cosmologically themed practices that his father had in his reign. Nevertheless, Humayun's short reign meant that the troublesome task of consolidating rule and transforming the nascent kingdom into a powerful empire fell on the shoulders of a thirteen-year-old Akbar, who subsequently excelled at the task considerably early on in his reign. This left Akbar with time to

[89] Anooshahr, Ali. "Science at the Court of The Cosmocrat: Mughal India, 1531–56." The Indian Economic & Social History Review 54, no. 3 (2017): 295; Eaton, 221.

[90] Moin, 134, 136, 235; Anooshahr, 295; Eaton, 222.

[91] Anooshahr, 295; Moin, 134; Eaton, 165.

[92] Khwandamir, 52, 81; Moin, 135.

[93] Khwandamir, 27.

[94] Jharokha Darshan ceremony is explained in detail in Chapter 4.

[95] Eaton, 222; Anooshahr, 295.

experiment on developing his identity as the divinely illumined sovereign who was above religious and sectarian divisions. This is explored in detail in the next section.

2.4. Prelude to Solar Symbolisms: Akbar and Kingship

The multitude of factors that had enabled the rapid growth of the Mughal Empire during Akbar's reign to become the dominant power in the Indian subcontinent continues to be a topic of scholarly research since decades. However, since a detailed exploration of those factors remain outside the scope of this study, the section will focus on the solar symbolisms and how it came to enhance sacred kingship practices that took shape as the empire expanded under Akbar. Consequently, the focus of this section will be to explore how the seeds of solar symbolisms that had its humble beginnings during the turbulent reign of Humayun had come to flourish, be codified and assimilated into an integral part of what became the Mughal sacred kingship traditions under Akbar.

Sixteenth century in north India was a time rife with cosmic and sainthood ideologies, where the intermixing of these aspects with tradition and religion was a kingship device already in use by various groups.[96] Additionally, this interweaving was a proven method of strengthening the ruler's authority while providing much needed legitimacy to the rule.[97] To add to this mix, the Mughals, even prior to their coming to India, were by no measure a regime that strictly held on to just one cultural system.[98] Their exposure to the varied local non-Islamic practices across Central Asia meant that India is not likely to have stood out as a completely alien world.[99] At the same time, this also indicated that the Mughals themselves had a level of flexibility to how they approached kingship and authority in general.[100] The difference can be seen in how their contemporaries in Iran, the Safavids, went on to

[96] Moin, 18, 21.

[97] Leonard, 152.

[98] Moin, 34.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid, 18, 34.

have the heterogeneity restricted through forced conversion of large sections of the local populace to Twelver Shi'ism, whereas the Mughals did not impose Islam on its local population in the same manner.[101] The combination of all these factors meant that Akbar was in a position to be able to eclectically formulate the manner of sacred kingship traditions for his dynasty from a pool of traditions stemming from the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia and Iran, which would enable the Mughal Emperor to be viewed as someone who embodied divinity. In this regard, solar symbolisms were a crucial aspect of this 'brand-building' process that aimed to portray the emperor as not just the emperor of Hindustan but as a cosmic ruler[102] who considered himself to be closest to God and whose rule was divinely ordained and just, essentially blurring the boundaries between royalty and divinity.[103]

A prominent instance of how the Mughals struck this delicate balance during Akbar's reign was best observed in the case of how the Mughals, with their Central Asian background of horse-based warrior culture, adapted to and assimilated the elephant-based kingship symbolisms and traditions of the Indian subcontinent.[104] In the subcontinent, the elephant itself represented kingship, as it was the mount of the king.[105] This symbolic use of elephants to express the power of the ruler led to a dilemma for the Mughals who had initially followed a somewhat religious outlook upon their arrival to India under Babur.[106] This was because the elephant was attributed with negative connotations in the Quran as an animal with evil

[101] Moin, 34-35.

[102] Jos Gommans. Review of Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court., by Audrey Truschke. *The American Historical Review* 122, no. 5, (December 2017): 1584–85.

[103] Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 173, 186.

[104] Jane Buckingham, "Symbolism and Power: Elephants and Gendered Authority in the Mughal World," in *Conflict, Negotiation, and Coexistence: Rethinking Human-Elephant Relations in South Asia*, ed. Piers Locke and Jane Buckingham (New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1, 4.

[105] Anooshahr, Ali. "The Elephant and Imperial Continuities in North India, 1200–1600CE." The Indian Economic & Social History Review 57, no. 2, 2020, 147.

[106] Ibid, 141.

associations.[107] The "Chapter of the Elephant" (Surah Al Fil) in Quran begins with the verses: "Have you not considered, [O Muhammad], how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant?"[108] The Surah narrated the story of the Abyssinian general Abraha who marched on Mecca with his army comprising of elephants, which was decimated by a swarm of birds sent by God that pelted clay stones, leading to its complete annihilation.[109] Thus the dilemma remained for the Mughals on whether using the elephant as a symbol of sovereignty as per the Indian tradition would make them appear as inimical towards Islam.[110] But the idea of the elephant mounted ruler was so entrenched in the Indian psyche that it was essential to utilise it if they were to establish themselves in the subcontinent and gain greater legitimacy in the eyes of the populace that they ruled over.[111]

Ascending the throne, Akbar had to face the same dilemma regarding the elephant that had troubled both his father and grandfather.[112] The solution to this was in the sacred kingship traditions that came to be developed under Akbar, a significant part of which included solar symbolisms. According to these kingship traditions, the emperor was viewed as an emanation of the light of God and as such, a superior, divine being specially chosen by God to rule.[113] This placed the Mughal Emperor as the closest living being to God who could also directly communicate with God, thereby bypassing the evil connotations that was associated with the elephant.[114]

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[107] Ibid.

[108] *The Quran*, 105:1.

[109] Oliver Leaman, *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2006), 129.

[110] Anooshahr, 151.

[111] Anooshahr, 151.

[112] Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, 337.

[113] Asher, "A Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 170; Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones: A Preliminary Note," *Arts Asiatiques* 54, no. 1 (1999): pp. 24-32.

[114] Anooshahr, 160, 161.

Subsequently, as the image of the emperor grew more divine, the elephant underwent change in its symbolism and was detached from evil connotations imposed by religion.[115] Furthermore, Akbar also had integrated his prowess at controlling difficult elephants as a direct metaphor of him bringing the symbol of Indian kingship under his control, where Akbar, as the undisputed ruler, could tame and bring to submission any rebellious elephant or symbolically any rebellious Indian ruler.[116] Therefore, this shift in assimilating the elephant as the symbol of imperial power and sovereignty also implied that Akbar successfully incorporated the elephant into the then emerging Mughal sacred kingship traditions and thereby struck a balance between the varied traditions and symbolisms.

While this showed the manner in which Akbar approached some of the existing belief systems of the Indian subcontinent during his reign, the factors that contributed towards the rise of solar symbolisms was also related to the emperor's complicated relationship with religion. Akbar's reign featured a multitude of views and policies that constantly evolved across the diverse aspects of religion that sometimes went on to perplex even his contemporary observers.[117] Badauni, a courtier with orthodox religious views, provides perhaps the biggest indication to one of Akbar's character traits when he noted that "rationalism" was proof of Akbar's ignorance that propelled his complicated relationship with Islam.[118] The evolution of Akbar's tryst with religion would start out with strict adherence to Islam and evolve on to being considered by some as an apostate, atheist and even a prophet.[119] Accounts from his early reign note Akbar as a staunch adherent of Sunni Islam who had even termed his conquest of Chittor in 1568 as a victory of Islam over infidels, who joined in public prayers five times a day until 1579 and who also sent massive sums of money to

[115] Ibid, 164.

[116] Buckingham, 6, 7.

[117] Eaton, 240.

[118] Wink André, *Akbar* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 88.

[119] Eaton, 240.

Hejaz and supported the hajj.[120] However, Akbar had also instituted policies at the same time that made conservative Islamic sections in his realm frown. This could be seen in the case of Akbar's marital alliances with Rajput chiefs (who followed Hinduism) in 1563 and placing of his Rajput wives on social parity with other royal women in court, while also abolishing jizya tax and pilgrimage taxes on non-Muslims in the same year.[121] Nevertheless, Akbar largely maintained the public façade that he was a devout Muslim until the 1570s.

However, Akbar's deepening fascination with ideologies such as the pantheistic doctrines of Ibn al Arabi and the concepts of divine illumination of Suhrawardi around the early 1570s and the growing adoration towards the more liberal Chishti order of Sufism since early 1560s, were instrumental in furthering the divide between Akbar and orthodox Islam.[122] In 1575, Akbar had established the Ibadat-khana (House of Worship) where he presided over formal debates between scholars of the various religions that he was exposed to, which ultimately led Akbar to declare all religions as equally true or equally false, a stance that left all sides disgruntled.[123] The underlying tensions escalated further in 1579 as Akbar issued an order proclaiming himself as the ultimate authority on all matters of Islam, much to the ire of the conservative factions, which led to further commotion as Akbar even considered replacing the Prophet's name in the Islamic credo with his own, which he did not follow through on.[124] Some contemporary accounts state that Akbar found it offensive even to hear the name Muhammad in this period.[125] Wink states that dissent against the emperor in this period was typically met with banishment.[126] The

[120] Wink, 88-90; Eaton, 241.

[121] Eaton, 241.

[122] Asher, 161; Eaton, 241.

[123] Moin, 146; Eaton, 242.

[124] Eaton, 242-243.

[125] Wink, 94.

[126] Ibid, 93.

matters came to a head in 1580 when one cleric urged Akbar's half-brother in Kabul to seize the throne due to the irreligious image of Akbar that had spread across the realm, which subsequently led to war.[127] After firmly establishing himself in Kabul in 1581 and chasing away his half-brother, thus ending the possibilities for any full-scale Islamic revolt, Eaton notes that Akbar confessed to Father Monserrate, a Jesuit priest who had accompanied him, that he was not Muslim.[128] Akbar's public turn away from Islam followed, coinciding with his victory over his half-brother who could have served as a rallying point for the orthodox Islamic elements in the realm.[129] All these events had also coincided with the coming of the first Islamic millennium and its messianic implications.

Following his campaign against his half-brother in 1581, Akbar began to combine saintly and messianic persona to his kingship identity, which also coincided with the approach of the first Islamic millennium in 1591.[130] Akbar's court chronicler, Abul Fazl, noted that Akbar was born to inaugurate the second Islamic millennium.[131] In preparation for this event, the year 1582 saw celebrations that was considered auspicious due to the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter exactly as it had during the birth of Islam, which also led to Akbar directing that all coins that would be issued for the next ten years would bear the same date of 1000 AH.[132] Furthermore, Akbar had issued his controversial Ilahi set of coinage in 1585, which replaced the Islamic kalima on the coins and instead inscribed the phrase: "Allahu Akbar Jalla Jalaluhu" (Fig.2).[133] In addition to saying that "God is Great, Glorified be his Glory", this was

[127] Eaton, 243.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Wink, 88.

[130] Eaton, 244.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Moin, 147; Eaton, 244.

[133] Najaf Haider, "The Monarch and the Millennium: A New Interpretation of the Alf Coins of Akbar," in *Coins in India: Power and Communication*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2006), pp. 76-83, 82.

also a word play on the emperor's own name (Regnal name: Akbar, Birth name: Jalal-ud-din),[134] making one wonder if the coin originally meant 'Akbar is God' instead.[135] We find the usage of this phrase also among the disciples of Akbar's creed of discipleship called Din-i-Ilahi or 'Divine Faith' which also began in the early 1580s, where the standard greeting among members was 'Allahu Akbar' to which one responded with 'Jalla Jalaluhu'.[136] In Din-i-ilahi, Akbar fashioned himself to be the spiritual guide to his subjects and considered himself as above all religions as the most sacred sovereign on earth.[137] This view proved instrumental to the many solar symbolism laden practices that became set during Akbar's rule, which continued to irk conservative sections in the realm. Ultimately, the ushering in of the Islamic millennium in 1591 saw the standard for dating coins and events in the empire change from the lunar hijri calendar to the new ilahi era, which followed the solar calendar.[138] Despite the turbulent interactions with Islam in the years prior, Eaton notes that Akbar, by 1601, had went back to practising the external rites of Islam, most likely to control the dissent from conservative factions.[139]

[134] Barrie Cook, "Money, Art and Representation: Text, Image, and Message.," in *A Cultural History of Money in the Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Deng (London, England: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 99-126; Haider, 82; "Akbar, Silver Rupee (Rupiya) of Agra Mint." Sarmaya. Accessed July 18, 2021. https://sarmaya.in/objects/numismatics/akbar-silver-rupee-rupaiya-2/.

[135] Truschke, Audrey. Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, 40; Eaton, 244.

[136] M. L. Roy Choudhury, "AKBAR (In the Light of the 'Din-i-Ilahi')," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 3 (1939): pp. 1073-1097, 1081.

[137] Eaton, 245.

[138] Haider, 76–83; Eaton, 245.

[139] Eaton, 246.

Figure 2. Silver Rupee coin of Akbar issued in 1602.
Description: The reverse side (right side in the picture) of the coin is inscribed with "Allahu Akbar Jalla Jalaluhu". Minted at Agra.
Source: © 2021, Sarmaya Trust. Accessed August 22, 2021. https://sarmaya.in/objects/numismatics/akbar-silver-rupee-rupaiya-2/.

Akbar's perennial interest in religion led to further interesting occurrences with other religions as well. For instance, Akbar commissioned an illustrated Persian rendition of the Indian epic Ramayana, the first complete translation of its kind completed in the 1580s, which narrated the story of Rama, who was idealized by Akbar as the ideal Indian monarch according to Truschke.[140] This remains relevant to this thesis as Rama belonged to the legendary suryavamsha dynasty (Solar Dynasty)[141] and was an avatar of God Vishnu, which Truschke points out was a view supported by both the Sanskrit texts and the Brahmins at court at the time, adding the idea of Sanskrit based concepts of sacred kingship to the already existing mix.[142] Truschke also points to the Mughal fascination with Karna and similarities to the lore of Alanquwa, which was analysed prior in detail in the antecedents section.[143] Furthermore, Akbar also showed interest in Christianity for a time that had initially led the Portuguese Jesuit

[140] Truschke, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court*, 204.

[141] Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, 218.

[142] Truschke, 205, 209, 213.

[143] Truschke, 122.

priests in his court to assume that he would convert.[144] The interaction did however aid in bringing copies of Christian art from Europe to the Mughal court, which was eclectically absorbed and adapted to enhance the Mughal painting that developed further under Jahangir and Shah Jahan.[145]

In short, the systems and developments that served as a prelude to the rise and flourishing of solar symbolisms in Akbar's reign was many. While all these varied aspects played a role, the primary reasons that directly lead Akbar down the path that lead to establishment of the ideology of solar symbolism were a select few, which is analysed in detail next.

2.5. The Rise of Solar Symbolisms

Equipped with the background of Akbar's reign, it is essential to look at the principal factors that actively brought about the proliferation of solar symbolisms among the Mughal sacred kingship traditions from the sixteenth century onwards. Consequently, this section will explore in detail the fundamental parameters that had contributed towards the formulation of solar symbolisms into a concrete identity of Akbar's sacred kingship traditions.

In many regards, it is Akbar's nonconformity to the established norms of kingship and religion that set the necessary conditions that enabled the ideology of solar veneration to flourish in the Mughal setting. Catherine B Asher suggested a list of three principal parameters that held most sway in leading to the development of solar or light imagery and the reasons for it getting adapted to fit the iconography of Mughal royalty.[146] Asher lists the reasons as Mughal devotion to the Chishti order of Sufi saints, court scholars who were followers of the concepts of divine illumination constituted by the 12th century Iranian scholar, Suhrawardi, and lastly, the fascination towards concepts of worship in Hindu, Jain and Zoroastrian practices.[147] All three

[144] Eaton, 242.

[145] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10.

[146] Asher "A Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 161.

[147] Ibid.

factors, which are described in detail below, had to work in tandem over a prolonged period before solar or light imagery achieved the level of acceptance it did among the Mughal emperors.

Akbar had the opportunity considerably early in his reign to settle down and engage in other aspects of life apart from establishing and maintaining the stability of the empire, which was not possible in the case of Humayun or Babur.[148] Furthermore, Akbar was known to have been attracted towards the Chishti order of Sufism as early as 1562, making annual pilgrimages, sometimes even on foot, to the shrine of the founder of the Chishti order, Shaikh Muin al-Din Chishti, in Ajmer.[149] Akbar's veneration of Chishti Sufi saints gave us not only Fatehpur Sikri, which was a capital city built as a thanksgiving gift to the saint, Shaikh Salim Chishti, who had predicted that the emperor would be blessed with a male heir, but it also led to the Mughal tradition of using white marble for buildings associated with the emperor.[150] Although white marble tombs for Chishti saints were already in existence before the Mughals, this aspect of the colour 'white' that was attributed to shrines of saints was eventually brought into the Mughal architectural scheme once the emperor started considering himself as a 'pir-zinda' or living saint.[151]

By the 1570s, Akbar had a retinue of followers of Suhrawardi's illumination ideology enter his court service, one of whom, Abul Fazl, would rapidly rise through the ranks and become one of his most trusted aides and hold crucial court positions such as being Akbar's closest aide, his official chronicler and one of his prominent counsellors on religious matters.[152] Abul Fazl was a devout believer in Suhrawardi's ishraq (illumination) principles who significantly contributed towards rejection of traditionalism, which subsequently led to diminishing the power of the ulema while

[148] Ibid, 162.

[149] Eaton, 241; Asher, 162.

[150] Asher, 167; Eaton, 254.

[151] Asher, 164, 167.

[152] Habib, "A Political Theory for the Mughal Empire—A Study of the Ideas of Abu'l Fazl." 329; Asher, 162.

simultaneously applying the illumination philosophy into the running of the Empire.[153] It is necessary to keep in mind that diminishing the power of the ulema was a political necessity at the time for Akbar, which had the added advantage of better integration of other non-Islamic groups into the imperial machinery, which decidedly shaped Indian history until the eighteenth century. Asher notes that Abul Fazl applied the ishraqi philosophy of Suhrawardi in a way which stated that only rulers imbued with the divine light, i.e. an illumined ruler, could rule justly and wisely and went on to present Akbar as this divinely saturated and enlightened being, the ideal ruler of his time.[154] Excerpts from the Ain-i-Akbari, written by Abul Fazl in late sixteenth century, mentions his perceived relationship between light and royalty as follows:

> Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe… Modern language calls this light farr-i izidi (the divine light), and the tongue of antiquity called it kiyan khura (the sublime halo). It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of any one… Again, many excellent qualities flow from the possession of this light.[155]

These words mirror the principles of Suhrawardi while describing Akbar as the Perfect Man with profound qualities who is closest to both God and the sun.[156]Abul Fazl further goes on to add that:

> His majesty maintains that it is a religious duty and divine praise to worship fire and light; surly, ignorant men consider it forgetfulness of the Almighty, and fire worship. But the deep-sighted know better…Every flame is derived from that fountain of divine light, (the sun), and bears the impression of its holy essence…The fire of the Sun is the torch of God's sovereignty.[157]

These lines point towards the existing beliefs at court and the way in which both Akbar and Abul Fazl viewed sun and light worship. The combination of these factors

[153] Habib, 335; Asher, 169.

[154] Asher, 169, 170.

[155] Abul Fazl, *The Ain i Akbari*, trans. H Blochmann, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873), Abul Fazl's Preface, iii.

[156] Asher, 170, 171.

[157] Fazl, 48.

resulted in Akbar being regarded as a divine sovereign blessed by the divine light of God and subsequently led to development of several court practices aimed at acknowledging the divine nature of the solar emperor, which will be explored in the upcoming chapters.

This process under the rule of Akbar reveals how symbolism of the sun was incorporated into the cosmological thought of Mughals and shows that it was a combination of factors from diverse backgrounds that led to the development of the ideology. With this background in mind, it is prudent to look into how these solar symbolisms that became part of the identity of the Mughal Emperor, continued after its codification under Akbar. For this, it is imperative to analyse the evolution of solar symbolisms during the reigns of Akbar's son and successor, Jahangir and Akbar's grandson, Shah Jahan.

2.6. Solar Symbolisms under Jahangir and Shah Jahan

Akbar's reign was pivotal for the foundations it laid which allowed the Mughal Empire to expand further under the reign of his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The fifty-two years after Akbar's death, i.e. 1605 – 1657, covered the reigns of both the emperors, which coincided with continued expansion in territory, wealth and power and also saw the evolution of the Mughal sacred kingship ideology and solar symbolisms and the unique ways in which it was presented and exercised. While the specific examples of the occurrences of solar symbolisms in art and architecture in the empire are explored in detail in the chapters ahead, this section will attempt to succinctly summarise how the solar ideology evolved after Akbar's death in 1605 until Aurangzeb's accession to the throne in 1658, which covers the reigns of both Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Jahangir's reign is renowned for the advancements that the Mughal atelier made in art and how the many manifestations of the divine emperor came to be portrayed in the most surreal imagery where solar symbolisms came to achieve some of its most striking methods of expression.[158] While features like the radiant halo around the

[158] Ebba Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World: European Cartography in Mughal Allegory and History Painting," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, no. 2-3 (2012): pp. 547-580, 550; Franke, 131.

emperor's head became a norm in Jahangir's paintings, some of the most striking depictions of solar symbolisms were in those paintings where the emperor was portrayed in allegorical representations of his dreams.[159] While Chapter 3 explores these instances in detail, when it came to depiction of solar symbolisms in the paintings during Shah Jahan's reign, it was not restricted to just the instances of the surreal, but it extended to include the same level of overt expression of solar symbolisms with the emperor in worldly events as well.[160] This difference is interesting considering the fact that Shah Jahan had postured himself publicly to rule following the traditions of Islam, more so than Jahangir and Akbar, but when it came to art and courtly culture, he opted to continue to be depicted as the divine sovereign replete with all solar symbols that were used by his predecessors.[161]

The theme of solar symbolisms continued well into other aspects of Mughal life as well, such as occasions where the new emperor ascending the throne picks titles or bestows them upon his subjects. Akbar's son, Salim, took the title of "Nur al-Din Muhammad Jahangir Badshah Ghazi" where "Nur al-Din" means "Light of the Faith" whereas Jahangir's son, Shah Jahan, took titles associated with light imagery such as "Shihab al-Din" meaning the "Meteor of the Faith". [162] Furthermore, these names extended to people of the Emperor's family as well. Jahangir's favourite wife was adorned with the titles of "Nur Mahal" (Light of the Palace) at their wedding and "Nur Jahan" (Light of the World) later on.[163] Similarly, Shah Jahan's wife, Mumtaz Mahal was "The Sun of Modesty" while his daughter Jahanara was given the name "The Light of the Imperial Chamber".[164] Interestingly, the use of names with light symbolism was not restricted only to people either. The name "Nur", meaning

[159] Eaton, 291

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Asher, 179.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones. A Preliminary Note," 24.

"Light", heavily featured in the names of imperial gardens and estates such as the "Bagh-i Nur Manzil" (Garden of the Palace of Light) or the "Chesma-i Nur" (Fountain of Light).[165] Even favourite animals of the emperors were often given solar names like in the case of Jahangir's favourite elephant being named "Nur-e-Nawruz" (Light of the Nawruz).[166] However, the evolution of solar themed names was limited in nature when compared with the evolution that solar symbolisms underwent in Mughal art.

While the overall changes that Mughal painting underwent under Jahangir was immense, one aspect that stands out in paintings in his reign is the appearance of Christian imagery with the depictions of the emperor. At the outset, exposure of the Mughals to European art and Christianity was another parameter that commenced in Akbar's reign with the arrival of Jesuit priests, which subsequently grew in the reigns of his successors.[167] From a Mughal perspective, since even Prophet Muhammad had attested the miracles of Jesus Christ, it may not have been much of an alien concept to begin with.[168] Nevertheless, some of the features that the Mughals came across in European art were adapted and made 'Mughal' to fit Mughal needs[169] to the extent that it came to aid and appear alongside solar symbolisms of the emperor. To this end, this exposure to European art and imagery seems to have provided the Mughal atelier with more means to develop and enhance the portrayal of sacredness of the emperor in their depictions.[170] A few instances of this trend where it appears to have blended with solar symbolisms are examined below.

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[165] Asher, 179.

[166] Malecka, 29.

[167] Ebba Koch, "The Baluster Column: A European Motif in Mughal Architecture and Its Meaning," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982): pp. 251-262, 256; Eaton, 242.

[168] R S Sugirtharajah, *Jesus in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 26.

[169] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10; Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World: European Cartography in Mughal Allegory and History Painting," 578.

[170] Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, 11.

It is interesting that certain Christian themes were overtly portrayed in paintings, with the images of Jesus Christ and Mary sometimes appearing in many paintings as miniature figures on walls of audience halls or other buildings or sometimes even in portrait paintings with Jahangir (Fig.3). The painting of Jahangir with Jesus is set on a window where Jahangir is placed above Jesus and both figures are adorned with a halo.[171] It is worth noting here that Jahangir possesses the bigger and more radiant halo and is also shown to be more dressed in formal attire with jewels and the world in his hands while Jesus is depicted in simple clothes carrying the cross.[172] However, the theme evolved further in the reign of Shah Jahan where portrait paintings of the emperor were mixed with solar symbolisms and Christian themes to achieve spectacular results. The best example of this trend was the portrait of Shah Jahan with his Grand Vizier, Asaf Khan (Fig.4). In the painting, the emperor, adorned with a radiant halo that appears like a sun on earth, is depicted to receive a ray of divine light transferred directly to Shah Jahan from God in the sky.[173] It is important to note that this figure of God is depicted with the sun in the background while this divine light is passed on through the Holy Spirit, on to the emperor. In this regard, it is possible to wonder if Shah Jahan is hinted at here to be the messiah of his time, where he takes the place of Christ in the Holy Trinity as he receives divine light from God in heaven through the Holy Spirit.[174] If that indeed was the intention, the concept is still in line with the core idea of solar symbolisms where the emperor is considered as the closest being to God on earth.

[171] Ebba Koch, "Being like Jesus and Mary: The Jesuits, the Polyglot Bible and Other Antwerp Print Works at the Mughal Court," in *Transcultural Imaginations of the Sacred*, ed. Margit Kern and Krüger Klaus (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2019), pp. 197-230, 213; Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, 10;

[172] Koch, "Being like Jesus and Mary," 213.

[173] Ibid, 218.

[174] Koch, "Being like Jesus and Mary," 219.

Figure 3. Jahangir with Jesus Christ.
Description: Jahangir is placed above Jesus in this painting while the halo of Jahangir remains bigger and more radiant. Artist: Hashim, Abu'l Hasan, 1615.
Source: Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. (After: Koch, Ebba. "Being like Jesus and Mary: The Jesuits, the Polyglot Bible and Other Antwerp Print Works at the Mughal Court." Essay. In *Transcultural Imaginations of the Sacred*, edited by Margit Kern and Krüger Klaus, 197–230. Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2019, Fig. 6).

Figure 4. Shah Jahan with Asaf Khan.
Description: The radiant sun-like halo on the emperor is depicted to receive divine light, which has the Holy Spirit, bestowed from the heavens by God, who has the sun in the background. Artist: Bichitr, 1640.
Source: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution. Accessed August 21, 2021. https://asia.si.edu/object/S1986.403/.

The presence of the sun in these instances played out in a variety of other ways as well. In another painting of Shah Jahan (Fig.6), painted soon after his accession, the emperor is displayed standing on a terrace while the extraordinary halo of the emperor appears to replace the sun in the sky, to the effect that the colours of the rainbow are also emitted from this halo. While the clouds part to reveal this glorious halo and its rainbow effect, four angels hover at the top of the painting in support of the emperor. A similar scheme was also noticeable on a Mughal portrait from an album belonging to Shah Jahan's son, Shah Shuja, which depicts Jesus Christ (Fig.5) seated on a throne while the clouds part to reveal his rainbow halo with an angel appearing above in the clouds. The similarities of paintings from the same period continue to support the theme of Shah Jahan being depicted as a messianic sovereign, where the depictions blended aspects of solar symbolisms in Mughal paintings with Christian imagery.

Figure 5. Jesus Christ with rainbow halo.
Description: Mughal painting from the album of Shah Jahan's son, Shah Shuja. Made between mid to late seventeenth century.
Source: Oxford Bodleian Library.

Figure 6. Shah Jahan with a rainbow halo.
Description: Shah Jahan stands on a terrace holding a pendant while the emperor's radiant halo appears to stand for the sun as it spreads to take on rainbow colours. Angels hover above. Artist: Chitarman, 1627- 1628.
Source: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accessed August 21, 2021. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451270.

In essence, Akbar's nearly half-century long reign saw the emperor's attempt to consolidate rule where finding a balance through holding diverse identities became the path that was taken for a stable empire. The identities that were in play ranged from that of a Timurid prince to a traditional Indian ruler, from a Sufi master who was meant to open the second Islamic millennium to also being the solar emperor and a divinely illumined being who was closest to God and consequently above all religious and sectarian divisions.[175] In this attempt, solar symbolism was an ideology that could proliferate and transcend across multiple areas spanning from literature to art and architecture, enhancing the sacredness of the emperor in each field, which became possible of the several parameters that had to come together, which is discussed in detail in this chapter. While the ideology of sun and light veneration grew and proliferated under Akbar, the visual depictions of solar symbolisms achieved its mature expression only under Jahangir and Shah Jahan, which are explored in detail in the subsequent chapters.

Essentially, what is evident from all the instances that were observed thus far is an overall lack of inhibition among the Mughal ruling elite to absorb various elements that aided in stylising a kingship identity that was most suitable to rule their domains.[176] Regardless of the religious, cultural or regional differences, if the practice could be fit to the existing narrative of the emperor's identity so that the identity of the emperor could be further enhanced and made more divine, it was always adopted and adapted to fit the milieu. The difference was that the results often varied based on the approach and tastes of each emperor.[177] To this end, solar symbolism was no exception as the foundations of it set during Akbar's reign had fully metamorphosed and included more sophisticated ways of representation by the end of Shah Jahan's reign. These many different ways in which solar symbolisms were inculcated into the art and architecture of the empire, is analysed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively.

[175] Eaton, 249.

[176] Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", 314.

[177] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

SOLAR SYMBOLISMS IN MUGHAL ART

The various factors that contributed to the rise of sun and light veneration and the factors that necessitated its continuation in the Mughal Empire subsequently led to the growth and evolution of these solar symbolisms across many fields that represented both the emperor and his empire. While the focus of this section is on the solar symbolisms observed in Mughal art, artistic representation in paintings is not the only avenue where these symbolisms were employed and consequently, will not be the only area that is explored. These solar symbolisms often had a dissemination that went beyond the confines of the Mughal court to seep into objects such as imperial flags and insignia and even to coinage in some instances. Therefore, the order that is followed in this section is such that solar symbolisms are explored from outside the imperial court to inside it, i.e. from the solar symbolisms employed in imperial objects employed at the level of the empire to the objects used at the level of the emperor. In this regard, it is imperative that this section begins with the official sign that the Mughals would have used to identify themselves with, their imperial flag.

3.1. The Lion and the Sun

The Mughal imperial flag often underwent changes over the course of the empire. While the imperial flag during Akbar's reign was known to have contained an emblem of the shining sun on a long triangular flag, we see the 'lion and sun' motif appearing prominently from Jahangir's period onwards.[178] While the motif of the 'lion and sun' in itself is comprised of parts that acted as sun symbols both

[178] S P Verma, "Material Culture as Discerned from Mughal Paintings," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 37 (1976): pp. 563-569, 567.

individually and together, the motif that came to appear in both the Mughal flags and coinage had a long history behind it. The lion symbol and its association with the sun is something that researchers have been able to trace back to ancient Mesopotamia, while the symbol also appears in the zodiac where the house of the Lion (or Leo) falls in the part of the year when the Sun is at its strongest (between July 22 and August 22).[179] Furthermore, lion in itself was an ancient symbol of royalty in both Persia and the Indian subcontinent.[180] However, more relevant to the case at hand, this motif is known to have been used during the time of Timur as well, where figures of lions decorated the spandrel of the Ak Saray Palace in Shahr-i Sabz, Uzbekistan.[181] Considering that the Mughals were proud Timurids,[182] it was not unusual that the 'lion and sun' motif became part of the imperial flag by Jahangir's reign. However, the lion and sun motif was not exclusive to the Mughals in this period as it continued to exist among their contemporaries in Central Asia and Iran too, which can be best observed in the example of Sher-Dor Madrasa (Fig.7), built in 1630s in the Registan Square in Samarqand, Uzbekistan.

Regardless of the point of origin of the 'lion and sun' motif, in the Mughal case, it appears to fit perfectly with the growing solar symbolisms in the period where both the lion and the sun featured prominently across diverse aspects of how the emperor expressed his identity as the divinely illumined sovereign. The presence of this motif on the imperial flag during Jahangir's reign was documented in travel accounts. Edward Terry, part of the British delegation of Sir Thomas Roe to the Mughal court of Jahangir from 1615-1619, provided a sketch of the Mughal imperial flag in his book (Fig.8) along with the description that "the royal standard of the great Mogul,

[179] Alexander H. Krappe, "The Anatolian Lion God," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 65, no. 3 (1945): pp. 144-154, 144; "Leo," Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed August 19, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/place/Leo-constellation.

[180] Richard M Eaton, *India in The Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 155.

[181] Corinne Lefévre, "In the Name of the Fathers: Mughal Genealogical Strategies from Babur to Shah Jahan," *Religions of South Asia* 5, no. 1-2 (2011): pp. 409-442, 416; Eaton, 155.

[182] Lisa Golombek and Ebba Koch, "The Mughals, Uzbeks, and the Timurid Legacy," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood and Necipoğlu Gülru, 1st ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), pp. 811-845, 811-812.

which is a couchant lion shadowing part of the body of the sun."[183] Niccolao Manucci's account of the Mughal Empire from the seventeenth century also testifies that the sun was a part of the Mughal imperial standard and that nobody else had the permission to use it.[184]

Figure 7. Aerial view of the Sher-Dor Madrasa, Samarkhand.
Description: Built in 1630s, the pishtaq of the madrasa depicts the 'lion and sun' motif on both sides.
Source: David Holt (Public Domain).

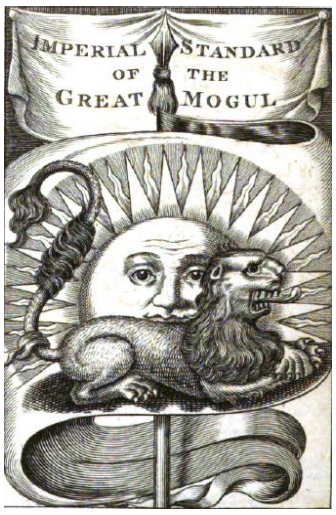

Figure 8. Imperial standard of the Mughals during Jahangir's reign.
Source: Terry, Edward. *A Voyage to East-India*. London: J. Wilkie, 1655, 347.

[183] Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India* (London: J. Wilkie, 1655), 347.

[184] Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, trans. William Irvine, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1907), 98.

The ‘lion and sun’ motif was depicted on Mughal imperial flags across different settings, which were captured in miniature paintings over the years. In this regard, the paintings from the Padshahnama of Shah Jahan displayed some of the best examples of this motif. The application of the motif on imperial flags in the battlefield is evident from the painting of the siege of Kandahar by the Mughal army of Shah Jahan (Fig.9), where the Mughal flags sporting the ‘lion and sun’ motif are depicted at the foreground of the battlefield. Shah Jahan’s royal procession from Agra to Lahore (Fig.10) in 1634 also features imperial Mughal flags with the same motif. The third painting from the Padshahnama depicts Emperor Jahangir receiving Prince Khurram (future Shah Jahan) after the latter’s return from a Deccan campaign (Fig.11), where the lion and sun motif is well illuminated on the imperial flag and displayed prominently at the forefront of the painting. By the end of the seventeenth century, the imperial flags start to match the descriptions of Mughal flags from the time of Akbar, which contained just the emblem of the radiant sun on a triangular flag. The painting of Emperor Aurangzeb being carried on a palanquin alongside his royal hunting party (Fig.12) shows the imperial army in the background carrying the triangular Mughal flag with a radiant sun at the centre. Although the empire slowly disintegrated after Aurangzeb’s rule, paintings show that the Mughal flags continued to hold this motif all the way to the twilight years of the dynasty. In the painting of the Mughal ceremonial Eid procession in 1840 (Fig.13), the elephant with its mahout and standard-bearer holds a green flag with a golden sun at its centre. In effect, this showed the continuity of the motif of the sun from the heydays of the empire, when it spanned much of the Indian subcontinent, up to the very end when the Mughal domains were restricted to only a part of the city of Delhi. While the decline is analysed later in this thesis, it is highly unlikely that there were any solar symbolisms that might have been attributed with the emperor from the eighteenth century onwards. These examples shed light on how this symbol had penetrated every aspect of imperial life from that time, boldly representing the Mughal Empire in the battlefield and in royal processions to even the homecoming of a prince and religious celebrations.

Figure 9. Mughal siege of Kandahar in 1631.
Description*:* Mughal flags showing the lion and sun motif (foreground) in a painting by Payag depicting the siege of Kandahar in 1631 in the Padshahnama.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-s/the-siege-of-qandahar-may-1631.

Figure 10. Royal procession of Shah Jahan from Agra to Lahore in 1634.
Description*:* The Mughal flags with the 'lion and sun' motif (foreground) as well as elephants carrying the imperial insignia (background) are depicted in this painting, which was originally part of a double-page scene. Artist: Kashmiri Painter
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-ai/a-royal-procession.

Figure 11. Jahangir receiving Prince Khurram from a Deccan campaign in 1617.
Description*:* Mughal flag with the lion and sun motif (bottom left) is depicted at the front in this painting that is part of a double-page scene. Artist: Ramdas.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/1/collection/1005025-i/jahangir-receives-prince-khurram-on-his-return-from-the-deccan-10-october-1617.

Figure 12. Emperor Aurangzeb carried on a palanquin.
Description*:* Aurangzeb's army carrying the imperial flag and the dynastic insignia is visible in the background. Artist: Bhavanidas (1705-1720).
Source: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/454619.

Figure 13. Mughal flag from the Eid procession of 1840.
Description*:* Mughal flag with a radiant, golden sun at its centre is carried on an elephant as part of the ceremonial procession for Eid. Artist: Mazhar Ali Khan.
Source: ©Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O16832/gouache-one-of-six-figures-from/one-of-six-figures-from-gouache-mazhar-ali-khan/.

Another avenue where the lion and the sun symbols were utilised was as part of the Mughal dynastic insignia, which were an integral part of the imperial processions. These Mughal dynastic insignia consisted of six symbols which included a bow with two gold fish suspended on the sides, face of a sun with radiating rays, the golden hand of Fatima, head of a horse, head of a lion-like beast and lastly an imperial umbrella.[185] Raising of each of these gilded insignia on decorated gilt staffs from a richly caparisoned elephant ensured that the insignia would remain at one of the

[185] William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and the Fall of Delhi, 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), Chapter 1.

highest points of elevation in the entire length of the Mughal procession.[186] Among these symbols, the radiating sun and the head of a lion both could directly correspond to solar associations.

In essence, the paintings suggest that the 'lion and sun' motif was a dominant part of the imperial Mughal flag during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, which was also the time when the solar ideology that had initially developed under Akbar was evolving to be more refined. While the 'lion and sun' motif continued in Iran going all the way up to the twentieth century, the 'lion and sun' motif in the Mughal imperial flag did not survive the onset of imperial decline. While solar symbolisms itself started declining by end of seventeenth century, the emblem of the sun still had a place on the flag, despite the associated meanings no longer holding sway. However, this motif was not limited to just imperial flags and was consequently incorporated into other areas as well, such as coinage, which is explored next.

3.2. Numismatics

Coinage is a vital historical source showcasing the domains of an empire where it was in circulation while simultaneously indicating the existence of a centralised state.[187] Although the monetary systems that had developed during Akbar's reign laid the foundations for a strong empire, the coinage that is relevant to this section comes mostly from the period of rule of his son and successor, Jahangir.[188] While the set of controversial "Allahu Akbar" coins issued by Akbar towards the end of his reign was covered prior, the coins of Jahangir that are considered here were not a set that was in wide circulation across the empire. Despite being struck to a monetary standard, this particular set of coinage issued by Jahangir was mostly tied with kingship, being used in carefully orchestrated court ceremonies, and therefore, not given to open

[186] Dalrymple, Chapter 1.

[187] John S Deyell, "The Development of Akbar's Currency System and Monetary Integration of the Conquered Kingdoms," in *The Imperial Monetary System of Mughal India*, ed. J. F. Richards (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 13-67, 17.

[188] Ibid, 13.

circulation throughout the realm.[189] Instead, these portrait coins were special gifts to followers so that it could be worn on their turbans and sashes and thereby show that they were graced by the divine emperor's favour.[190] Yet, the imagery that was portrayed in these coins is unique, precisely because it had illustration firstly, as opposed to the norm of coins bearing only inscriptions, and also because these images were of the emperor and solar symbols, which are explored below.

As Mughal painting reached its zenith under the patronage of Jahangir, numismatics under the emperor reached new horizons with several portrait type coins and even a coin series based on zodiac signs being issued in this period, which was a deviation from the general trend of Mughal coinage bearing only inscriptions.[191] Many of the issues of the coins which featured a portrait of the Jahangir (Fig.14, 15) or of his father, Akbar (Fig.16), were embellished with the lion and sun symbols or with just a radiant sun on the obverse side. When viewed through the lens of solar symbolisms in the empire, this symbolically signified the emperor's power and showcased the emperor's divinity through his divine association with the sun. Hence, it can be assumed that every transaction involving these coins would thus account as an act of 'brand recognition' where this solar imagery gets firmly instilled in the minds of its users with that of the Mughal emperor and his dynasty.

[189] Shailendra Bhandare. "Transregional Connections: The "Lion and Sun" Motif and Coinage between Anatolia and India". In *Turkish History and Culture in India*, eds. A.C.S. Peacock and Richard Piran McClary (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 209.

[190] "Coin of Emperor Jahangir." Ashmolean Museum. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.ashmolean.org/coin-emperor-jahangir#/.

[191] Rosemary Crill and Kapil Jariwala, eds., *The Indian Portrait: 1560-1860* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2010), 29.

Figure 14. Gold mohur coin issued by Jahangir in 1611.
Description: The coin contains the haloed self-portrait of Jahangir on the obverse side and the 'lion and sun' motif on the reverse.
Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 15. A variant of the gold mohur coin issued by Jahangir in 1611.
Description*:* The coin contains a haloed self-portrait of Jahangir holding a wine goblet on the obverse side, and the 'lion and sun' motif on the reverse.
Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 16. Gold mohur coin with portrait of Akbar from 1605.
Description: The coin issued by Jahangir in 1605 contains a portrait of his father, Akbar, on the obverse side and a large radiant sun on the reverse.
Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Jahangir's coins provide remarkable insights into solar symbolism upon closer inspection. It can be observed that all portrait coins depict Jahangir as being surrounded by a radiant halo that accentuates both his divinity and his association with the sun. Interestingly, the coin issued by Jahangir with a portrait of his father, Akbar, is notably devoid of this radiant halo, which is surprising considering that Akbar can be seen to have a halo in quite a few of the miniature paintings made by Jahangir's court artists in the same period. This method of using portrait coins in order to further embellish Jahangir's own image can point to a targeted and masterfully conceived approach where the halo on Jahangir becomes a parameter to showcase the exaltedness of Jahangir over his own father. The significance of 'lion and sun' motif, which was covered earlier for its solar associations, is also utilised in these coins on the reverse side of the portrait of Jahangir.

Among the portrait coins from Jahangir's rule, another significant instance for this study is the gold mohur coin issued by Jahangir in 1615 (Fig.17). The coin had a haloed Jahangir sitting cross-legged on his throne holding a wine goblet, but it is the Persian inscription on the reverse side that is relevant to this paper. While the imagery of the emperor holding a wine cup itself could have enraged the hard-line religious sections in the realm, the inscriptions might have been even more triggering. Ashmolean Museum translates the Persian inscription on the reverse side, as "The words 'Jahangir' and 'Allahu Akbar' are equal in value till the Day of Judgement."[192] While this result of this equal value was reached through the Abjad system of calculating the numerical value of the letters in both the words,[193] if the example of Akbar analysed before is anything to go by, there is a possibility that this attribution was not accidental. The combination of the sunburst at the centre of the coin, the halo on the portrait of Jahangir and the inscription equating the emperor as the divine being who is closest to God, points to the extent that both sacred kingship and solar symbolisms had evolved into by the time of Jahangir's reign. Although these portrait type coins displaying solar imagery were discontinued by the

[192] "Coin of Emperor Jahangir." Ashmolean Museum. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.ashmolean.org/coin-emperor-jahangir#/.

[193] Ibid.

successors of Jahangir, solar symbolisms continued in other forms in the reign of his son and successor, Shah Jahan.

Figure 17. Gold mohur coin issued by Jahangir in 1615 at Ajmer.
Description: The coin contains a self-portrait of the haloed emperor sitting cross-legged while holding a wine goblet on the obverse side and a sunburst with Persian inscriptions on the reverse side.
Source: © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.ashmolean.org/coin-emperor-jahangir#/.

3.3. The Shamsa

The shamsa or the rosette motif as a symbol is known to have held solar connotations from as early as the Iron Ages, where it was spread out across western Asia and the Aegean.[194] While the word shamsa is likely to have originated from the Arabic word shams, meaning the sun, the question remains if the roots of this term went further back to Shamash, the ancient Mesopotamian Sun god.[195] Although the shamsa varied in form across different regions, it had already become an established symbol denoting light or solar connotations over the centuries, even in many Islamic empires such as the Seljuqs for instance.[196] Consequently, finding the use of shamsas among

[194] Cheryl Hart, "An Analysis of the Iconographic Rosette Motif as a Means of Non-Verbal Communication: A Case Study – The Rosette Motif and Its Association with Solar Symbolism," in *Proceedings of the 9th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Rolf A Stucky, Oskar Kaelin, and Hans Peter Mathys (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), pp. 125-136, 125.

[195] Francis Joseph Steingass, *The Student's Arabic-English Dictonary* (London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1884), 555.

[196] Suzan Yalman, "Ala Al-Din Kayqubad Illuminated: A Rum Seljuq Sultan as Cosmic Ruler," *Muqarnas Online* 29, no. 1 (2012): pp. 151-186, 175.

the Mughals does not come as a surprise. In this regard, Mughal manuscripts are the prominent examples that employed the shamsa, traditionally forming the opening pages of the manuscript itself while sometimes forming the closing page as well.[197] Furthermore, the design of the Mughal shamsas generally composed of warm colours and multiple layers of gold often intermixed with copper and silver to give stunningly detailed shamsas which worked in tandem to provide a three dimensional effect due to the medley of colours.[198] This meant that moving light over the page that had a shamsa created a shining effect as light hit the illuminated elements that made up the shamsa. Furthermore, it is possible to see that Abul Fazl, Akbar's court chronicler, had described the shamsa as "The Shamsa of the arch of royalty is a divine light, which God directly transfers to kings, without the assistance of men."[199] Read together with the rise of solar symbolisms from Akbar's reign onwards, it can be assumed with some certainty that the shamsa was viewed as a sun symbol. The arrangement of the shamsa as radiating out from the centre could in addition to highlighting the divine position of the emperor, also stand as a metaphor to highlight unity and harmony of the divine.[200] This can be seen from how the centre of the shamsa in a painting was commonly set aside for details of the emperor, usually portrayed in elaborately stylized script, symbolically placing and equating the emperor as the sun.

For the purpose of this study, two sumptuously embellished shamsas from the seventeenth century that are currently in collections at The Royal Collection Trust and the Cleveland Museum of Art are considered. The first shamsa (Fig.18) under consideration was produced in 1656 during the reign of Shah Jahan and was the

[197] Navina. Haidar,"'Rosette Bearing the Names and Titles of Shah Jahan', Folio from the Shah Jahan Album." Accessed September 2, 2020. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451286; "Shamsa (Sunburst) with Portrait of Aurangzeb (1618-1707), from the Emperor's Album (the Kevorkian Album)," August 27, 2020. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2013.331.

[198] Stuart Cary Welch, *Emperor's Album: Images of Mughal India* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987), 81.

[199] Abul Fazl, *The Ain i Akbari*, trans. H Blochmann, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873), 50.

[200] "The Padshahnamah: Opening Shamsah (Sunburst)," Royal Collection Trust, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-b/the-padshahnamah-opening-shamsah-sunburst.

opening page for the Padshahnama manuscript.[201] While this provided the standard example of a Mughal shamsa, the second shamsa (Fig.19) provides a bizarre case. The second shamsa is estimated to have had its original version made in the 1640s with a plain gold disc occupying the centre.[202] However, instead of characteristic credentials of the emperor (Shah Jahan) occupying the centre of the shamsa, significant alteration post 1658 occurred as Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzeb, seized the throne and proceeded to have his own portrait painted in the centre over the details of his father.[203] This showcased both the importance of the centre position in the shamsa and also the importance with which it was viewed so as to have it appropriated after a regime change. In effect, the shamsa provided a glimpse of the Mughal emperor as the divine ruler occupying the centre of the sunburst from which radiated floral motifs and geometric patterns, through vertices in sets of eight at each level, scattering in all directions from the centre, ultimately signalling unity and harmony of the divine.[204]

In essence, as shamsas often acted as opening pages to Mughal manuscripts and held inherent solar connotations. The shamsa in this section is also intended to serve as an opening to various aspects of solar symbolisms in Mughal paintings. In this regard, a closer examination of the portrait of Aurangzeb from the second shamsa analysed in this section also brings to attention the halo that adorned the head of the emperor, which is the next parameter that is analysed for its solar associations.

[201] "The Padshahnamah : Opening Shamsah (Sunburst)." Royal Collection Trust. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-b/the-padshahnamah-opening-shamsah-sunburst.

[202] "Shamsa (Sunburst) with Portrait of Aurangzeb (1618-1707), from the Emperor's Album (the Kevorkian Album)," August 27, 2020. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2013.331.

[203] Ibid.

[204] "The Padshahnamah: Opening Shamsah (Sunburst)," Royal Collection Trust, accessed August 16, 2021, https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-b/the-padshahnamah-opening-shamsah-sunburst.

Figure 18. Opening shamsa of the Padshahnama, 1657.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-b/the-padshahnamah-opening-shamsah-sunburst.

Figure 19. Shamsa with the portrait of Aurangzeb at its centre.
Description: Folio from the Emperor's Album (Kevorkian Album). The original, without the portrait, was made in 1640-1650 but was altered shortly after 1658.
Source: The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2013.331.

3.4. The Halo

The radiant halo as a feature adorning the emperor's head starts to appear primarily in paintings from the reign of Jahangir onwards. Although some scholars attribute the prevalence of this feature in Mughal art in this period to the increased exposure that the Mughals had to religious images from the west and its subsequent adaptation and incorporation into paintings by the Mughal atelier, it is hard to state with certainty since the halo existed in different cultures since ancient history.[205] While the halo could have likely had Zoroastrian roots, one of the early evidence of the halo found closer to the Indian subcontinent is in Gandharan art.[206] Nevertheless, the presence of the halo in the Mughal case went together with the rise of solar symbolisms. This section explores the use of the halos, which often overtly resembled a radiant sun, in the Mughal case and how it served to portray the sacredness of the divinely illumined emperor.

A closer look at the evolution of the halo as an element in Mughal paintings indicates evolution in its meanings as well, depending on the context of the painting, which at times reflected the political realities of the time. In this regard, the examples that will be considered for this section are limited to the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jahan and to a few instances where the halo tended to take on meanings outside of its normal usage. In these paintings, the halo was often depicted in the form of a radiant sun itself, replete with vibrant rays disseminating outwards, while sometimes varying from normal to gargantuan proportions, particularly in allegorical paintings of Jahangir. These variations in the halo very well intended to signal the hierarchy of power or divinity of those present in the painting in addition to sacredness and solar symbolism.

[205] Kavita Singh, *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens: Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2017), 5; Monica Juneja, "On the Margins of Utopia—One More Look at Mughal Painting," *The Medieval History Journal* 4, no. 2 (2001): pp. 203-240, 213; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "A Roomful of Mirrors: The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks, 1550–1700," *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2010): pp. 39-83, 41.

[206] E H Ramsden, "The Halo: A Further Enquiry into Its Origin," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 78, no. 457 (1941): pp. 123-127, 124.

The first of these examples are two paintings portraying allegorical representations of dreams that Emperor Jahangir had involving the Safavid Emperor, Shah Abbas. The Mughal-Safavid relations at this period were often tense with shifting claims over some disputed territories in modern day Afghanistan. The first painting (Fig.20) made in 1618 depicts an allegorical scene where this long-standing rivalry between the two empires over the fortress of Kandahar was resolved in a dream that Emperor Jahangir had. In the painting, Jahangir can been seen embracing Shah Abbas, who is not only depicted to be physically smaller in size, but also to be sharing in the grand halo of Jahangir which clearly depicts a gigantic sun and a crescent moon held aloft by angels. While the absence of the halo on Shah Abbas and the massive scale of the sun-like halo that adorns Jahangir in this painting is clearly indicative of the solar symbolisms attached to Jahangir, another painting of both the emperors convey a different story. The second painting (Fig.21), made two years after the first one, shows Jahangir entertaining the Shah Abbas with wealth and opulence. While the halo can be seen to be present around the heads of both rulers this time, it is not very prominent and it appears to be highly similar in characteristics as well, suggesting a more cordial theme in the interaction between the two rulers.[207] However, in 1622, two years after the production of this second painting, the Safavids captured the fortress of Kandahar from the Mughals leading to future conflicts between the empires.[208]

The allegorical paintings of Jahangir went on further to cover many varied themes outside of politically charged ones as well. In the painting of 'Jahangir triumphing over poverty'[209] (Fig.22) is another instance of a prominent halo that very much resembles the sun in the way it is portrayed. Radiant rays emanate from the halo of the emperor as he stands atop a globe and shoots an arrow at a metaphorical depiction of poverty, which is also accompanied by angels aiding the emperor with a

[207] "Jahangir Entertains Shah Abbas from the St. Petersburg Album." Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution. Accessed September 3, 2020. https://asia.si.edu/object/F1942.16a/.

[208] Ibid.

[209] "Emperor Jahangir Triumphing over Poverty." LACMA Collections. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://collections.lacma.org/node/240917.

crown and ammunition. The presence of angels in Mughal paintings, which is a common motif that most often appears alongside the emperor, could in itself be a symbol of light since hadith literature indicates angels to be made from light.[210]

Figure 20. Emperor Jahangir embraces Shah Abbas.
Description*:* The substantially large halo of Jahangir can be seen to comprise of a radiant sun and a crescent moon held aloft by angels. Artist: Abu‘l Hasan, 1618.
Source: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution. Accessed August 20, 2021, https://asia.si.edu/object/F1945.9a/.

[210] Oliver Leaman, *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2006), 382.

Figure 21. Emperor Jahangir entertains Shah Abbas.
Description: Emperor Jahangir entertains Shah Abbas with wealth and opulence. The cordial theme of the painting is evident from the faint but similar halos on both rulers. Artist: Bishandas, 1620.
Source: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://asia.si.edu/object/F1942.16a/.

Figure 22. Jahangir's triumph over poverty.
Description: The radiant sun-like halo on the emperor is joined by angels with a crown and ammunition, as he defeats a metaphorical image of poverty. Artist: Abu'l Hassan, 1620-1625
Source: Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://collections.lacma.org/node/240917.

The extent of the radiance of the halo that adorned the Mughal Emperor was often portrayed to be overtly appearing like a mini-sun itself, which was best illustrated by two paintings from Shah Jahan's Padshahnama. The first painting depicts a scene from the wedding ceremony of Aurangzeb[211] (Fig.23). Occurring at night, Shah Jahan's halo in the painting is depicted to be so luminous that the emperor appears to shine like the sun itself, to the extent that the light arising from the halo even appears to fall on others occupying positions near to the emperor as well. Another painting from the Padshanama reveals a rare occurrence of both the emperor and the sun appearing in the same painting (Fig.24). The painting displays Shah Jahan and his hunting party, all clad in green, engaged in a hunt at dawn.[212] Compared to the rising sun on the horizon, Shah Jahan's halo is illuminated so well that it outshines the real sun in its radiance in the painting. In this way, the emperor was portrayed in paintings as the divinely-illumined being that could even surpass the sun in its qualities.

Yet another variation of the use of the halo comes from the painting of Emperor Jahangir receiving Prince Khurram (future Shah Jahan)[213] (Fig.25). Completed during the reign of Shah Jahan in 1656-1657, the painting captures an event from the past (1616), where Shah Jahan had returned from his Mewar campaign.[214] However, since it was painted in Shah Jahan's reign, the halo appears noticeably different on both the protagonists. While the halo on Shah Jahan is full, bright and fabulously illuminated, the halo on Jahangir appears faint to the level that it is barely visible; clearly indicating which sovereign was considered as the divinely-illumined being in the painting. This can be seen as a continuation of 'halo politics' that was evident even in the case of Jahangir and continued well into successors of Shah Jahan as

[211] "Bhola - Shah-Jahan Honouring Prince Awrangzeb at His Wedding." Royal Collection Trust. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-at/shah-jahan-honouring-prince-awrangzeb-at-his-wedding-19-may-1637.

[212] "Shah-Jahan Hunting." Royal Collection Trust. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-ah/shah-jahan-hunting.

[213] "Abid - Jahangir Receives Prince Khurram (April 1616)," Royal Collection Trust, accessed August 17, 2021, https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-al/jahangir-receives-prince-khurram-april-1616.

[214] Ibid.

well. A similar theme was analysed in the previous section where the portrait coins issued in the reign of Jahangir was adorned with a halo but the halo was notably absent on coins with the portrait of his father, Akbar.[215]

Figure 23. Shah Jahan honours Aurangzeb at his wedding.
Description: This Padshahnama painting shows the radiant halo of the emperor shining as bright as the sun even in a night setting. Artist: Bhola, 1656-1657.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-at/shah-jahan-honouring-prince-awrangzeb-at-his-wedding-19-may-1637.

[215] See 3.2. Numismatics.

Figure 24. Shah Jahan hunts at dawn.
Description: This Padshahnama painting from 1656-1657 captures both the emperor and the sun in the same painting, where the emperor's halo appears to outshine the sun itself.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-ah/shah-jahan-hunting.

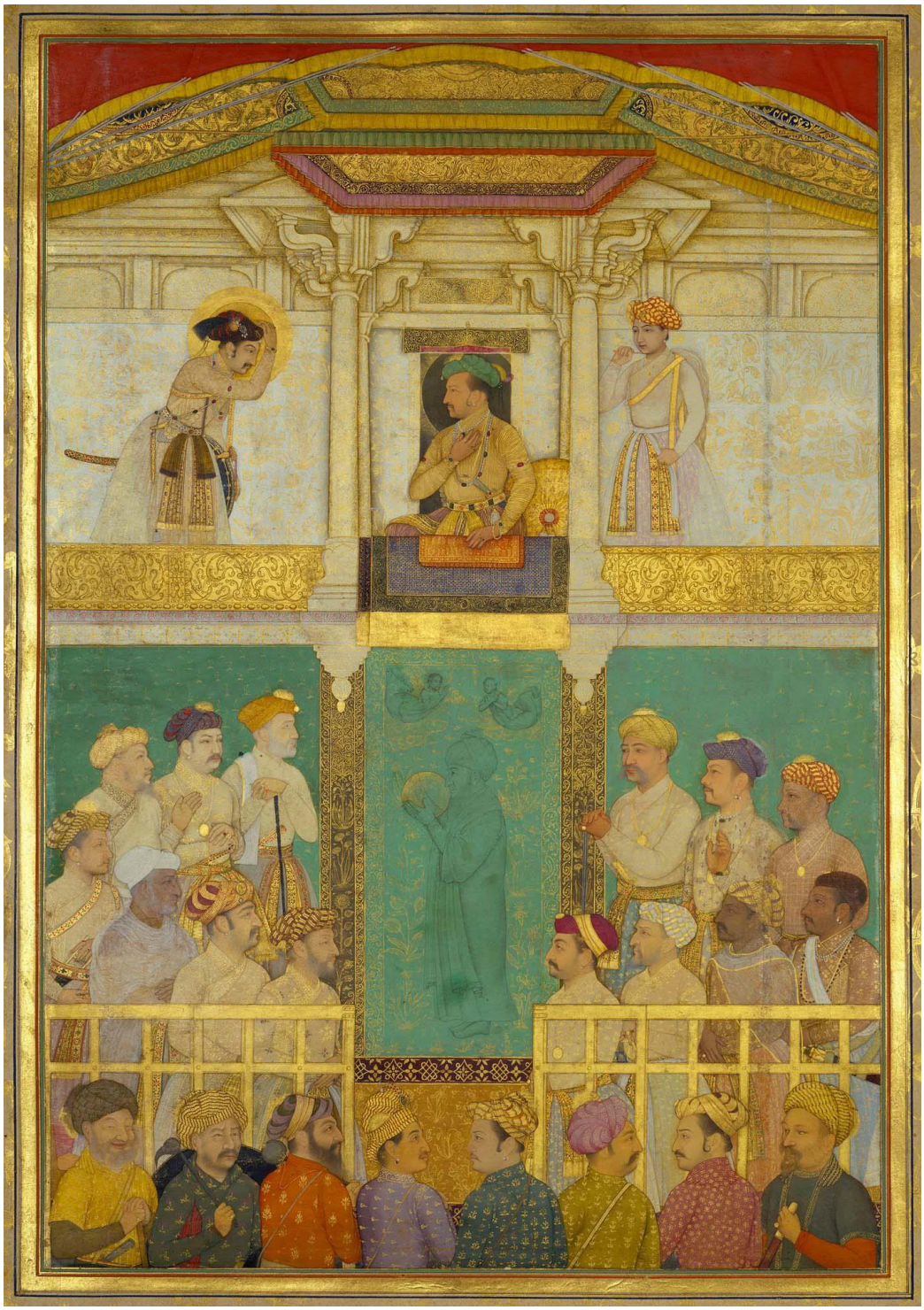

Figure 25. Jahangir receives Prince Khurram.
Description*:* This Padshahnama painting captures an event from 1616 where Emperor Jahangir receives the future emperor Shah Jahan. However, the halos on both the protagonists are notably different. Artist: Abid, 1656-1657.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-al/jahangir-receives-prince-khurram-april-1616.

Figure 26. Dynastic portrait of the first four Mughal sovereigns with Timur.
Description: This painting from 1650 depicts Timur (centre) surrounded by his Mughal descendants. Babur and Akbar are seated to the left while Humayun and Jahangir are seated to the right. Timur is only ruler on a throne and the only one bestowed with a halo in this assembly.
Source: © The British Library Board. Accessed August 17, 2021. https://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2020/01/painting-a-thousand-words-timur-and-his mughal-descendants.html?no_prefetch=1.

Another use of the halo was to portray the hierarchy of power and divinity in the case of dynastic group paintings. The Mughals were proud of their Timurid heritage, and as such, in dynastic portraits of the Mughal rulers with Timur, the divinity of the halo was bestowed only on the portrait of Timur and not on his descendants.[216] In the painting of Timur with the first four Mughal rulers (Fig.26), Timur is only ruler who occupies his position on a throne in the assembly. This disparity depicted through the halo and the throne demonstrates the use of the halo as a symbol to denote and assign hierarchy in a visual representation with multiple Mughal sovereigns.

In essence, the halo as a solar symbol had a strong presence in Mughal art and in addition to imbuing sacredness and associations with the sun, the halo acquired diverse meanings based on the context of the painting. This brings to attention another set of motifs that frequently appeared in Mughal paintings as well, of animals, that were often depicted flanking the sun or with it. These solar fauna is analysed in the next section.

3.5. Solar Fauna

The varied artistic tools analysed thus far which associated the emperor with the sun were, in a way, different methods of overtly or covertly representing the sun in imperial art, which can be seen in how the sun's characteristics forms the base for the halo, the shamsa and other imperial regalia that included it. However, it was not restricted to just the sun's form since certain fauna that held inherent cosmological associations with the sun were also integrated into the scheme of Mughal solar symbolisms in art. The imagery of these solar animals were actively employed, often in tandem with the emperor in fields as diverse as art, apparel, carpets and even the imperial thrones. While the imperial throne and its associated solar symbolisms are explored in detail in the next section, this section will focus on solar fauna.

While figurative depictions of animals and birds was a common decorative motif in Mughal art, often utilised to embellish the borders of paintings, not all the animals seen in these works had symbolic associations with the sun. Among the ones that did possess these implied meanings, a pattern can be observed which used solar fauna in

[216] Lisa Golombek and Ebba Koch, "The Mughals, Uzbeks, and the Timurid Legacy," 811-812.

certain decorative arrangements in particular groupings. In this regard, the simurgh, both by itself and with other birds such as ducks and cranes, the motif of two simurghs flanking the sun, the peacock, and the question of whether the elephant could be a sun symbol will be considered in this section. The lion and its historic association as a sun symbol was already discussed prior and hence will not be included here.

3.5.1. Simurgh, Peacock and Other Birds

Simurghs, birds and winged angels were traditionally part of the set of imagery used by Islamic rulers to imbue symbolic meanings of kingship and paradise to diverse facets of their art and architecture.[217] The simurgh is the mythical Persian bird considered as the king of the birds, the emanation of divine wisdom and light that inhabits the solar mountain of Qaf.[218] In the Mughal case, the simurgh was depicted across a myriad of mediums spread out across paintings, architecture, imperial thrones and its canopy, carpets and even on textiles.[219] Among these depictions, it can be seen that there were primarily two types of motifs that involved the simurgh that suggested associations of the mythical bird to the sun. While the first type included depictions of the simurgh often accompanied by other birds with inherent symbolic meanings, such as the duck and the crane, the second type was the motif of two simurghs flanking the sun, which overtly associated the simurgh with the sun.

[217] Ebba Koch, "Solomonic Angels in a Mughal Sky: The Wall Paintings of the Kala Burj at the Lahore Fort Revisited and Their Reception in Later South Asian and Qajar Art," in *Spirits in Transcultural Skies: Auspicious and Protective Spirits in Artefacts and Architecture between East and West*, ed. Katharina Weiler and Niels Gutschow (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2015), pp. 152-173, 157.

[218] Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones: A Preliminary Note," 28; Koch, 158.

[219] Philippa Vaughan, "Mythical Animals in Mughal Art: Images, Symbols and Allusions," in *Flora and Fauna of Mughal Art*, ed. Som Prakash Verma (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1999), pp. 55-68, 55.

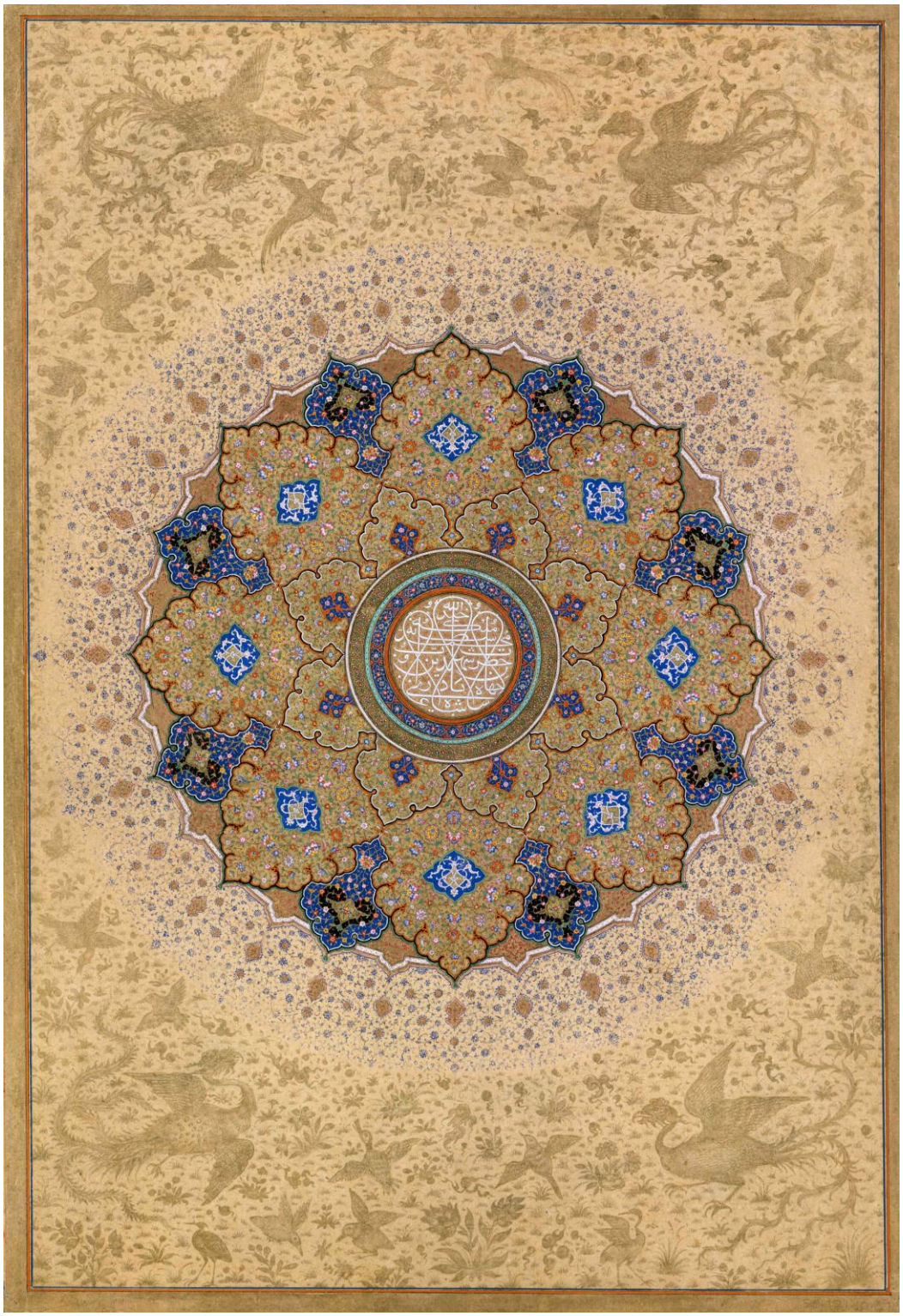

Figure 27. Shamsa from the Shah Jahan Album.
Description: The shamsa bears the name and titles of Emperor Shah Jahan at the centre. The space around the shamsa is covered with an assortment of plants and birds, including simurghs, ducks, cranes etc., worked in gold. Period: 1630-1640.
Source: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451286.

The first category, involving the simurgh accompanied by other birds, is most commonly found on the margins of Mughal paintings. While birds appearing as stock elements on the margins of Mughal paintings was not unusual[220] and by itself did not imply solar symbolisms, the use of birds in this manner hinted at ishraqi philosophy where the bird served as a metaphor for the quest of the soul to unite with God.[221] The best example of this motif implying solar association comes from a shamsa painting from the Shah Jahan album (Fig.27). The shamsa (sunburst), an overt sun symbol discussed in the previous section, bears the name and titles of Emperor Shah Jahan at the centre, indicating the emperor as the sun.[222] However, the space around the shamsa is a landscape that is covered with an assortment of illuminated plant and bird imagery, which includes simurghs at each corner, accompanied by ducks, cranes etc. The use of gold to highlight these birds deserves special attention, as gold itself is a metal associated with the sun.[223] Therefore, this composition as a whole indicates a case where the fauna that accompanied it are part of a painting that is heavily charged with solar symbolism.

This scheme of the emperor surrounded by simurghs along with other birds in paintings continues to appear in the case of the painting depicting Jahangir, Nur Jahan and Prince Khurram (future Shah Jahan) in a garden setting (Fig.28). The carpet on which the haloed emperor sits contains depictions of simurghs, ducks, cranes and a dragon occupying the space in such a way that it essentially emulated the pattern seen in the earlier shamsa painting, where the position of the emperor at the centre was surrounded by imagery of simurghs along with other birds.

The motif of the simurgh accompanied by other birds was not restricted to just shamsas and paintings as it was applied to textiles too, particularly in designs for the

[220] Koch, 157.

[221] Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 182.

[222] "'Rosette Bearing the Names and Titles of Shah Jahan', Folio from the Shah Jahan Album," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed August 20, 2021, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451286.

[223] Abbas Daneshvari, *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran: An Iconographical Study* (Lexington: Mazda Publishers, 1986), 23.

hunting wear of the Mughal emperor. The painting of a Mughal Prince (possibly Jahangir) in his hunting jacket (Fig.29), embellished with images of different animals that includes lions hunting deer, ducks, herons and a simurgh, is a prime example of this trend. While the colour of the jacket hints at the use of gold, the position of the fauna on the jacket indicated the setting of the natural world. In it, the birds occupied the upper half, with the simurgh placed highest and closest to the emperor's head, which was considered to emit divine light, while the land animals occupied the bottom half. A surviving Mughal hunting coat from the seventeenth century (Fig.30), made of satin with silk embroidery, is similarly embellished with imagery of flora and fauna such as lions hunting deer, cranes and ducks. However, the absence of the mythical simugh here coincides with the presence of peacocks, a living bird included among the solar fauna, widely considered as sacred through its association with the uppermost levels of heaven and the sun, which featured prominently on across diverse imperial objects, just like the simurgh.[224] The Persian word for peacock (tawus) itself was used as metaphors of the sun, fire and heavens.[225] With regard to being a paradisiac bird with solar connotations, both the peacock and the duck were considered to be custodians of the Tree of Life and solar discs, making both these birds feature prominently on Mughal thrones.[226] The peacock however took more prominence as a sun symbol and formed an integral part of Shah Jahan's famous Peacock Throne, which featured two bejewelled figurines of the peacock at the top of the throne.[227] After the raid of Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1739, even the replacement for the Peacock Throne involved four figurines of peacocks that were turned towards the seat of the divinely illumined emperor.[228]

[224] Malecka, 28.

[225] Nile Green, "Ostrich Eggs and Peacock Feathers: Sacred Objects as Cultural Exchange between Christianity and Islam," *Al-Masāq* 18, no. 1 (2006): pp. 27-78, 61.

[226] Malecka, 28.

[227] Malecka, 28.

[228] Ibid.

Figure 28. Nur Jahan entertains Jahangir and Prince Khurram.
Description: The carpet on which the emperor sits can be observed to contain depictions of simurghs, ducks, storks and a dragon. Made in early 1620s.
Source: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://asia.si.edu/object/F1907.258/.

Figure 29. Painting of a Mughal Prince (possibly Jahangir) holding a falcon.
Description: The hunting jacket of the prince is embellished with images of different animals that includes lions hunting, ducks, herons and a simurgh. Period: 1600-1605.
Source: Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://collections.lacma.org/node/247380.

Figure 30. Mughal hunting-coat.
Description: The hunting coat is made of satin with silk embroidery, which is embellished in imagery of flora and fauna (lions hunting deer, storks, ducks, peacocks etc.). Period: 1620-1630.
Source: © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O16066/hunting-coat-unknown/.

The painting of Jahangir on his throne (Fig.31) provides a closer look into how all these themes coalesced into one single throne of the solar emperor. Inside the eight pointed stars lined throughout the base of this throne are imagery of the simurgh, peacocks, ducks, cranes and other birds along with lions and other fauna. While the simurgh occupies a central position being placed at the opening, the sculptures of golden ducks appear on the backrest of the throne, all of which taken together hint at a reference to both Jamshid's (and Solomon's) throne, which is inscribed in the calligraphy surrounding the throne.[229]

Familiarity with the motif of the simurgh and the birds that accompanied it brings to attention the second type of motif involving the simurgh that is even more overtly associated with the sun, even at prima facie glance. The motif of two simurghs and

[229]Kavita Singh, *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens: Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe*, 49; Malecka, 25, 28.

the sun, applied in different permutations, was also a decorative motif that frequented usage in Mughal art and architecture. The motif was commonly portrayed under the canopies above the imperial throne, directly under which the Mughal emperor sat, while featuring as a decorative motif in Mughal architecture too.[230] This is clearly visible in the painting of Shah Jahan receiving his eldest son, Dara Shikoh, while seated on a throne under the parasol (Fig.32). The parasol directly above the haloed emperor holds the image of two simurghs flying in a circle that is contained inside a big radiant sun, while two smaller suns containing smaller birds exist to each side of the central motif. The motif of two simurghs and the sun is also found under the parasols above the jharokha in the court paintings in Mughal audience halls, particularly during Shah Jahan's reign. The painting of Emperor Jahangir receiving Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) (Fig.33) from the Padshahnama is a wonderful example for this. Not only is the canopy directly above the jharokha seat ornate with the motif of the brightly illuminated sun in the middle flanked by two simurghs, but the parasols on both sides of the central canopy are shown to contain simurghs as well, making the entire canopy above the emperor's jharokha a highly solar themed environment.

The motif of simurghs with the sun achieves an even more overt status as a solar symbol in the case of the posthumous portrait of Akbar (Fig.34). In the painting made for Shah Jahan, two simurghs swoop in at the center of the image just above Akbar's large, radiant, illuminated halo, which resembles the sun and provides the most colour to the painting.[231] While the simurghs converge above the sun like halo, angels praise the emperor, at whose feet lay the lion and calf at ease, indicating harmony and peace throughout his rule.[232]

[230] "Shah Jahan Accepts a Falcon from Dara Shikoh." San Diego Museum of Art. Accessed August 20, 2021. http://collection.sdmart.org/Obj5093?sid=966&x=52310.

[231] "Portrait of the Aged Akbar." Cleveland Museum of Art. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1971.78.

[232] Ibid.

Figure 31. Prince Salim (future Jahangir) on his throne.
Description: The throne contains images of simurgh (centre), peacock, lions hunting deer and other smaller birds at the base, all portrayed inside eight-pointed stars while the backrests contain golden sculptures of ducks. Period: 1600-1605.
Source: St Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts.

Figure 32. Shah Jahan receives a falcon from Prince Dara Shikoh.
Description: The parasol above the throne shows two simurghs flying in a circle, which is enclosed by a sun. Either side of this central motif contains smaller versions of the same motif but with birds instead of simurghs. Artist: Govardhan, 1630.
Source: The San Diego Museum of Art. Accessed August 20, 2021. http://collection.sdmart.org/Obj5093?sid=966&x=52310.

Figure 33. Jahangir receives Prince Khurram following his Deccan campaign.
Description: The parasol above the jharokha throne shows a brightly illuminated sun flanked by simurghs. The parasols on both sides of this central parasol also contain simurghs. Artist: Murar. Period: 1656-1657.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. "Murar - Jahangir Receives Prince Khurram on His Return from the Deccan." Royal Collection Trust. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-j/jahangir-receives-prince-khurram-on-his-return-from-the-deccan-10-october-1617.

Figure 34. Portrait of Akbar made for Shah Jahan.
Description: Simurghs fly above Akbar's large, radiant, illuminated halo while angels praise the emperor, at whose feet lay the lion and calf at peace. Akbar's halo resembles the sun and is the most colourful element in the painting. Artist: Govardhan, 1640-1650.
Source: Cleveland Museum of Art. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1971.78.

Having seen the association of the simurgh to the sun and the use of this motif in imperial art and crafts, the question arises as to if the motif had transferred on to imperial architecture as well, which it did. However, compared to the scale of the motif appearing on the pishtaq of the Nadir Divan-begi Madrasa (Fig.35), built in the 1620s in Uzbekistan, the ancestral land of the Mughals, the motif was not as prominent in Mughal architecture. The presence of this motif in Mughal architecture appears primarily in the Lahore Fort. While the picture wall of the Lahore Fort has instances of tiled figures of simurghs (Fig.36) displayed on the wall, a more relevant example is found inside the fort. In the Kala Burj inside the Lahore fort, an image of two simurghs fighting against a blue background enclosed inside an eight-pointed star is depicted at the centre of the vault (Fig.37), which is subsequently surrounded concentrically by images of angels, birds and flora.[233] Koch suggests that the ensemble in the Kala Burj indicated a Solomonic program.[234] In addition to the Solomonic meanings, the motif of simurghs circling inside an eight-pointed star, as seen in examples prior, indicates the possibility that the motif in this instance could resemble a shamsa too, that has eight vertices spreading out from the centre and is surrounded by simurghs and other birds. Meanwhile, the motif of simurghs circling inside a radiant sun was already seen to have solar associations as well.

Figure 35. Nadir Divan-begi Madrasa in Bukhara, Uzbekistan.
Description: The pishtaq displays the motif of two simurghs and the sun.
Source: Mario J. Schwaiger (Public Domain).

[233] Ebba Koch, "Solomonic Angels in a Mughal Sky", 152.

[234] Malecka, 25; Koch, 162.

Figure 36. Motif of simurgh fighting a dragon on the outer wall of Lahore Fort.
Source: Chughtai Museum. Accessed August 20, 2021. http://blog.chughtaimuseum.com/?p=10637.

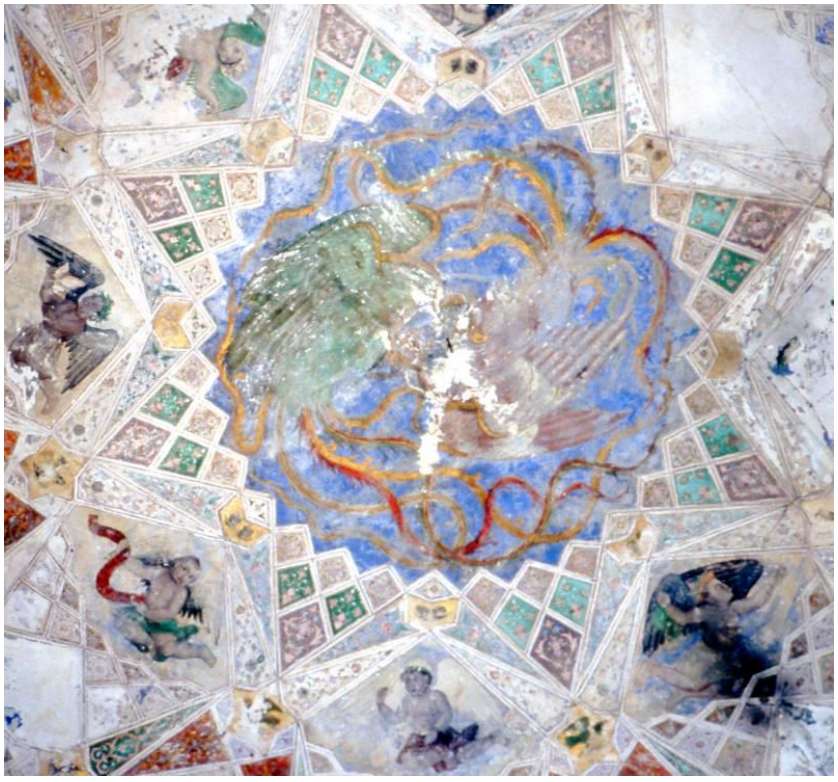

Figure 37. Central vault of the Kala Burj at Lahore Fort.
Description: The vault displays the battle between two simurghs against a blue background.
Source: Ilay Cooper. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://www.ilaycooper.com/blog/travel/lahores-colourful-black-bastion/.

In essence, the simurgh, the peacock and other birds, held symbolic meanings that associated them with the sun to varying degrees. The use of these solar themed motifs and its many permutations ranging from art to architecture demonstrated the popularity of these motifs as it imbued solar connotations to spaces and objects that the emperor used and to the emperor himself. The use of these motifs on the parasols above the jharokha throne in the audience halls and on large carpets, demonstrated that these motifs were public statements of the solar associations of the emperor, which went above conveying the symbolism to just private circles.[235] The extent of use of these motifs in furthering the divinity of the emperor also brings up the question on whether the elephant, an animal that held symbolisms of kingship in India and which was frequently used by emperor as the imperial mount and in art and architecture, held solar symbolisms in the Mughal scheme as well. Consequently, this will be the topic of analysis in the next section.

3.5.2. Is the Elephant a Sun Symbol?

The elephant was a common motif found across Mughal art and architecture that heavily contained kingship symbolisms in the Indian subcontinent, which was analysed prior.[236] The elephant regularly featured in Mughal art in all types of settings. In architecture, it is possible to notice life-size elephant statues guarding the elephant gate at Red Fort in Delhi, columns brackets and wall paintings featuring elephants in the Lahore Fort and even life size statues commissioned by Emperor Jahangir on large rocks during his journeys across the land, among other examples.[237]

However, with regard to solar symbolisms, the elephant was closely related to the ultimate sun symbol, the emperor, by serving as the mount for both the divinely illumined emperor and for the imperial insignia. For instance, an account of a battle

[235] Philippa Vaughan, "Mythical Animals in Mughal Art: Images, Symbols and Allusions," in *Flora and Fauna of Mughal Art*, ed. Som Prakash Verma (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 1999), pp. 55-68, 63.

[236] See Chapter 2.

[237] H. Beveridge, "The Delhi Elephant Statues," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 45, no. 4 (1913): pp. 1049-1054.

in 1764 by a Mughal historian notes that the tall elephant, acting as the imperial mount, would enable the emperor to provide his "beneficent, magnificent sun" such that it would inspire the troops in battle.[238] Thus, while the elephant in conjunction with Mughal Emperor projected the emperor's sacredness, by mounting the tallest elephant, the emperor occupied the highest position in the battlefield and became the standard that urged the troops to continue the fight. It is perhaps this concept of enabling the emperor's divine light to shine forth that led Jahangir to bestow his favourite elephant the title of "Nur-e-Nawruz" (Light of the Nawruz).[239]

A variant of the arrangement of the emperor atop the elephant can be observed in paintings as well. The elephant was a sculptural ornamentation in the court painting of Shah Jahan (Fig.38), which depicted attendants with royal flywhisks, a symbol of sovereignty, fanning the emperor while standing atop golden sculptures of elephants, which was placed directly below the jharokha of the emperor in the audience hall. This arrangement could also have worked as a metaphor for the Mughal emperor who stood above the rulers of Hindustan, which was represented by the elephant.[240] Similar use of the metaphor could be seen in how Akbar had rode and controlled rogue elephants in real life and showed his prowess as supreme emperor of Hindustan who could also control any rebelling Indian ruler.[241]

This arrangement of the emperor, who was a manifestation of the sun, atop the elephant played out in other formats too where the lion takes the position of the emperor. This elephant-lion arrangement can be seen in the painting of Jahangir celebrating the festival of Holi (Fig.39) with his courtiers where the legs of the emperor's throne were made of a golden winged lion standing atop a golden

[238] William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy: The East India Company, Corporate Violence, and the Pillage of an Empire* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), Chapter 5.

[239] Malecka, 29.

[240] See Chapter 2.

[241] Jane Buckingham, "Symbolism and Power: Elephants and Gendered Authority in the Mughal World," in *Conflict, Negotiation, and Coexistence: Rethinking Human-Elephant Relations in South Asia*, ed. Piers Locke and Jane Buckingham (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7.

elephant.[242] Welch suggests that such an arrangement of the elephant and lion represented the might and wisdom of the elephant combined with the supreme solar energy of the lion.[243] While elephants were the imperial mount of the emperors for hunting lions, the elephant-lion combination evolved further in the realm of lore, where it metamorphosed to become a winged hybrid, called gaja-simha, which had the head of an elephant and the body of a lion, with roots in Indian mythology.[244] The gaja-simha battling a simurgh while clutching onto seven elephants was a motif that was reproduced in both paintings as well as carpets during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir.[245] The painting also shows that during the battle, ducks and cranes are among the clouds surrounding the simurgh and gaja-simha, a theme commonly associated with the simurgh in Mughal paintings. The reason for the battle between these two mythical creatures is suggested by Vaughan as "the allegory of Mughal rule, symbolised by the simurgh through which the good manifestly triumphs… over evil".[246] This further substantiates the use of the image of the simurgh across diverse fields.

In essence, although the elephant is an animal that was featured frequently in both Mughal art and architecture as an Indian symbol of kingship that served as the mount of the emperor, the absence of any direct references relating the elephant to the sun prevents considering the elephant by itself as a potential sun symbol. However, the elephant was often combined with other overt solar symbols, making it part of the canon despite it individually not exhibiting solar associations. Attempts to create a

[242] Malecka, 29.

[243] Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 38; Malecka, 29.

[244] Pedro Moura Carvalho, "What Happened to the Mughal Furniture? The Role of the Imperial Workshops, the Decorative Motifs Used, and the Influence of Western Models," *Muqarnas Online* 21, no. 1 (2004): pp. 79-93, 86; Welch, 38.

[245] Carvalho, 86;

[246] Vaughan, "Mythical Animals in Mughal Art: Images, Symbols and Allusions,", 63, 66; Carvalho, 86;

similar effect in other aspects in the day-to-day life of the emperor led to solar symbolisms finding a way into other objects that the emperor interacted with as well. The Mughal imperial throne is an example for this and it is analysed next.

Figure 38. Jahangir taking part in Holi celebrations.
Description: The foot of the throne on which the emperor sits displays a golden elephant upon which stands a winged golden lion. Artist: Govardhan. Period: 1618-1620.
Source: Rampur Raza Library.

Figure 39. Battle between a simurgh and a gaja-simha.
Description: While the simurgh fights the gaja-simha that clutches onto seven elephants, the ducks and cranes occupy the space in between. Late seventeenth century.
Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum. Accessed August 20, 2021. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1920-0917-0-126.

3.6. The Imperial Throne

The solar symbolisms that were a part of how the emperor was portrayed in art often extended to apply to real world objects that represented the sovereign as well. In this regard, as the seat of the emperor, imperial thrones were also avenues that actively employed solar symbolisms since its use was exclusive to the emperor. In order to explore this section, familiarity with the solar associations that the shamsa and the various solar fauna held, which were analysed prior, is crucial. These themes often appear in tandem with the depictions of the thrones, hinting that some aspects of these meanings transferred on to the throne as well since it was the celestial seat of the Mughal Emperor.[247] While scholars have pointed out the many references that

[247] Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones: A Preliminary Note," *Arts Asiatiques* 54, no. 1 (1999): pp. 24-32, 25.

Mughal thrones had to Solomon's (and Jamshid's) thrones,[248] this section will focus on the solar symbolisms that these thrones held through analysing the solar associations of two things, the materials that adorned the throne and the motifs that appeared on it.

The imperial throne tended to be ornate with materials that were individually associated with the sun. The Ain-i Akbari mentions the lines: "It is the Sun from which the seven oceans get their pearls, The black rocks get their jewels from his lustre. The mines get their gold from his fostering glance."[249] As pearls, precious jewels and gold was thus seen to be formed due to the sun, its use to decorate the thrones, by principle, would have extended some of these connotations to the throne of the divinely illumined king. Among this, the metal gold was already widely associated with the sun.[250] Additionally, it was also customary for jewels to be scattered in the court upon accession of the emperor to the throne, which is an act that could be intended at closely resembling the scattering of the rays of the sun.[251] Furthermore, among the jewels itself, it is believed that the Mughals admired the red rubies, possibly due to the belief that rubies were cosmic stones which were formed from the heat of the sun.[252] For instance, the famous Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan was noted to have held a ruby worth 'a lac of rupees' which was passed down from Jahangir, on which was engraved the names of the Mughal lineage up to Timur.[253]

With regard to the motifs that were employed on and alongside the imperial thrones, the shamsa and some of the solar fauna, both of which were analysed in the previous

[248] Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, ed. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt, 313-38. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 326; Malecka, 25.

[249] Abul Fazl, *The Ain i Akbari*, trans. H Blochmann, vol. 1 (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873), 28.

[250] Abbas Daneshvari, *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran: An Iconographical Study* (Lexington: Mazda Publishers, 1986), 23.

[251] Malecka, 25.

[252] Malecka, 25-26.

[253] Sir H. M. Elliot, *Shah Jahan* (Lahore: Sh. Mubarak Ali, 1875), 49; Malecka, 25.

sections, appear to be prominent. The shamsa was employed on thrones as both the shape for the backrest of the throne and the centre on the canopies that stood over the throne,[254] which was often flanked by simurghs or other birds. In the dynastic portrait showing Akbar passing on the Mughal crown to Shah Jahan (Fig.40), it is possible to notice the application of both these parameters. The backrest of the throne of Akbar is shaped in the form of a shamsa in such a manner that it encircled the head of the emperor like a halo.[255] The backrest was adorned with precious jewels and gold, hinting at the possibility that the shamsa-shaped backrest could have resembled both a halo around the emperor's head and a sunburst spreading its rays, which when viewed from the audience's perspective would have produced the effect of a shimmering golden halo. The painting also reveals how the shamsas appeared under the imperial parasol that stood over the throne, flanked by images of simurghs or other birds, which was arranged in such a way that the emperor when seated on the throne will be sitting directly under the shamsa.[256] While the canopy above Akbar in the painting has a clear radiant sun motif flanked by simurghs, the canopies of Jahangir and Shah Jahan both have a shamsa in place of the radiant sun motif and is flanked by simurghs as well.

The depiction of solar fauna, that was visible on the canopies in this case, extended to include itself as part of the ornamentation on the thrones as well. The renowned Mughal imperial throne of all, the Peacock throne, was noted to be have been made from a luxurious ensemble of gold and the most precious jewels, which took seven years to complete.[257] The throne possessed two bejewelled peacock motifs atop each pillar with a tree made from rubies, emeralds, diamonds and pearls coming in between the peacocks.[258] The peacock is another bird that was associated with both the sun and paradise, and therefore, its use in this scheme further substantiates the

[254] Malecka, 26

[255] Malecka, 26

[256] Ibid.

[257] Elliot, 49.

[258] Ibid.

likelihood that this famous throne held solar connotations as well.[259] Furthermore, the painting of Jahangir's throne (Fig.31) displays a highly ornate throne replete with cosmic imagery comprising of simurgh, peacock, falcon and lion hunting deer inside eight pointed star medallions, while duck shaped heads formed the backrest of the throne, which could also be a reference to Solomon's throne.[260] Associating such depictions of creatures with Solomon's throne also provided the necessary justification to bypass the restrictions on visual depictions imposed by Islam and thus enabled their portrayal on objects.[261]

All these diverse aspects that were brought together to form the imperial throne aided in enhancing the identity of the emperor as a divinely illumined sovereign even further. The imperial throne was notably different from the earlier parameters that were analysed as part of the solar symbolisms that had appeared in Mughal art, primarily due to the fact that the throne was not restricted to the two-dimensional plane as in the case of paintings, but it was three-dimensional and occupied space. This aspect of the throne played out well to set it as a bridge that connects both the dimensions as the study continues its analysis of solar symbolisms. In this regard, the analysis of how solar symbolisms were applied to spaces that the emperor inhabited and presented himself from, or in other words, an analysis of Mughal architecture follows, which is consequently, also the grandest and the most enduring of all Mughal creations.

[259] Malecka, 28;

[260] Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526 - 1858)* (Munich: Prestel, 1991), 111; Malecka, 28.

[261] Koch, 111.

Figure 40. Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan.
Description: The shape of the headrests as well as the canopies above the throne contain the shamsa and the shamsa flanked by simurghs respectively. Artist: Bichitr, 1631.
Source: Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Accessed August 19, 2021. https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/image/In_07A_19/1/LOG_0000/.

In essence, the varied tools of artistic representation involving solar symbolisms that were analysed in this chapter were, at its core, different methods of representing the sun and its metaphorical symbols in Mughal imperial art. This is evident from how the sun's characteristics itself formed the base for many different types and combinations of solar themes. Some of these motifs were not restricted in its usage to a few set instances and instead went on to be employed both individually and in combination across diverse areas. The sun, lion and simurgh motifs and their various combinations are example or this trend. In essence, the chapter examined the 'lion and sun' motif appearing in imperial flags and coins, the radiant halo that adorned Mughal emperors and the various instances of 'halo politics', the shamsa and the different types of fauna motifs that had solar associations in Mughal paintings, subsequently ending with an analysis of the imperial thrones and other imperial regalia. While employing these symbolisms in Mughal art led to some of the most overt instances of the solar ideology in action, the audience that would have been exposed to this remained limited as Mughal art was limited to a select few levels of the empire and as such, did not penetrate to all levels of society. It is in this regard that application of solar symbolism in architecture was different since its monumentality and scale automatically exposed parts of it to wider sections of the populace. The effect of solar symbolisms in architecture is analysed next.

CHAPTER 4

SOLAR SYMBOLISMS IN MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

The stability and prosperity that ensued after the consolidation of the Mughal Empire under Akbar brought about significant advances in the number and scale of architectural projects that were undertaken in the realm. In their approach towards architecture, the Mughals eclectically absorbed influences that would help them in projecting their claims to legitimacy and in furthering their grip on administering the ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse populace that they ruled over. As solar symbolisms came into prevalence from Akbar's reign onwards, the many ways in which it came to be displayed in different aspects of imperial life differed significantly according to each sovereign's reign. If solar symbolisms displayed in art had achieved one of its grandest expressions under the reign of Jahangir, which continued with his immediate successors as well, perhaps grandest expression for it in architecture came during the reign of Shah Jahan.[262] The flurry of construction activity that marked Shah Jahan's reign not only resulted in some of the most renowned Mughal buildings of our time,[263] but also led to further refinement in the application of solar symbolisms to fit the identity of the emperor even in the spaces that the emperor used or displayed himself from. In this regard, this section attempts to explore the architectural spaces where the practices or meanings associated with solar symbolisms came to be intertwined with architecture, often shaping the way in which a space came to be designed. The architectural spaces that are considered in this section are arranged in the order starting from where the emperor most overtly expressed his association with the sun to the subtlest expression of it. In other words,

[262] Richard M Eaton, *India in The Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 284, 285.

[263] Taj Mahal, Delhi Jama Masjid, City of Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi) etc.

the section explores the jharokha darshan ceremony, Mughal audience halls and imperial tombs. This also coincides with the order of the solar symbolism laden spaces where the emperor was most accessible to his subjects to the least.

4.1. Jharokha Darshan

For this purpose, the study will analyse the practise of 'jharokha darshan', where the Mughal emperor appeared at an east facing, highly ornate and golden roofed balcony in his fort at sunrise every day in order to bless his subjects on the terrain below with his divine effulgence.[264]

One of the prominent instances of assimilation of indigenous traditions from India into the Mughal composite culture was the practise of jharokha darshan.[265] The practice traditionally involved a king appearing from a balcony or pavilion (called jharokha) on his palace walls every morning to present himself to his subjects, enabling them to receive the darshan, which is the instance of catching the glimpse of a deity or a holy person that results in the viewer receiving blessings.[266] Although this tradition had its roots among the Hindu kings in northern India, it was carried over by the Mughals as they expanded their dominions.[267] The ceremony allowed the sovereign to be viewed with the sacredness akin to how a deity was venerated in a temple.[268] However, instead of merely replicating the tradition, the Mughals enhanced their practise of jharokha darshan with their own understanding of solar symbolisms that added to the divinity of the emperor as he performed the darshan at

[264] Gülru Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): pp. 303-342, 314; Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones: A Preliminary Note," *Arts Asiatiques* 54, no. 1 (1999): pp. 24-32; Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 62.

[265] Afzal Husain, "Jahangir's Relations with the Non-Muslims," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 45 (1984): pp. 444-453, 445; Nirmal Kumar, "Rituals of Power and Power of Rituals: A Study of Imperial Rituals and Invented Traditions in 16th Century North India," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 58 (1997): pp. 244-252.

[266] Eaton, 222.

[267] Ibid.

[268] A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 233.

every sunrise from the top of the his citadel to bless the populace on the terrain below with his presence (Fig.41, 42).[269] Ebba Koch describes from the Padshahnama that this daily appearance at sunrise constituted the emperor as 'the earthly sun' who was 'opposite to the sun in the sky'.[270] The choice of architectural design for the jharokha, which in itself resembled the shape of a radiant sun, provides further clarity on the extent of the sun veneration that was utilised for this public form of viewing. Among the Mughals, the practice was begun in a crude form by Humayun but it came to be adjusted to coincide with the sunrise and imbibed with meanings of solar veneration and divinity only under his son, Akbar.[271] By the reign of Shah Jahan, the practice had grown so embedded into daily life in the imperial capital that it was believed that there were followers of the emperor who proudly refused to have food until they witnessed the jharokha darshan in the morning,[272] which if true, demonstrates the divinity that was attributed to the emperor.

Jharokha Darshan was a practice that was traditionally associated with Indian kings and its adoption into the Mughal fray was inevitable in a way as the Mughal realms expanded across north India in the sixteenth century.[273] Although it does provide some parallels with the instance of how another Indian symbol of kingship, the elephant, came to be assimilated and became a part of the identity of the Mughal emperor, the jharokha institution grew partly through the growing Rajput influence at the Mughal court following Akbar's political and marital alliances with Rajput

[269] Necipoğlu, 314; Malecka, Anna. "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Thrones. A Preliminary Note." Arts Asiatiques 54, no. 1, 1999, 24–32; Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 62.

[270] Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, ed. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt, 313-38. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 316; Asher, 185.

[271] Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal World: Life in India's Last Golden Age* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007), 44; Eaton, 222.

[272] *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India, 1911* (London: Published for the government of India by John Murray, 1914), 53, 54.

[273] Eaton, 245.

clans.[274] Subsequently, jharokha darshan came to evolve in its meanings with each new sovereign. When the Sisodiya clan of Rajputs, the last house to hold out against the Mughals, were finally subdued in 1615 and integrated into the empire, Jahangir had two life size marble equestrian statues of the Sisodia ruler and his son placed directly below his jharokha, displaying obeisance of the Sisodia clan to Mughal rule and the emperor.[275] Therefore, by Jahangir's reign, the jharokha darshan encompassed displaying of political allegiances too. The Mughal emperor also remained strict on the fact that only the imperial capital could have the jharokha from a citadel and it was the exclusive prerogative of the emperor to do the darshan. For example, Jahangir sternly rebuked the Mughal governor of Bengal for creating a jharokha in his provincial capital in Dhaka and ordered it to be no higher than half a man's height from the ground.[276] This also enables us to see how the jharokhas across the realm were carefully controlled so that the imperial jharokha at Agra (at that time the imperial capital) was the one and only sacred space that provided the darshan and consequently, the only place with the attributed meanings of legitimacy and divinity. Devoted followers who were unable to partake in the ritual directly were even offered painted substitutes containing a tiny portrait of the haloed emperor framed by the jharokha window with a carpet hung on the sill.[277]

[274] Ibid, 249.

[275] Eaton, 255-56.

[276] Ibid, 265.

[277] Moin, 224; Kavita Singh, "As Jahangir Contemplates a Portrait of His Father, a Reversal of Our Ideas about Dreams and Reality," Scroll.in, accessed July 25, 2021, https://scroll.in/article/1000463/as-jahagir-contemplates-a-portrait-of-his-father-a-reversal-of-our-ideas-about-dreams-and-reality.

Figure 41. Jahangir giving jharokha darshan at Agra Fort.
Description: A hierarchy can be observed in how the subjects are standing, with the public and lower ranking officials occupying the lower part of the image while the high ranking officials stood directly below the window. Artist: Abu'l-Hasan, 1620.
Source: © The Aga Khan Museum. Accessed August 23, 2021. https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/jahangir-jharoka-window-agra-fort-folio-jahangirnameh-memoirs-jahangir-akm136.

Figure 42. Shah Jahan watching an elephant fight from the jharokha window.
Description: Shah Jahan, his sons and court watch an elephant fight. The painting also depicts a hierarchy where the Emperor at the top and all who are beneath him. Folio from Padshahnama. Artist: Bulaqi.1639.
Source: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Accessed August 23, 2021. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/453313.

This brings us to explore the architecture of the space that made the jharokha. Based on the best available primary sources on the jharokha darshan ceremony, which comes in the form of miniature paintings, it can be observed that by Shah Jahan's reign, the beholder would prima facie observe the Bengal roof (semi-circle shaped roof with corners that run down the sides) that covers the jharokha window in which the emperor appeared. The painting (Fig.42) most likely depicts the jharokha at Agra Fort, where the curved Bengal roof was originally covered with gold[278] and has a set of seven equidistantly spaced finials lining the circumference of the curved roof that gives the impression of rays radiating from the sun (Fig.43). Although it is hard to conclusively state if the choice of the number seven in the number of finials held any inherent cosmological meanings, such as the seven heavens or seven days of the week, among other possible interpretations, it is likely that the gilding the roof possessed both symbolic and practical benefits. While gold in Islamic cosmology is a metal that is widely associated with the sun even in the medieval period,[279] its application on the roof would have made the roof appear to glow like a second sun as the sunlight reflected off it at sunrise. Thus, when viewed from the ground (Fig.44), i.e. at the eye level of the common folk, it is possible that the jharokha darshan ceremony would have appeared more like a spectacle where the emperor who presented himself at sunrise at the jharokha would appear to be surrounded by a heavenly glow, reminiscent of a halo, created by the reflected sunlight. It is possible to observe from miniature painting of Jahangir's jharokha darshan that the top of the roof from where the darshan was given was covered in gold, highlighted by the illumination given in the painting through golden effect. This was prior to the rebuilding of many of the palace buildings inside Agra Fort by Shah Jahan,[280] indicating that the golden roof was a conscious decision aimed at enhancing the effect of the ceremony to the spectator. Furthermore, the arrangement of the

[278] Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, 181, 186.

[279] Abbas Daneshvari, *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran: An Iconographical Study* (Lexington: Mazda Publishers, 1986), 23.

[280] Eaton, Richard M. India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765. California: University of California Press, 2019, 287; Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 185.

onlookers that made up the jharokha darshan ceremony was in such a way that it also displayed the power hierarchy where the emperor sat at the zenith in his jharokha. It is evident form the paintings that the space below the jharokha was allocated based on strict hierarchy in the descending order of power from the jharokha, i.e. the nobles holding the highest rank occupied the space closest to the jharokha while the less powerful nobles stood further from it.[281] This arrangement was followed in the case of the pillared audience halls of Shah Jahan as well where the emperor sat on his jharokha throne while the audience took their positions based on the power hierarchy.[282]

Figure 43. View of Khas Mahal from inside the Agra Fort.
Description: Shah Jahan gave jharokha darshan at sunrise from here. The curved Bengal roof with seven finials can be seen to resemble a radiant sun.
Source: Michael Peuckert, Archnet. Accessed August 23, 2021. https://archnet.org/sites/2665/media_contents/94547.

[281] Moin, 233.

[282] Ibid.

Figure 44. East side view of Agra Fort from the ground level.
Description: Previous jhaorkah darshan paintings showed Jahangir giving darshan from the Musamman Burj (tower on right) (Fig.41) and Shah Jahan giving darshan from Khas Mahal (Fig.42), located to its immediate left.
Source: Foursquare. Accessed August 23, 2021. https://tr.foursquare.com/v/agra-fort

Despite the legitimacy and divinity that it could provide for the emperor, the practise of jharokha darshan was fraught with potential dangers too. In the event that the emperor was unable to attend the jharokha at sunrise due to any reason, the situation could spiral out of control where the rumours of the emperor's possible death could spread rapidly across the realm, which can initiate both succession wars and other disturbances. This disastrous scenario for the empire materialised in reality during the reign of Shah Jahan, as he fell ill for ten days and did not partake in the ceremony, leading to a succession war among his four sons despite his full recovery, ultimately resulting in him losing power and being imprisoned by Aurangzeb.[283] An earlier instance where this scenario was successfully avoided was in 1556, when a recently re-crowned Emperor Humayun died unexpectedly.[284] This resulted in a man resembling the deceased emperor being made to appear at the window for some days so that any suspicion among the populace could be quelled and order be maintained

[283] Eaton, 307, 333; Munis D. Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 40; Audrey Truschke, *Aurangzeb: The Life and Legacy of India's Most Controversial King* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 43.

[284] Eaton, 223.

in the realm till the young Prince Akbar could return from his campaign and be crowned.[285] Even though this practise, aside from its symbolic meanings involving the sun, served the purpose of reassuring the populace that the Emperor is alive and well, it was abolished by Aurangzeb in 1669 who cited it as un-Islamic and who most likely did not want to take the risk of possible succession wars in the event that he could not appear at the jharokha.[286]

After construction of the new capital city of Shahjahanabad in Delhi in 1648, which housed the Red Fort, the jharokha darshan ceremony continued from the Muthamman Burj in the Red Fort.[287] While the Muthamman Burj was the projecting octagonal tower from which the emperor presented himself for the darshan every morning, the tower was part of the Khas Mahal, which was the emperor's private palace in the fort.[288] In the emperor's prayer room or Tasbih khana (place for telling beads), located in northern part of the Khas Mahal,[289] is a further interesting instance of a solar symbol, this time in the form of the radiant sun used as a decorative motif. This sun motif is located at the center of the intrados of the arch that encompasses the scales of justice, surrounded by vegetal ornamentation and situated above a perforated screen under which flows the Nahr-i-Behesht.[290] The motif is placed in such a way that the scales of justice appear directly below the sun, which could perhaps be interpreted as a metaphor for the efficient administering of justice under the all-encompassing rule of the divinely illumined Mughal emperor. A further instance of a similar sun motif appears on the intrados of the arch used to enter the space of the Tasbih khana as well. In essence, the presence of such a motif of a

[285] Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, 62.

[286] Eraly, *The Mughal World: Life in India's Last Golden Age*, 44; Necipoğlu, 314.

[287] Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639-1739* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), xi, 39.

[288] John Murray, *A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon* (Calcutta: Thacker, Sprink and Co., 1911), 198.

[289] "Khas Mahal." Archnet. Accessed August 6, 2021. https://archnet.org/sites/2545/media_contents/2833#item_description.

[290] Ibid.

radiant sun in a key room in the emperor's private palace indicates instance where solar symbolisms were integrated into Mughal architecture.

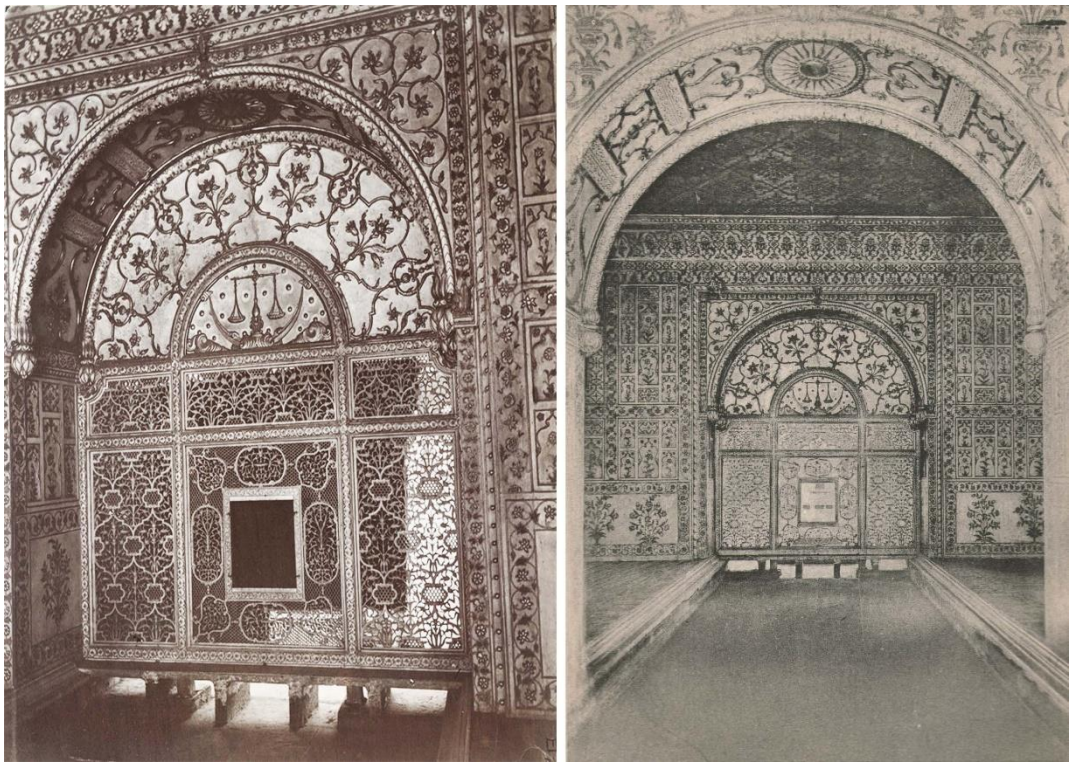

Figure 45. Sun motif inside Khas Mahal of Delhi Red Fort.
Description: (1) Radiant sun motif at the centre of the intrados of the arch which stands directly above the Scale of Justice in the Khas Mahal in the Delhi Red Fort. (2) Radiant sun motif on the centre of the intrados of the arch with the wall that holds the scale of justice in the background.
Source: (1) © The British Library Board (2) 432postcards.monissa.com

In essence, the jharokha darshan ceremony was the cornerstone of Mughal rituals that embodied solar symbolisms, in both symbolic and literal sense. Achieving its codified form under Akbar in the sixteenth century, the practise seemed to have found a resonance with a majority of the populace in the empire and aided in garnering wider popularity and acceptance for the divine illumined kingship identity of the emperor.[291] In a way, the traditional association of the ceremony with Indian kings had made its adoption into the Mughal fray inevitable as the Mughals

[291] Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal palaces," 314.

expanded their dominions further in India.[292] However, the ritual was tweaked from its earlier form to assimilate with Mughal solar symbolisms to suit the growing ideology of Mughal sacred kingship as it was assimilated into the ever-evolving sacred kingship traditions. This subsequently meant that appearing from the jharokha contributed to placing the emperor as a majestic and divine sovereign who was both spatially and symbolically removed from the ordinary subjects of his realm.[293] In this regard, the very architecture of the jharokha from where the emperor displayed himself was designed to maximise its association with the sun – from shape to function. The effect on architecture on the practice is substantial as it provides the best possible setting to display oneself as the solar emperor, under a golden canopy shaped like a radiant rising sun, which reflects sunlight at dawn and provides the illusion of a golden glow around the emperor, essentially creating the effect of a halo. Ultimately, the form of the jharokha was restricted to not just this ceremony on the palace walls as it was adopted for the throne from which the emperor was presented in his audience halls, which shall be analysed in the next section.

4.2. Audience Halls

By the reign of Shah Jahan (1628 -58), a typical morning in the Mughal imperial capital began with the emperor appearing at the jharokha window on his fort walls at sunrise for the ceremony of jharokha darshan, followed by the emperor moving on to the audience hall for conducting the business of empire.[294] In her detailed study on Mughal audience halls, Ebba Koch notes that the audience hall as a building type developed only by the reign of Shah Jahan and went on to become one of the principal buildings for the functioning of the empire since it was here that the emperor attended to matters of court and interacted with his subjects.[295] However, a closer analysis of these audience halls reveals a trail of solar symbolisms that was

[292] Eaton, 245.

[293] Eaton, 284.

[294] Moin, 233.

[295] Koch, Ebba. "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival of Persepolis in the Form of a Mosque." Essay. In Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires: A Global Perspective, edited by Jeroen Duindam, Artan Tülay, and Metin Kunt, 313–38. Brill, 2011.

employed at various levels throughout, both in its design, particularly in terms of its orientation, and also the way in which the emperor presented himself, which will be the focus of study in this section.

Despite the fame for constructing the Taj Mahal, Shah Jahan's role in codifying and constructing large pillared audience halls in all his major fort palaces in Agra, Lahore and Delhi is often overlooked.[296] These rectangular pillared halls were designed to immediately draw one's attention to the raised platform where the emperor sat in his throne, which took after the jharokha window in both name and the form.[297] However, the use of the jharokha in this context is not the only aspect that implies a conscious attempt at linking the emperor to the sun. Taking the Agra fort as an example, Koch demonstrates that the hall of public audience (Diwan-i Aam) in the fort shared a close relationship with the mosque that stood directly across it in the courtyard.[298] While the mosque had its mihrab occupying the most important position which was oriented towards the west, the audience hall had the jharokha serving the same purpose but it was pointed towards the east, where both the mihrab and the jharokha existed in the same axis (Fig.46).[299] Koch suggests that the jharokha acted as Shah Jahan's own imperial qibla, which was the east, the direction of sunrise, and coincidentally acting as a counter image to the mihrab as it was oriented towards Mecca.[300] Asher adds to this by pointing out that the embellished image of a lamp which appeared occasionally on mihrabs, inspired from the Quranic verse on light, was countered by Shah Jahan's position in the audience halls, making him appear as the imperial qibla that was filled with divine light.[301] Therefore, this could

[296] Moin, 232-33.

[297] Ibid, 233.

[298] Koch, 332, 334.

[299] Ibid.

[300] Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, ed. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, and Metin Kunt, 313-38. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 334.

[301] Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 182.

imply that any subject or foreign dignitary who attended the Mughal court automatically aligned themselves to the direction of the sun as they faced the emperor, where they knowingly or unknowingly participated in the solar symbolism filled sacred kingship ideology, expertly designed through the use of architecture.

Figure 46. Spatial arrangement of Diwan-i Aam and the mosque.
Description: Satellite view showing the (1) mosque and the (2) hall of public audience (Diwan-i Aam) standing opposite to each other while in the same axis across the courtyard of Agra Fort. While the mihrab of the mosque is oriented to the west, the direction of Mecca, the jharokha of the audience hall is oriented to the east, the direction of sunrise.
Source: Google Maps.

The court ceremonial conducted in these audience halls followed strict hierarchy in both the vertical and horizontal axis that placed the emperor as supreme. From the ground below the emperor's seat the nobles were spread out hierarchically in the order of their power and prestige.[302] In other words, the emperor was considered as the sun who was the centre of both the empire and the universe whereas his high ranked nobles were the planets and the lower ranked nobles were the minor heavenly

[302] Moin, 233.

bodies in this carefully constructed order.[303] Necipoğlu further substantiates this point by indicating that the hall of private audience in the Agra Fort also contains Persian inscriptions comparing the audience hall to the highest heavens while Shah Jahan was compared to the sun in the sky.[304] This led Moin to suggest that the jharoka throne (Fig.46), in effect, acted as the symbolic centre of the empire, as the seat of the divine solar emperor who was above any and all constraints brought up by religion.[305] At first glance, this scenario would be perplexing considering that Shah Jahan tended to present himself in the tradition of Islam and he was also the emperor who commissioned the most mosques among all the Mughals.[306] Therefore, it would appear peculiar that the walls behind the jharokha throne in some of these audience halls were adorned with figural imagery, thereby not conforming to Islamic prohibitions on artistic representation, while such figural imagery was not repeated in any other building commissioned by Shah Jahan.[307] The case in point being the wall behind the jharokha throne in Delhi Red Fort which contained the figure of Orpheus playing a musical instrument surrounded by birds and plants, possibly being a reference to Solomon.[308] The permitting of these figural images to adorn the wall directly behind where the emperor appeared in his jharokha throne marked the space apart as one outside of the restrictions imposed by religion.[309] These figural representations were further proof of an attempt at transforming the space as one where the sacredness of the emperor was on full display, which when combined with elements containing both solar symbolisms and other sacred kingship imagery enabled that space to be above all earthly and sectarian divisions. The combined

[303] Necipoğlu, 314; Blake, 96.

[304] Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, 185; Koch, 334; Necipoğlu, 317.

[305] Moin, 237.

[306] Eaton, 291.

[307] Moin, 239.

[308] Ebba Koch, "Visual Strategies of Imperial Self-Representation: The Windsor Pādshāhnāma Revisited," *The Art Bulletin* 99, no. 3 (2017): pp. 93-124, 114; Moin, 239.

[309] Moin, 239.

effect of this idea of sacredness associated with solar symbolisms, from the perspective of both ritual and architecture, aided in enhancing the sacred kingship ideology of the emperor and subsequently implied at a conscious attempt at linking the emperor to the sun.

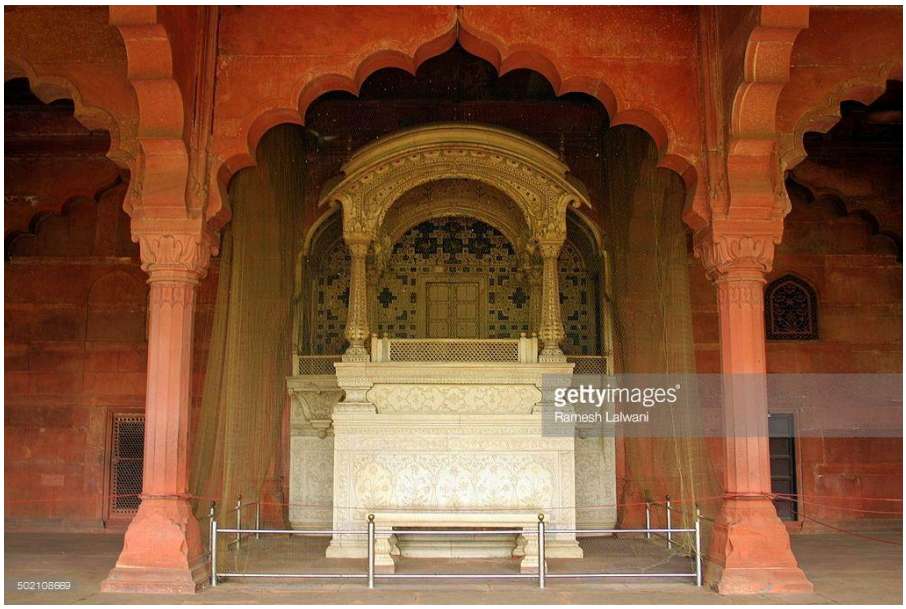

Figure 47. Jharokha throne in the Diwan-i Aam at the Delhi Red Fort.
Description: The wall behind the throne is replete with figural imagery of Orpheus playing music to birds and plants.
Source: Ramesh Lalwani, Getty Images.

With this perspective, it is possible to observe that a significant number of paintings from the Padshahnama of Shah Jahan consist of paintings of court scenes in these audience halls with the emperor attending from his jharokha, signifying the importance that the Mughals regarded to the space. The audience hall remained rife with solar symbolisms, starting from the orientation of the building itself to the use of the jharokha as the throne where the emperor attended to matters of the empire. However, in practice, the solar symbolisms in the case of audience halls were not left at just these implied meanings. Some of the overt techniques utilised for implying solar associations to the emperor through art was also combined with architecture to enhance the prestige of the divinely illumined emperor in the paintings of court scenes. An ideal case to observe this blend is the painting of Shah Jahan receiving his three eldest sons at the Diwan-i Aam (hall of public audience) in Agra in 1628

(Fig.48).[310] The emperor, adorned with a halo, remains seated at his jharokha throne in full attendance of the court while the canopy above him in the painting portrays a radiant sun with an abstract bird image at its centre that is flanked by two simurghs painted with gold. The application of gold in the space in close proximity to the emperor is taken to the extreme in the last court painting from Padshahnama which shows Shah Jahan receiving Prince Aurangzeb at Lahore Fort in 1640 (Fig.49).[311] This painting also displays the same protagonists from the previous one, the emperor and his four sons along with Asaf Khan, but all the participants are much older here as they occupy the level of the jharokha throne. The mesmerising jharokha level of gold, which is a metal associated symbolically with the sun, is further enhanced with images of birds on the Lahore jharokha while angels watch over the emperor in the ceiling area.[312] While the emperor is adorned with a halo here too, the depiction of the sky with the angels immediately around the throne shows a faint emanation of light arising from the throne. This leaves the onlooker wondering if it was meant as a direct application of the Persian inscriptions from the hall of private audience in the Agra Fort that compared the audience hall to the highest heavens while Shah Jahan was compared to the sun in the sky.[313] While these audience halls do continue to survive today, albeit in a much less regal state, the importance accorded to the central position of the emperor in both art and architecture displays the overall hierarchy with which the Mughals viewed space in the audience hall and the way the emperor was perceived as a divinely illumined ruler. In this regard, having analysed both the jharokha darshan ceremony, where the emperor presented himself to the general public as the 'earthly sun', and the solar symbolisms utilised in the audience hall, it is

[310] "Shah-Jahan Receives His Three Eldest Sons and Asaf Khan during His Accession Ceremonies (8 March 1628)." Royal Collection Trust. Accessed July 30, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/11/collection/1005025-k/shah-jahan-receives-his-three-eldest-sons-and-asaf-khan-during-his-accession.

[311] "The Arrival of Prince Awrangzeb at the Court at Lahore (9 January 1640)." Royal Collection Trust. Accessed July 30, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-as/the-arrival-of-prince-awrangzeb-at-the-court-at-lahore-9-january-1640.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Necipoğlu, 317; Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", 334; Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, 185.

time to explore how solar symbolisms were employed even in the spaces that the emperor occupied after his death, which is explored in the next section.

Figure 48. Shah Jahan receives his sons and Asaf Khan at Agra Fort.
Description: This reception takes place in the audience hall at Agra Fort, as depicted in the Padshahnama. The canopy above the jharokha throne shows simurghs flanking the sun. Artist: Bichitr, 1628.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 23, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-k/shah-jahan-receives-his-three-eldest-sons-and-asaf-khan-during-his-accession.

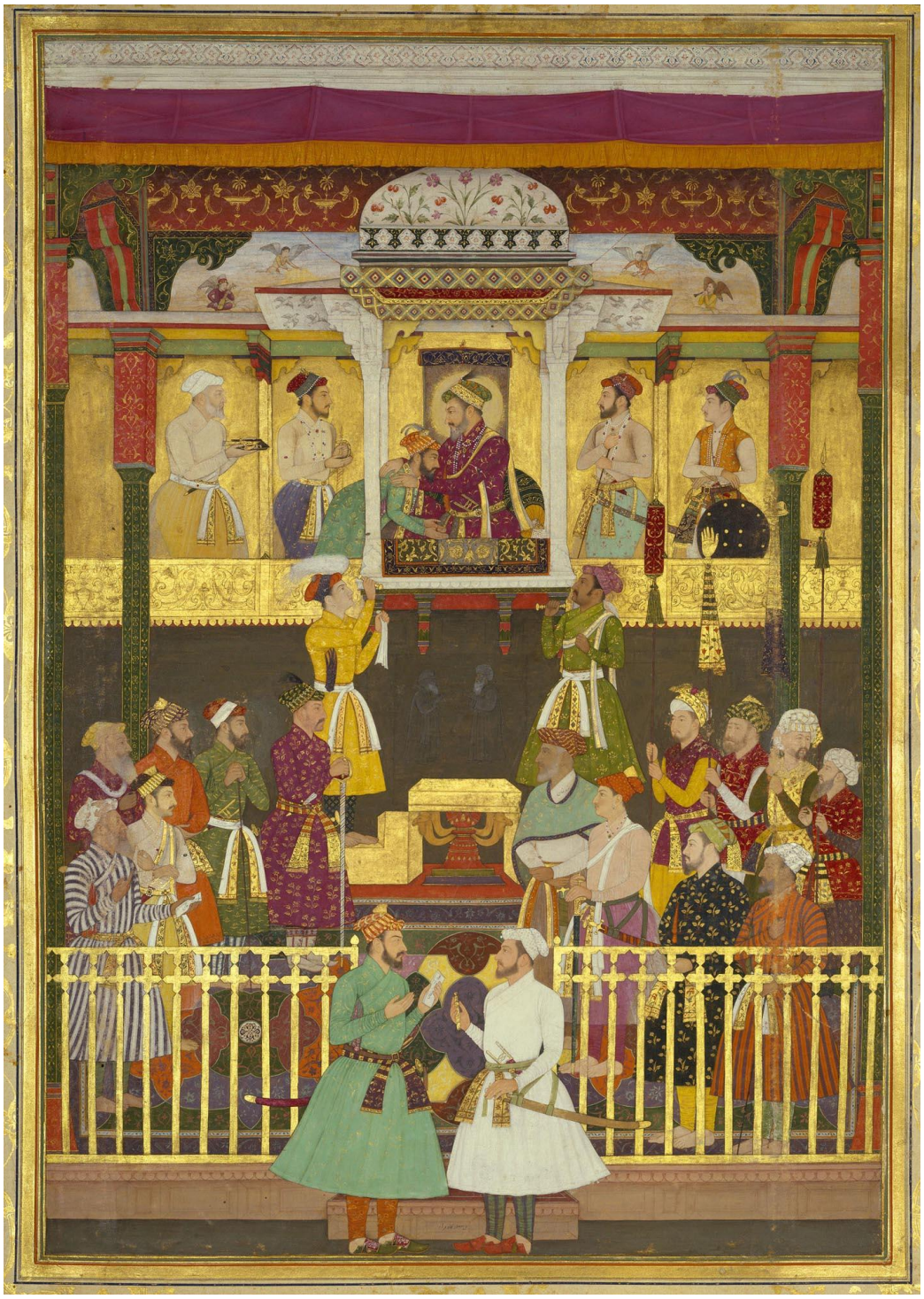

Figure 49. Shah Jahan receives Prince Aurangzeb at Lahore Fort.
Description: Emperor Shah Jahan receives Prince Aurangzeb while his other three sons and Asaf Khan stand in the audience hall at Lahore Fort, as depicted in the Padshahnama. Artist: Murar, 1640.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 23, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-as/the-arrival-of-prince-awrangzeb-at-the-court-at-lahore-9-january-1640.

4.3. Imperial Tomb Architecture

Considering the extent of how much solar symbolism had penetrated varied aspects of art and architecture in the Mughal Empire, it is natural to ponder how the sacred kingship ideology at the time approached it in the event of the emperor moving on from the earthly realm. In many a case, the imperial tomb of an emperor would often be built by the successor who ascends the throne. However, what if both of them considered themselves to be divinely illumined rulers who were closest to God and subsequently above religion? This was the case in the Mughal Empire after the proliferation of solar symbolisms from Akbar's reign onwards, which went on to evolve under Akbar's successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Consequently, this section will attempt to explore how solar imagery came to be applied in the case of imperial tombs of Akbar in Sikandra (Fig.50) and that of his son, Jahangir in Shahdara (Fig.51).

The Taj Mahal is without question the most famous of all Mughal buildings. The fact that it is a mausoleum certainly would prompt a researcher to look into other mausoleums of the other Mughal emperors as well in order to see how the evolution of Mughal tomb architecture culminated in the Taj Mahal and to how it evolved from there. Humayun's tomb, completed in 1572, was the first large scale Timurid inspired imperial tomb in Mughal Empire[314] and it is generally believed to have inspired future Mughal mausoleums including the Taj Mahal. However, it is possible to observe that the mausoleums of the immediate two successors of Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir, did not necessarily follow a similar architectural design, which, at the outset, can be seen from how these two tombs did not even contain a dome as part of the main structure. This would seem fascinating considering that Islamic mausoleums of that period, in general, employed the concept of the vertical axis where the highest point in the structure (usually the dome or the minaret) would act as a vertical axis signifying the idea of heavenly ascension or ascension from the imperfect world of Earth to the perfection of heaven.[315] While the imperial Mughal

[314] Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, 16.

[315] Samer Akkach, "In the Image of the Cosmos Order and Symbolism in Traditional Islamic Architecture (Part 1-2)," *Islamic Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1995), 96.

tombs did strive to be an image of paradise in both form and symbolism, was there any element from solar or light symbolisms that had an effect on the design outcome?

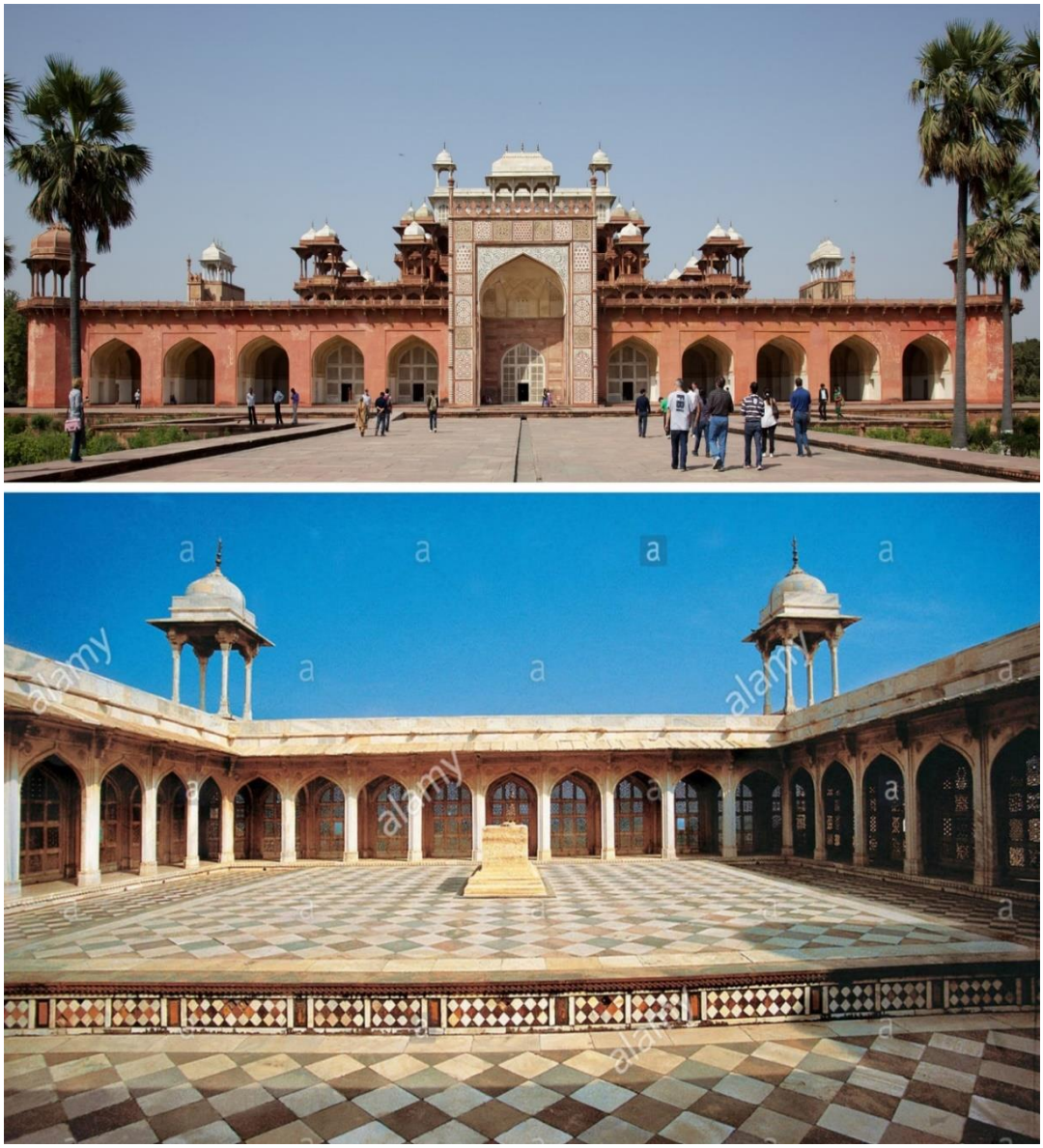

Figure 50. Akbar's Tomb in Sikandra.
Description: (1) Front Elevation. The photo shows the upper most floor to be made out of white marble. (2) Sunlight shining on the white marble cenotaph of Akbar on the upper most floor while enclosed by white marble screened walls.
Source: (1) Tulaui (Public Domain) (2) Dinodia Photos/Alamy.

Figure 51. Jahangir's Tomb in Shahdara, Lahore.
Description: (1) Front Elevation. The original form of the tomb is believed to have had a second floor made of marble screened walls, like in the case of Akbar's tomb. (2) Aerial view of the tomb where we can see the square platform on the middle indicating that there might have stood a marble cenotaph.
Source: (1) Tahsin Shah (2) Maaz Kamal. (Public Domain)

At the outset, the tombs of both Akbar and Jahangir present a shift from some of the established norms that were evident in Humayun's tomb. To some extent, this is to be expected considering that Akbar and Jahangir are two emperors who overtly

employed solar symbolisms in many aspects of their identity and was at times, openly on a collision course with religion when it interfered with authority. Both tombs no doubt followed the garden plan inspired from Humayun's Tomb, occupying the centre in the square garden was divided by water channels into four sections (charbagh), which implied the concept of the rivers of Paradise from Quran.[316] While the absence of the dome in both tombs stands out, what came in its stead is what brings to attention the potential application of solar themed practices in Mughal imperial tomb architecture.

Akbar's tomb is a five-storey structure with the top most floor being an open courtyard enclosed by white marble-screened walls (Fig.50), while the centre of the courtyard houses a marble cenotaph of Akbar that stands open to the sky.[317] Asher suggests that this type of an open cenotaph could imply beliefs of not only orthodox Islam but also light symbolism because of the Persian inscriptions on the gates to the tomb implying Akbar's soul to shine in the light of God like the rays of the sun and the moon.[318] Although domes and minarets are absent from Akbar's mausoleum, we can say that the way each floor is arranged vertically certainly can imply a concern for the vertical axis. Jahangir tomb follows a style similar to Akbar's tomb where domes are missing from the overall tomb structure. Jahangir's tomb today is a single storey square-plan structure with minarets on all the four corners. Although it is not possible to see a marble cenotaph or a courtyard enclosed by marble-screened walls on the upper floor as seen in Akbar's tomb, scholars suggest that there could have been such a structure in the original building plan, which might have held a cenotaph open to the sky which could have been destroyed in the subsequent centuries.[319] Present day aerial view of the tomb reveals a square platform at the centre of the top

[316] Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, 108.

[317] Ibid.

[318] Asher, 108, 109; Edmund W. Smith, Akbar's Tomb, Sikandarah, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. xxv (Allahabad, 1909), 35; Asher, "A Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 186.

[319] Fairchild Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 198.

floor, which indicates that this assumption might be likely to be true (Fig.51). This trend of mausoleums without domes stopped during the reign of Jahangir's son, Shah Jahan, who went on to build the Taj Mahal, a domed mausoleum made of white marble where the cenotaph was no longer exposed to the sky. However, exposing of the cenotaph to the elements reappears in the case of Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzeb, where tomb architecture takes an extreme form as Aurangzeb had a remarkably simple grave, which was in stark contrast to the magnificent tombs of his predecessors, since it lacked a built structure, keeping in line with a more orthodox version of Islam.[320] This inclination towards orthodox Islam also coincided with the general decline of solar symbolisms during Aurangzeb's reign, which will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

The choice of white marble in these imperial tombs was not a coincidence. In the case of the jharokha darshan and the audience halls which were rife with solar symbolisms, white marble was an unavoidable part which in itself held symbolic meanings. The importance accorded to it can be seen from how the Agra Fort, which was primarily made of red sandstone originally by Akbar, had only the octagonal tower that was used for jharokha darshan ceremony be made out of white marble.[321] The refurbishment of the buildings in the fort under Shah Jahan saw large-scale use of white marble,[322] which was extensively used in the new jharokha window, the jharokha thrones and the private audience halls too.[323] Eminent scholars suggest that in the case of the Mughals, white marble blurred lines between the ruler and divine, which actively corresponded to metaphors of spirituality and divine light radiating from the solar emperor.[324]

[320] Eaton, 330.

[321] Necipoğlu, 317.

[322] Ibid.

[323] Catherine B Asher, "Sub-Imperial Palaces: Power and Authority in Mughal India," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): pp. 281-302, 283.

[324] Laura E Parodi, "Solomon, the Messenger and the Throne Themes from a Mughal Tomb," *East and West* 51, no. 1 (2001): pp. 127-142, 128; Asher, 283; Necipoğlu, 317.

White marble tombs for Chishti saints already existed in the Indian subcontinent before the Mughals, which was eventually brought into the Mughal architectural scheme once the emperor started identifying himself as a living saint.[325] Akbar postured himself as an enlightened Sufi master to his subjects, for which he also utilised his association with the sun and divine illumination, aided by illumination principles of Suhrawardi.[326] The white marble tombs that reflected light and gave the optical illusion of change of its colour according to the time of the day, i.e. the position of the sun in the sky, thus became a material symbolizing God's light and was subsequently appropriated into Mughal architecture and especially in tomb architecture.[327] The culmination of all these belief systems can be observed in the most famous Mughal building of all time, the Taj Mahal, which was officially known as Rauza-i Munawwar (the Illumined Tomb).[328] Coincidentally, the white marble cenotaph located at the centre of white marble-screened courtyard on top of Akbar's tomb can be understood to serve as a final architectural expression of the solar symbolisms that had proliferated under Akbar's rule, which most likely continued in Jahangir's tomb too. While solar symbolisms certainly seem a probable factor that was under consideration, the implied meanings of sainthood associated with tombs of Sufi saints is also not likely to have been disregarded when white marble was considered to be used in these instances.

In essence, solar symbolisms in the realm of architecture were institutionalised so that it continued to impart divinity and sacredness to the illumined emperor both in the spaces he inhabited during his lifetime and after. In this regard, the imperial tombs of the emperors remained another aspect of Mughal architecture that continued its symbolic associations with the sun. However, the overt associations with sun symbolism among these imperial tombs started its decline after Shah Jahan's death, as Aurangzeb broke away from much of the symbolic associations,

[325] Asher, "A Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine," 164, 167.

[326] Eaton, 249.

[327] Asher, 161, 167.

[328] Ibid.

which had its roots in sun veneration, in favour of an identity and legitimacy more entrenched in religion. This was evident from how Aurangzeb, who was possibly the wealthiest sovereign in the world at the time of his death in 1707, chose a remarkably simple grave that was open to the elements over a large scale mausoleum which was the norm followed by his predecessors. The overall decline of solar symbolisms as well as how it coincided with Aurangzeb will be explored in detail in the next chapter.

In essence, considering that solar imagery was employed at every available opportunity to enhance the sacred identity of the emperor to impart divinity and help garner greater legitimacy, architecture for one was no exception. On the contrary, architecture was one area where the emperor could leave an enduring legacy of themselves and their reign that had the most chance of lasting the trials and tribulations of time. At the same time, architectural patronage directly enabled the emperor to express both the prosperity of the empire during their reign and their divine association with the sun to magnanimous proportions. This trend could be observed across diverse architectural parameters. In the case of the royal buildings used for the jharokha darshan ceremony, the emperor appeared every morning at sunrise from a jharokha surmounted by a curved and gilded Bengal roof with seven finials, which effectively resembled a radiant sun and which possibly aided in making the emperor appear to be surrounded by a golden glow as sunlight hit the roof. In the case of the audience halls that contained the jharokha throne of the emperor, the orientation of the hall was towards the east, the direction of sunrise, and was placed directly opposite to the mosque, which was oriented to the west. The case of the imperial tombs of Akbar and Jahangir, which were devoid of domes while the emperor's sarcophagus, made of white marble, was designed to face the sun, along with the use of white marble in Mughal architecture and its associated symbolic meanings further substantiates instances of solar ideology permeating architectural design. Therefore, this could imply that any subject or foreign dignitary who attended the Mughal court automatically aligned themselves as per how the space, which was designed through the use of architecture in conjunction with the court rituals, directed them where they knowingly or unknowingly participated in the solar symbolism filled sacred kingship ideology of the Mughal emperor. The flow of these

solar symbolisms in the sacred kingship ideology, expressed sometimes overtly through both art and architecture, followed the general prosperity of the empire. The decline of both the empire and solar symbolisms, which began under Aurangzeb, subsequently led to the disintegration of the empire in the eighteenth century, which is the topic of analysis in the next chapter. In essence, solar symbolisms in the realm of architecture were institutionalised so that it continued to impart sacredness to the illumined emperor in the spaces that he inhabited both during his lifetime and after.

CHAPTER 5

TWILIGHT: THE DECLINE OF MUGHAL SOLAR VENERATION

The eighteenth century in India opened with the Mughal Empire at its territorial zenith, encompassing most of the Indian subcontinent, and the sixth Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb, at the helm of possibly the wealthiest empire in the world at the time. However, the year 1707 witnessed the end of Aurangzeb's lengthy forty-nine year reign, following which the cracks in the Mughal imperial machinery, which had become visible during Aurangzeb's rule itself, turned to fissures causing a steady decline to the point that the eighteenth century in India closed with a ruined Mughal house where the seventeenth Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, was a mere political puppet at the hands of other rulers.[329] The dynasty was in such dire straits that a popular couplet on Shah Alam from the time went on to say that the 'Kingdom of Shah Alam stretched from Delhi to Palam', where Palam is a suburb in Delhi itself.[330] Although many of Aurangzeb's policies had a direct role in the lead up to the complete disintegration of the empire in the eighteenth century[331], the dynasty endured on, in name at least, till the uprising of 1857 against the English East India Company (EIC), following which the last Mughal sovereign, Bahadur Shah Zafar II,

[329] Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and Highroads to Empire, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 2002), 16; Jaswant Lal Mehta, *Advanced Study in the History of Modern India, 1707-1813* (New Delhi: New Dawn Press Group, 2005), 140; Richard M Eaton, *India in The Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 346; Audrey Truschke, *Aurangzeb: The Life and Legacy of India's Most Controversial King* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 2.

[330] Herbert Charles Fanshawe, *Delhi: Past and Present* (London: J Murray, 1902), 4; William Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and the Fall of Delhi, 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), 58.

[331] Eaton, 344; Truschke, 16.

was exiled to Rangoon, thus officially ending the dynasty.[332] However, the use of solar symbolisms in Mughal sacred kingship rituals certainly began its slump during the reign of Aurangzeb and had mostly ceased to exist as the House of the Mughal deteriorated in the eighteenth century from an empire spanning much of a subcontinent to one hardly holding a single city. Consequently, this section will focus on the case of solar symbolisms during the reign of Aurangzeb to understand this decline and attempt to trace its legacy.

5.1. Solar Veneration under Aurangzeb

To understand how solar symbolisms changed during Aurangzeb's reign, it remains imperative to begin by taking a closer look at the sovereign. Aurangzeb ascended the Mughal throne in 1658, taking the regnal title of 'Alamgir' (World Conqueror), after winning the war of succession against his three brothers while their father, Shah Jahan, was still alive.[333] Although fratricides for seizing the throne during wars of succession was not abnormal for the period nor was it against the established Mughal tradition of succession, which tended to favour the strongest and the most well networked prince to become king, but seizing the throne while the father was still alive was very much an act of usurpation which was against Islamic law.[334] This consequently caused Aurangzeb considerable difficulties at gaining legitimacy in the wider Islamic world at the start of his reign, which can be observed from how the Sharif of Mecca approved of Aurangzeb as the Mughal sovereign only after Shah Jahan's death in 1666, eight years after Aurangzeb had ascended the throne.[335] Becoming emperor in 1658 at the age of thirty-nine, Aurangzeb ruled for a staggering forty-nine years during which he was able to expand the empire to its greatest geographical extent by bringing swathes of lands in the Deccan into the

[332] Michael Fisher, *A Short History of the Mughal Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 225; Dalrymple, 448.

[333] Truschke, 3; Eaton, 293, 315; Stuart Cary Welch, *Imperial Mughal Painting* (New York: George Braziller, 1978), 113.

[334] Munis D. Faruqui, *The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37; Eaton, 215, 334.

[335] Eaton, 334.

Mughal fold, something that his predecessors coveted but could not achieve.[336] In the quest for fulfilling this mission, Aurangzeb relocated his imperial court from north India to the Deccan in 1681, warring until his death in 1707 at the grand old age of eighty-eight.[337] Overall, this brings us to notice a pattern in Aurangzeb's reign that tended to rupture from many established traditions of his predecessors, which included many of the Mughal sacred kingship practices as well. Incidentally, solar symbolisms were to be no exception in this matter.

It is ironic that the sovereign who had benefitted the most from the Mughal kingship practices that venerated the sun was the one who rejected and ultimately dismantled much of it. This is evident from how the war of succession began in 1657 not from the death of Emperor Shah Jahan, but from an illness to the emperor that prevented him from appearing for the jharokha darshan ceremony for a period of ten days.[338] Although Shah Jahan did fully recover, the damage was already done as suspicions spread across the realm about the emperor's possible demise.[339] As soon as news of this reached the princes who were stationed at different parts of the empire, the war for the Mughal throne had begun.[340] Being a shrewd politician and an experienced general with a wide network of connections across the empire aided Aurangzeb to win a hard fought victory over his brothers in the war which was spread out across several engagements.

It is worth noting that upon ascending the throne in 1658, Aurangzeb initially continued much of the sacred kingship rituals that were already in place during Shah Jahan's reign,[341] which included utilising solar symbolisms in kingship rituals of how the emperor was depicted and presented. For his first ten years in power, Aurangzeb

[336] Truschke, 32, 38.

[337] Ibid, 32.

[338] Faruqui, 40; Truschke, 43.

[339] Eaton, 307, 333; Faruqui, 40.

[340] Eaton, 311, 333; Truschke, 43.

[341] Truschke, 41, 45.

continued the jharokha darshan ceremony at sunrise every day and continued weighing himself against gold and silver for his solar and lunar birthdays, which were subsequently distributed to the poor.[342] Additionally, miniature paintings from the period provide us with the glimpse of continuation of many solar symbols which were already perfected during Shah Jahan's reign, such as the radiant halo adorning the emperor and both the sun and the simurgh motif on the underside of the parasols under which the emperor sat (Fig.52). Paintings were also commissioned as part of state propaganda aimed at conferring legitimacy on Aurangzeb and hinting at a voluntary transfer of power through depicting Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb in a single painting where Shah Jahan with the bigger and more radiant halo faced Aurangzeb with the developing halo.[343] A more forceful attempt at controlling the narrative is visible in a shamsa painting of Shah Jahan from 1640-50 (Fig.19), where Shah Jahan's name at the centre of the shamsa was subjected to expunction and Aurangzeb's portrait with a halo was painted in its stead after coming to power in 1658.[344] All these examples showcase the prudent efforts undertaken by new emperor to ensure that he would get the time to consolidate power with as less opposition to his position following his turbulent ascension to the throne. To this end, even if Aurangzeb would have wanted to discontinue many of these sacred kingship rituals, pragmatic concerns would have hindered it for the starting phase of his reign.

Nevertheless, one of the most illustrious of examples showing this policy of continuation is the portrait of Aurangzeb from his first coronation (Fig.53), painted in 1660, where divine light breaks forth from the dark clouds and shines its rays on the emperor.[345] While the dark clouds could be indicative of the fiercely bloody war

[342] Truschke, 41.

[343] Seyller, Dr. John. "Double Portrait De Shah Jahan Et Aurengzeb-Alamguir." Millon. Accessed June 13, 2021.https://www.millon.com/lot/113724/15261794?refurl=%3Cp%3E%3Ca+href%3D%22https%3A%2F%2Fwww.millon.com%2Fuploads%2FFile%2FLateShahJahanAlbumPage.pdf%22+target%3D%22_blank%22%3E%3Cspan+cl

[344] "Shamsa (Sunburst) with Portrait of Aurangzeb (1618-1707), from the Emperor's Album (the Kevorkian Album)." Cleveland Museum of Art, June 13, 2021. https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2013.331.

[345] Truschke, 29.

of succession that Aurangzeb had emerged victorious from, the shaft of light falling on the emperor could suggest the approval of heaven, thereby continuing Mughal sacred kingship associations with the sun that was evident in paintings of his predecessors, especially in those of Shah Jahan's portraits. On the theme of light from heaven falling on the emperor, Aurangzeb's coronation portrait can be juxtaposed with the portrait of Shah Jahan (Fig.4) receiving blessings from the Godly figure in heaven who is depicted to be emerging from the sun and bestowing divine light upon Shah Jahan through the Holy Spirit. Aurangzeb's coronation portrait in contrast is devoid of all the Christian imagery found in Shah Jahan's portrait and even lacks the massive radiant halo that made Shah Jahan appear like a sun on earth. Upon close inspection, the coronation portrait reveals a faint and suggestive halo around emperor's head created through omission from the shaft of light falling on the emperor from the sky. In essence, the use of light for indicating legitimacy through heavenly approval certainly indicates the continuance of the tradition of sacred kingship at the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign. However, massive shifts awaited this policy after Shah Jahan's death in 1666.

Figure 52. The Darbar (court) of Aurangzeb.
Description: Note the radiant halo on the emperor and the sun motif flanked by simurghs on the canopy under which the Emperor sits. Artist: Bichitr, 1660s.
Source: Welch, Stuart Cary. *Imperial Mughal Painting*. New York: George Braziller, 1978, 112.

Figure 53. Coronation portrait of Emperor Aurangzeb.
Description: A shaft of light breaks forth from dark clouds and falls on the emperor. Artist: Hunhar, 1660.
Source: The St. Petersburg Album, Freer Gallery of Art. Accessed August 28, 2021. https://asia.si.edu/object/F1996.1/.

5.1.1. A Change of Policy

Aurangzeb's long reign brought about certain shifts in how sacred kingship rituals were pursued and performed in the empire, particularly around the point nearing a decade of being in power.[346] Mughal sacred kingship traditions containing syncretic elements outside of Islam were subject to change. These included traditional Indian practises such as the jharokha darshan and weighing the emperor for his solar and lunar birthdays, both of which were discontinued around 1669 while the Persian New Year festival of Nauroz was discontinued in 1659.[347] Jizya tax was introduced in 1679 on all non-Muslim males except those serving in imperial service and the Islamic confession of faith was removed from coinage in order to prevent it from being defaced.[348] Harsh policies were adopted towards Shi'i groups and other groups adhering to the millennial and messianic ideology within the realm throughout the duration of Aurangzeb's rule.[349] Most importantly, Aurangzeb replaced the system of governance in the empire from one under the rule of a divine sovereign who followed Mughal sacred kingship ideologies to one under the sharia of Hanafi Sunnis and subsequently codified the legal system by commissioning the single, massive legal compendium of the Fatawa-i 'Alamgiri for the impartial rule of the realm by a strong judiciary.[350] This was a complete turn from the established traditions of his predecessors and consequently demystifying the emperor and the empire itself in the process.[351] From this vantage point, it would certainly seem that Aurangzeb subscribed to a puritanical version of Islam when compared with his predecessors

[346] Truschke, 43.

[347] Rajoshree Ghosh, "The Dynamics of a Mughal Court Festival: A Case Study of Nauroz," *Indian Historical Review* 44, no. 2 (2017): pp. 198-211, 209; Stephen P Blake, "Nau Ruz in Mughal India," in *In Rethinking a Millennium Perspectives on Indian History from the Eighth to the Eighteenth Century: Essays for Harbans Mukhia*, ed. Rajat Dutta (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2008), pp. 121-139, 130; Eaton, 335; Truschke, 98.

[348] Eaton, 335-336.

[349] Samira Sheikh, "Aurangzeb as Seen from Gujarat: Shi'i and Millenarian Challenges to Mughal Sovereignty," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28, no. 3 (2018): pp. 557-581, 559.

[350] Eaton, 340, 342; Sheikh, 559;

[351] Sheikh, 580.

and this consequently led to weeding out practices that did not fit according to his religious outlook. However, a closer study indicates that the reasons were farther from first impressions.

The reasons Aurangzeb discontinued many of these sacred kingship practices during his reign can be broadly summed up as a combination of several key aspects spread across personal, religious and practical parameters. Aurangzeb's relationship with his family certainly had an influence in the religious posture that Aurangzeb took. As mentioned prior, Aurangzeb had to compete with three strong contenders for the Mughal throne who were also his brothers. Among them, Aurangzeb's biggest rival was Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's eldest and favourite son and heir apparent, who had enthusiastically embraced Shah Jahan's Mughal sacred kingship ideologies.[352] As Richard Eaton had pointed out, distancing himself from the ideology of sacred kingship enabled Aurangzeb to distance himself politically and ideologically from his arch nemesis for the throne, Dara Shikoh, both during and after the succession war.[353] Posturing himself as the true Muslim was thus beneficial to Aurangzeb to justify both executing Dara on grounds of heresy and for continuing the imprisonment of his father from whom he had usurped power, which although was against Islamic law, could be justified since Shah Jahan himself actively practised these sacred kingship rituals and even saw himself as the Second Lord of Conjunction.[354] This rupture from sacred kingship ideology is also likely to have garnered support from factions within the empire that were displeased with many aspects of these sacred kingship ideologies and practices since the time of Akbar, namely hard-line sections of the clergy and some sections of the nobility, both of whom favoured Aurangzeb during and after the war of succession.

Aurangzeb's inclination towards a more puritanical view of religion and his close collaboration with Sunni clerics is presumed to have developed during his time as a

[352] Eaton, 340.

[353] Eaton, 401, 402.

[354] Sheikh, 571; Eaton, 334.

prince governing the province of Gujarat (1645-47).[355] In this province which was rife with various sectarian movements including Sunni, Shi'i and millenial ones, Aurangzeb provided patronage to Sunni clerics who were fiercely anti-Shi'i and anti-millenial, who subsequently went on to occupy the highest positions of the judiciary in the Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb became emperor.[356] The most standout example of this trend is the case of Abd al-Wahhab, a cleric in Gujarat during Aurangzeb's governorship, who rose to become Aurangzeb's close advisor and the chief qazi of the Mughal empire. [357] Wahhab had also legitimised Aurangzeb's ascension to the throne by decreeing that Shah Jahan was unfit to rule and therefore Islamic law was not violated in the succession.[358] Therefore, it can be observed that throughout his reign, Aurangzeb did not hesitate to persecute groups (even inside Islam) which did not fit with his religious views or which he suspected could be a threat to the smooth functioning of the empire.[359] On the contrary, his collaboration with the Sunni clerics in Gujarat made him realise that judicial power is an effective method to control public order over a vastly multicultural empire, which culminated in the production of the codified legal compendium of Fatawa-i Alamgiri during his reign and a greatly empowered judiciary.[360] The closeness to religious orthodoxy in Aurangzeb is also reflected in his architectural projects like the Badshahi Masjid in Lahore, the largest mosque in the subcontinent for three centuries[361] and more clearly in the case of his own tomb which, in stark contrast to the spectacular tombs of his

[355] Sheikh, 557; Eaton, 340.

[356] Truschke, 76; Sheikh, 561; Eaton, 341.

[357] Eaton, 334; Sheikh, 565; Truschke, 70.

[358] Eaton, 334; Sheikh, 565; Truschke, 70.

[359] Truschke, 76.

[360] Eaton, 341-43, Sheikh, 572-73.

[361] Eaton, 342; Truschke, 46.

predecessors, was a modest grave open to the sky, very much in line with his religious codes.[362]

A more crucial parameter when compared with the personal or religious reasons for breaking away from the Mughal sacred kingship rituals could have been the practical benefits that the rupture brought. Aurangzeb was very well aware of the risks involved in continuing the jharokha darshan ceremony since his inability to attend the ceremony for any period of time, due to any reason, can trigger a war of succession among his own sons and can lead to his overthrow from power, very much like how it had happened to his father.[363] Keeping this predicament in mind, Aurangzeb stopped the jharokha darshan ceremony in 1669.[364] It is interesting to note that since jharokha darshan was discontinued only after Shah Jahan's death in 1666, it is possible to presume that it was followed until 1669 since Aurangzeb needed to sustain the image of the divine Mughal sovereign in the eyes of his subjects. Regardless, the fear of his sons seizing power from him loomed large in Aurangzeb's mind, which resulted in Aurangzeb alienating his sons from power and is likely to have motivated Aurangzeb, even in his eighties, to personally lead the prolonged Deccan campaign so that he remained at the head of the imperial army.[365]

This leads us to ask the question of how successful these measures were to bring about a transition from the inherited sacred kingship based rule where the sovereign transcended both heavenly and earthly realms to the rule based on sharia law which discarded many of these inherited kingship practices which was considered to be against Islam. It would be surprising to note that despite his best efforts, Aurangzeb found himself having to strategically utilise his image as the sovereign connecting both the spiritual and the earthly realms.[366] Many among his supporters considered

[362] Truschke, 2.

[363] Truschke, 43.

[364] Ibid.

[365] Eaton, 344-346.

[366] Eaton, 338-340.

him a living saint and believed that he was capable of performing miracles.[367] Notable instances of this belief among his supporters present themselves in 1697, when Aurangzeb is recorded to have stopped the Bhima river from flooding his camp by casting a prayer slip in the river which immediately subsided the flood, and also in 1672, when Aurangzeb is noted to have personally wrote prayers and magic symbols on his army banners to ensure victory against a peasant revolt that came to be led by a prophetess proclaiming the ability to raise an invisible army.[368] Thus, although the rupture from established systems that began with Aurangzeb set the precedent for the eventual demystification of the divine Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb himself continued to utilise the benefits of some of the Mughal sacred kingship traditions as it suited him. However, his successors were not as fortunate as the ruinous effects of the imperial decline was set into full motion following the Aurangzeb's demise.

5.2. The Imperial Decline

While a detailed analysis of how the Mughal Empire declined is beyond the scope of this paper, this section will attempt to glance through the principal factors for the decline while exploring how the altering of the sacred kingship systems during Aurangzeb's rule affected the dynasty after his death. As seen in the previous section, Aurangzeb benefitted from his inherited ideological base that attributed sacredness to the emperor as a divine being mediating the spiritual and earthly realms, which his predecessors had cultivated to perfection by utilising solar symbolisms and other eclectic features from both the Indian subcontinent and outside, thereby forming the imperial Mughal sacred kingship ideology.[369] Yet, by altering many of these established sacred kingship traditions, particularly the system of governance, from one under the sacred kingship of the divine emperor to one under sharia law of the Hanafi order, which the emperor himself came under the purview of, Aurangzeb essentially created a rupture from many of the established

[367] Eaton, 402.

[368] Eaton, 339.

[369] Truschke, 40; Eaton, 339.

Mughal systems.[370] Desacralizing the emperor in such a manner by emphasizing on justice proved to be a radical shift in a world that was largely preoccupied with seeing the emperor as mediating the human and sacred realms.[371] Ultimately, this rupture did more harm than good for the empire. Aurangzeb's policies left several sections of his multi-ethnic, multicultural, and majority non-Islamic subjects disgruntled, which left his successors with far greater challenges to face upon coming to power.[372]

As was customary, Aurangzeb's death in 1707 followed a war of succession among his sons but it was notably minor in scale compared to the wars of succession of their predecessors indicating certain shifts inside the empire already, visible in how a significantly lesser section of the powerful nobility threw their lot into the war.[373] As Aurangzeb's immediate successors held very short reigns which were largely spent attempting to stymie the disintegration, it became increasingly difficult to consolidate power under the new circumstances that the empire was in. The steady breakdown in the ability to manage and maintain territory, finances, military and political alliances in just a few decades after Aurangzeb's demise ensured that the Mughals would never again rise after their fall from power. To add to the injury for the Mughals, the non-consolidation of rule under a single sovereign also meant that the title of the emperor became increasingly contested over time and what started as the powerful among the nobility becoming kingmakers and restricting the emperor to a nominal figurehead in the first half of eighteenth century soon transpired to foreign powers practising the same approach with the Mughal sovereign for the second half of the century.[374] These developments also significantly limited the possibilities for any of the successors to even attempt to bring about a revival to the ways of the old imperial

[370] Eaton, 340; Sheikh, 560.

[371] Eaton, 402.

[372] Meena Bhargava, ed., *The Decline of the Mughal Empire* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014), x, xi.

[373] Eaton, 346.

[374] John F. Richards, "Mughal State Finance and the Premodern World Economy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 2 (1981): pp. 285-308, 285; Eaton, 350.

sacred kingship policy even if they had actively coveted it. As the swift and decisive nature of the imperial decline conclusively ended much aspects of divinity that was attributed to the Mughal emperor, the solar symbolisms in Mughal art and architecture, which had hardly survived Aurangzeb's reign, followed the fate of the empire.

While it is not accurate to presume that the deterioration of solar symbolisms along with much of the sacred kingship rituals directly resulted in the decline of the Mughal Empire, it did coincide with the general disintegration of the empire in the eighteenth century, which was a culmination of an assortment of problems on several fronts. Although the factors stressed on as the primary reason for the disintegration is much debated across academia, some consensus does exist on some of the principal parameters. One suggestion is that the decay commenced with the rupture from established systems seen in Aurangzeb's policies.[375] Richard Eaton adds to this that the significant reduction in power wielded by princely households from Aurangzeb's reign onwards also aided in ensuring the decline. Other significant parameters that exacerbated the decline included a flurry of misfortunes for the empire which commenced with a collapsed economic system. The futile and protracted quarter century long Deccan campaign of Aurangzeb, disastrous mansab and jagir appointments over decades and the realignment of influential private bankers to funding other regional polities are considered as some of the main parameters that continue to be analysed under the umbrella of economic shortcomings.[376] Another critical feature contributing to the decline was the inability to consolidate power under a single sovereign by the various ineffectual successors owing to their short reigns which initially led to powerful nobles acting as kingmakers and placing nominal figureheads wielding no real power as emperors, which subsequently went on to be repeated by other polities that captured Delhi over the years.[377] The extent of

[375] Katherine Butler Brown, "Did Aurangzeb Ban Music? Questions for the Historiography of His Reign," *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 1 (2007): pp. 77-120, 79; Truschke, 105.

[376] Richards, "Mughal State Finance and the Premodern World Economy," 285; Bhargava, x-xi; Eaton, 350; Karen Leonard, "The 'Great Firm' Theory of the Decline of the Mughal Empire," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, no. 2 (1979): pp. 151-167, 152.

[377] Richards, 285; Eaton, 350.

the instability and the relegation of the image of the emperor from the once all powerful position attributed with divinity itself to one of a nominal figurehead can be seen from how four different emperors had ascended the throne in quick succession in just the year 1719, just twelve years after the death of Aurangzeb.[378] To add to the woes, Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi in 1739 delivered a decisive blow to the Mughals from which the empire never really recovered as Nadir Shah returned for Persia carrying the bulk of Mughal wealth which included the Kohinoor diamond (now part of the British Crown Jewels) and the Peacock Throne.[379] Scholars note that the wealth obtained from his Indian campaign was so massive that it allowed Nadir Shah to exempt Persia from taxes for three years.[380] Although Nadir Shah's invasion was just the first of the many, both from within and outside the Indian subcontinent, that the Mughal dynasty had to endure in the eighteenth century, the period also coincided with emergence of various successor states from what remained of the empire.[381] While these are not strictly the only parameters that had contributed to the imperial decline, in effect, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Mughal Emperor held no effective power and remained a puppet king who lived on a meagre pension provided by whoever held Delhi at the time and used the emperor for their own gain.[382] As the sun slowly set on the Mughals, an empire based far away in Europe was sweeping over swathes of the Indian subcontinent in the aftermath and becoming the empire on which the sun never set.

5.3. Legacy

It is worth noting that the gravitas associated with the Mughal name and the symbolic association attributed to the Mughals as the legit rulers of Hindustan was

[378] Eaton, 350.

[379] Michael Axworthy, *Sword of Persia: Nader Shah, From Tribal Warrior to Conquering Tyrant* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 10; Eaton, 359; Truschke, 103;

[380] Axworthy, 213.

[381] Richards, 285.

[382] William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy: The East India Company, Corporate Violence, and the Pillage of an Empire* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), 279; Eaton, 360.

deeply embedded in the general psyche of much of north India even in the twilight years of the dynasty. For instance, despite being a sovereign lacking any real political, economic or military power, the Mughal Emperor's name continued to be used in coins of the English East India Company (EIC) until 1833.[383] In these coins which were readily accessible and legal tender for anyone in Company lands, the EIC acknowledged to be vassals of the Mughal emperor which enabled them to garner a larger legitimacy in the eyes of the populace that they ruled over.[384] However, the perfect instance to display the weight that the Mughal name commanded even at the very end of the dynasty emerges during the uprising of 1857. During this uprising against the EIC, a significant number of Indian soldiers (both Hindu and Muslim) who were employed by the EIC had revolted against Company rule across much of north India and had primarily rallied their standards around the Mughal sovereign in Delhi instead of any another ruler.[385] Although the uprising was eventually supressed, it certainly came as a shock to the EIC to see Indian soldiers flocking to an octogenarian Mughal king who the Company had dismissed as an ineffectual ruler who held no power whatsoever.[386] British officials from that time noted how the might and splendour associated with the Mughals and their practices remained lucid memories among a substantial section of the populace of north India such that the capture of Delhi from the EIC elicited speculations of the revival of the grandness of the Mughal Empire and its many traditions.[387] Thus, it is possible to observe that the 'brand-building' enterprise that the Mughals undertook appears to be a resounding success due to its longevity and the imprint it left behind in the minds of generations of its subjects, even long after the Mughals had seized to have any real control over much of those territories. It can thus be postulated that in this brand-building venture, solar symbolisms certainly played an important part, particularly

[383] Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and the fall of Delhi, 1857*, 432.

[384] Ibid, 432.

[385] Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal: The Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and the fall of Delhi, 1857*, 44, 471, 480.

[386] Ibid, 44-45.

[387] Ibid.

during the transition phase of the Mughals from that of a small kingdom to a subcontinental empire, and aided in cementing the place of the Mughal emperor as the true and divine ruler of Hindustan in the popular imagination of its subjects. Regardless of the very many aspects of the Mughal legacy that are overtly visible across diverse disciplines (art, architecture etc.) in many regions in north India, the legacy of solar symbolisms will be the point of focus in this section.

It is natural to ponder whether the Mughal sovereigns who succeeded Akbar (after 1605) had taken an active effort in consciously modifying any of the kingship practices related to the sun that were already passed down to them after their development during Akbar's reign. Overt visual representations showcasing the Mughal emperor as a divine being, often depicted as the sun on earth, grows significantly after 1605, with spectacular results in the form of artistic representations of the 'solar emperor' being the norm during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The overall lack of standout examples of new practices developing to this end could indicate that either the emperors who succeeded Akbar may not have deemed it necessary to have to alter the already well-functioning system or it is possible that they viewed it as part of essential kingship duties and possibly did not consider sun worship with the level of devotion that Akbar attributed to it. Regardless of intentions, even at its peak, overt kingship practices holding solar symbolisms are likely to have been limited to a section of Mughal society in the vast expanse of the empire. The question arises as to what extent of these solar symbolisms would have trickled down to territories on the fringes of the empire. While the regions closer to the imperial capital would certainly be familiar with some aspects solar symbolisms stemming from practices surrounding the emperor, it is possible that the regions at furthest extent, ruled by nobility, could very well have been less subjected to the nuances of solar symbolisms occurring at the imperial centre. However, these regions, while embroiled in their own local issues, certainly were connected to the larger circle involving cosmic belief systems that spanned much else of the landscape. Perhaps, this also explains why the Mughals emperors saw other groups holding practices resembling sacred kingship traditions as a direct threat that deserved severe punishment, as can be seen in case of how millenarian

movements were dealt with in Gujarat by Aurangzeb.[388] Like many things, sacred kingship too held value in its exclusivity and the Mughal Emperor coveted absolute monopoly on it. While further scholarly research on the many regional polities are necessary to understand the extent of awareness of Mughal sacred kingship traditions in those provinces located at the periphery of the empire, it can be said with conviction that the Mughal emperor, at the height of the empire, was considered a divine being by a majority in the empire. The ending of that cosmic, mystic status that surrounded the emperor during Aurangzeb's reign certainly played a part in the assortment of issues that led to the eventual disintegration of the empire.

The magnanimous scale of the Mughal Empire meant that the legacy that was left behind in its downfall was substantial. While the immediate appropriation of this legacy can be seen in case of the polities that came to fill the vacuum that was left behind in the anarchy and chaos of the eighteenth century, the best example that remains fitting to the case of solar symbolisms comes to us from the case of the ultimate player in the game who benefitted directly from the fall of the Mughals, the British. The English East India Company (EIC) was a direct beneficiary of Mughal decline as they found themselves in a largely divided subcontinent mired in complete anarchy and effectively came to control most of it.[389] Company rule gave way to direct imperial rule under the British Crown in 1858 and it is against this backdrop that we find an interesting instance of a Mughal ceremony charged with solar symbolisms, which had ceased to exist in the seventeenth century, be revived.[390] Although the jharokha darshan was a practice that existed in the subcontinent before the arrival of the Mughals to India, the ultimate example of the Mughal legacy of solar symbolism outliving the dynasty comes to us in December 1911. At the time, King George V and Queen Mary were conducting their tour of British India, which

[388] Samira Sheikh, "Aurangzeb as Seen from Gujarat: Shi'i and Millenarian Challenges to Mughal Sovereignty," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28, no. 3 (2018): pp. 557-581, 557.

[389] Dalrymple, *The Anarchy*, 59.

[390] Burton Stein, *A History of India*, ed. David Arnold (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 107; Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 71.

also coincided with the change of capital from Calcutta to Delhi.[391] The occasion witnessed the spectacle of the Delhi Durbar and more important to this study, an instance of the royal couple appearing at the Mughal jharokha in the Red Fort in Delhi to give jharokha darshan (Fig.54) to the masses of commoners who were assembled at the plains below the fort. The official record of the visit stated it as:

> A special meeting between the Sovereign and the humbler classes of the people had from the first been regarded as an essential feature of the Delhi visit,… the idea of a great popular assemblage on the alluvial stretch below the Fort, before which Their Majesties could appear at the jharoka of the Fort in the same way as the Moghul Emperors had been wont to show themselves to the people… Advancing then, shortly before half-past four, to the 'Jharoka, the balcony window in the bastion known as the Mussaman Burj, which had been similarly used by the Moghul Emperors, Their Majesties stood for a time in the full view of the people… Directly Their Majesties were seen, a mighty roar of recognition arose, spreading like a wave with inconceivable rapidity for a whole mile across the plain, and lasting as long as Their Majesties remained there at the window.[392]

It is essential to note that at this point, although the symbolic meanings associated with the Mughal tradition of jharokha darshan did not apply in this case, there is evidence of an active awareness among the British officials of the significance of at least some aspects of the practice. This can also be seen in the official record of the royal visit which noted how subjects in Delhi during Shah Jahan's reign proudly refused their morning meal until they had witnessed the jharokha darshan.[393] Taking this awareness among the British into consideration, the case of this grand imperial visit in 1911 which included a ceremony originally performed at sunrise which officially began the day during the Mughal heyday getting replaced in 1911 with one where the jharokha darshan was conducted in the evening, during the early reign of King George V, who ruled over an empire on which the sun never set, becomes quite the coincidence. Thus, we see the ultimate expression of legacy of Mughal solar symbolisms in the case of a foreign power from another side of the world utilising a

[391] Alan Trevithick, "Some Structural and Sequential Aspects Of The British Imperial Assemblages at Delhi:1877–1911," *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 3 (1990): pp. 561-578, 570.

[392] *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India, 1911* (London: Published for the government of India by John Murray, 1914), 185, 188.

[393] Ibid, 53-54.

practice which they knew to be Mughal to present their emperor and empress to masses of people they ruled over following the change of the capital city to Delhi. The symbolic meanings of kingship associated with this practice meant that although the tradition of the jharokha darshan both predated and outlasted the Mughals, it came to acquire new meanings during Mughal rule which tied it deeply with sun veneration which further enhanced the fame of the practise. Despite the loss of the meanings that the Mughals would have considered it to have, the practise of jharokha darshan came to be attributed and remembered in the Mughal name. Thus in a way, the legacy of solar veneration and its contribution towards aiding the development of sacredness of the Mughal emperor certainly outlived the dynasty.

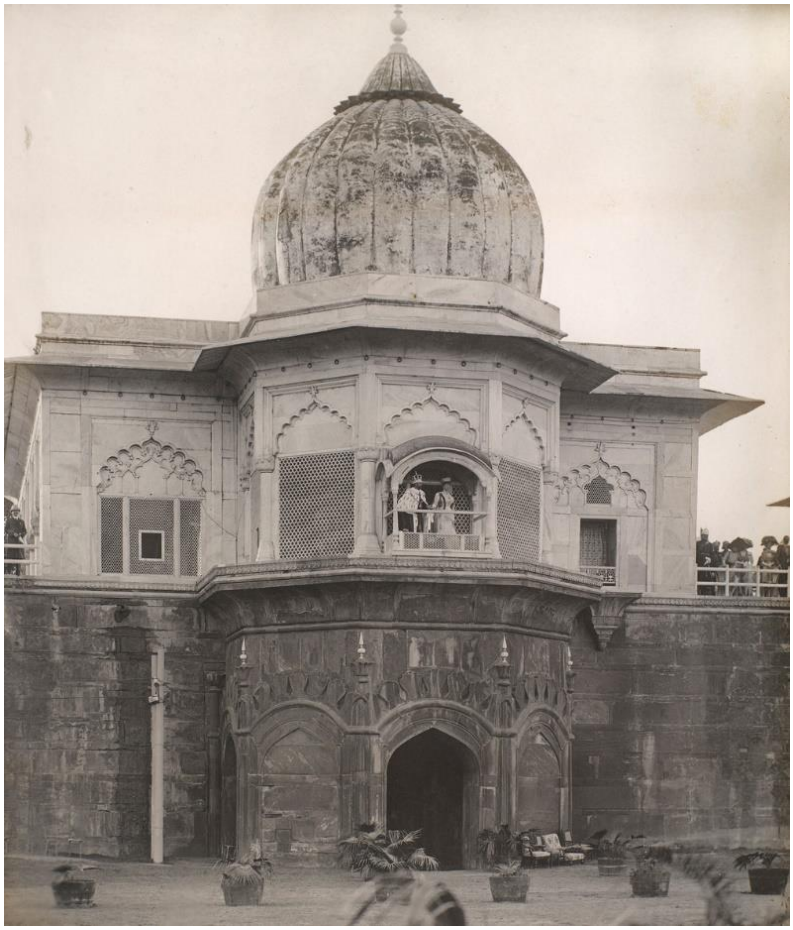

Figure 54. King George V and Queen Mary appearing at the jharokha window in 1911.
Description: King George V and Queen Mary present themselves to the masses of common people gathered below from the Red Fort in Delhi on December 13, 1911.
Source: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2021. Accessed August 23, 2021. https://www.rct.uk/collection/2303515-a/king-george-v-1865-1936-and-queen-mary-1867-1953-at-red-fort-delhi.

In conclusion, this chapter focussed on the case of the decline of solar symbolisms that commenced during the reign of Aurangzeb and attempted to trace its legacy. In modern India, Aurangzeb remains a controversial figure, often mired in political overtones and seen in popular imagination as a religious zealot. Although academic attempts to separate Aurangzeb from this painted image often remains a futile endeavour, Aurangzeb's policies with regard to the Mughal sacred kingship rituals, which included solar symbolisms, took a radical shift from those of his predecessors. The effect of this shift was that it broke from the aspect of divinity that was cultivated in the minds of the Mughal subjects who had attributed divine status to the Mughal sovereign and his close association with the sun, that was set during Akbar's reign and which was further enhanced by Jahangir and Shah Jahan. In other words, the decline of solar symbolisms, which began in late seventeenth century, coincided with the period of general decline of the empire. The fall from an empire spanning most of the Indian subcontinent in 1707 to one where the sovereign was a puppet ruler of others in late eighteenth century was as sudden as it was complete. The Mughals never recovered from this fall and the solar symbolisms that aided in enhancing the divine status of the emperor in the eyes of its subjects lost meaning under the fate that the empire endured. A final flicker of the legacy of one of the practices associated with a solar themed tradition comes to us from the case of the King and Queen of the British Empire holding the jharokha darshan from the Red Fort in Delhi in 1911 as they toured their Indian dominions following the Kings coronation and the shift of capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi. Thus, it can be postulated that in this brand-building venture, solar symbolisms certainly played an important part, particularly during the transition phase of the Mughals from that of a small kingdom to a subcontinental empire, and aided in cementing the place of the Mughal emperor as the true and divine ruler of Hindustan in the popular imagination of its subjects.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

India's colonial experience under Britain led to many words from Indian languages becoming part of the English vocabulary, such as the word 'loot' for instance. In this regard, the testament to what the Mughal Empire once was comes from the word 'mogul' defined as 'an important person who is very rich or powerful'.[394] The grandeur that brought the Mughal Empire and its sovereign this fame in its heyday was also tied to the aspect of divinity that was associated with the emperor by a large section of subjects in the realm. As analysed in this thesis, solar symbolisms were an important component of this attempt at attributing divinity to the emperor, which also helped the emperor transcend the many real and imagined boundaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that hindered a stable and effective rule.

As seen at the outset, establishing of Mughal domains in northern India set the stage for the coming together of varied cultural influences from the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia and Iran. This allowed for the moulding of these varied instances under the Mughals in their attempt to build a kingship identity connected to light and the sun, a theme that had existed in one form or the other in all these lands. Although, the seeds of solar symbolisms had its humble beginnings during the turbulent reign of Humayun, it had come to flourish, be codified and assimilated into an integral part of what became the Mughal sacred kingship traditions only under Humayun's son, Akbar. Akbar's nearly fifty-year long reign saw attempts to simultaneously consolidate his rule in his domains and undertake the expansion of his demesne over a populace that was a mosaic of religions, cultures and ethnicities. This meant that

[394] "Mogul." Cambridge Dictionary. Accessed July 13, 2021. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mogul.

accommodating the diverse groups was the ideal approach to rule that would allow for sustained peace and stability for the nascent empire. In this attempt, solar symbolisms was an ideology that could proliferate and transcend across multiple areas spanning from literature to art and architecture, enhancing the sacredness of the emperor as a divine being who was closest to God on earth.

Essentially, the case of solar symbolism points towards an overall lack of inhibition among the Mughal ruling elite when it came to absorbing the various elements that aided in stylising a kingship identity that could add to the existing narrative of the emperor's identity, of which solar symbolisms were an integral part by late sixteenth century. In other words, solar imagery was employed at every available opportunity to enhance the sacred identity of the emperor to impart divinity and help garner greater legitimacy in the eyes of the populace. This study also showed that the results and the extent of the application of the solar themes in art and architecture varied depending on each ruler and their personal tastes to some extent. In short, the thesis demonstrated how the ideology of sun and light veneration that grew and proliferated under Akbar achieved its mature expression with regard to visual representation under Jahangir and Shah Jahan and subsequently analysed the various instances of solar symbolisms that had emerged in art and architecture.

The varied tools that associated the emperor with the sun were, at its core, different methods of representing the sun and its metaphorical symbols in Mughal imperial art. This can be seen from how the sun's characteristics itself formed the base for many different types and combinations of solar themes that was demonstrated throughout the varied instances that were explored here. The chapter commenced by examining the 'lion and sun' motif appearing in imperial flags and coins, and proceeded to examine the halo, the shamsa and the different types of fauna motifs that had solar associations in Mughal paintings, subsequently ending with an analysis of the imperial thrones and other imperial regalia. While employing these symbolisms in Mughal art led to some of the most overt instances of the solar ideology in action, the audience that was exposed to this remained limited as Mughal art did not penetrate all levels of society. It is in this regard that application of solar symbolism in architecture was different.

Closer examination of the effect of solar symbolisms in architecture revealed how it enabled the emperor to simultaneously express both the prosperity of the empire and their divine association with the sun to magnanimous proportions. This was done through analysing the solar elements in the case of jharokha darshan, audience halls and imperial tomb architecture. Through this, the Mughals could effectively direct how any subject or foreign dignitary who attended the imperial space automatically aligned themselves. Consequently, the users of this space knowingly or unknowingly participated in the solar symbolism filled sacred kingship ideology of the Mughal emperor. In essence, solar symbolisms in the realm of architecture was so institutionalised that it continued to impart sacredness to the illumined emperor in the spaces that he inhabited both during his lifetime and after.

The thesis also focussed on the case of the decline of solar symbolisms that had commenced during the reign of Aurangzeb and traced its legacy. The study explained the reasons for Aurangzeb's policies, with regard to the Mughal sacred kingship rituals which included solar symbolisms, taking a radical shift from those of his predecessors. The fall from an empire spanning most of the Indian subcontinent at the start of the eighteenth century to one where the sovereign was a puppet ruler of others by the end of that century was as sudden as it was complete. While the successor states and new powers that rose from the decaying empire in the eighteenth century were many, the repeat of solar symbolisms in a way similar to how it was in the Mughals did not materialise in these cases. This was to a large extent due to the circumstances where no single polity fully grew to conquer and consolidate rule over an area as vast as the Mughals had for an extended time, until the English East India Company achieved the feat. In the case of the Company, it was no longer necessary to undertake kingship practices in the same way because it was primarily a for-profit company and an all-encompassing emperor, whose identity had to be built and maintained, was not required. Although the last instance of the jharokha darshan ceremony occurred from the Mughal capital in 1911 during the visit of the British monarch, the ideology had very much died a silent death as the empire had begun its disintegration in the eighteenth century itself.

In conclusion, the thesis offered a coherent narrative on the sparse literature on solar symbolism in Mughal cosmological thought, through analysing the wide range of

available evidence, primarily from art and architecture, which otherwise remained as highly-particular case studies of specific aspects of solar imagery across academia. The thesis explained the rise and decline of solar imagery and ideology in the Mughal Empire through analysing instances of it in literature, art and architecture, while focused on the extent to which solar symbolisms came to affect art and architecture and the various sways in which it was employed. While the most overt instances of these symbolisms burst onto the stage only from mid-sixteenth century and started its slow but steady decline from late seventeenth century onwards, the thesis covered the life span of sun veneration in the Mughal dynasty throughout its existence. Consequently, the thesis was also among the first studies that analysed the decline of solar symbolisms in Mughal art and architecture.

Furthermore, the thesis also sheds light on the possibilities for future studies in the research areas of both solar symbolisms and sacred kingship in the case of Mughals as well as their contemporaries. Studies examining how such practices were perceived outside of Mughal realms is another field worth exploring. Last but not the least, the thesis contributed to the grand corpus of Mughal art and architectural history by focusing on solar symbolisms in the empire in order to generate a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon among the Mughals.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

1526 yılında Zahîreddîn Muhammed Bâbür komutasındaki ordu, Delhi'den yalnızca elli altı mil uzaktaki Panipat savaşında İbrahim Ludî'nin kuvvetlerini kesin surette yenilgiye uğrattığında, Babür Şah bu zaferin üç yüz yıldan uzun bir süre boyunca Hint alt kıtasının çoğunu yönetecek bir imparatorluğun başlangıcı olacağını tahmin etmemiş olabilir.[395] Nitekim Babür Şah aslen günümüzde Özbekistan sınırlarında yer alan Fergana vadisinden gelmekteydi ve Ludî hanedanlığından aldığı toprakların nüfusu çoğunlukla gayrimüslimlerden (ekseriyetle Hindulardan) oluşmaktaydı; Babürlüleri başlangıçtan itibaren çağdaşları olan Safevîlerden ve Osmanlılardan ayıran da bu olmuştur.[396] 17. yüzyılın sonuna gelindiğinde Babürlü İmparatoru, Hint alt kıtasının büyük çoğunluğunu hâkimiyeti altına almış konumdaydı, 150 milyona yaklaşan devasa bir nüfusa hükmetmekte, zengin kaynakları ve dünya ekonomisinin tahmini yüzde 24'üne karşılık gelen gayrisafi yurtiçi hasılasıyla zamanının en varlıklı imparatorlukları arasında kendisine yer bulmaktaydı.[397] Üstelik bu zenginlik ve refah seviyesi, din, etnik köken, kültür ve dil anlamında değişkenlik gösteren çok çeşitli ögeleri içinde barındıran bir nüfusa hükmederken elde edilmiştir ve bu durum da

[395] Richard M Eaton, *India in The Persianate Age: 1000-1765* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 204; Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1; Lisa Golombek ve Ebba Koch, "The Mughals, Uzbeks, and the Timurid Legacy," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Finbarr Barry Flood ve Necipoğlu Gülru, 1st ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017), sf. 811-845, 811;

[396] John F Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1; Asher, 1, 19.

[397] Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2003), 256; Richards, 1.

kompozit bir kültürün ve toplumun doğmasına yol açan eklektik ve benzersiz bir senkretizmin gelişmesini sağlamıştır.[398]

Böylesi çeşitli bir nüfusu yönetmenin getirdiği zorlukların son derece farkında olan Babürlüler, topraklarını en iyi şekilde yönetebilmek için sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel düzlemlerde çok sayıda önlemi aktif olarak hayata geçirmişlerdir. Bu amaçla, imparatora ilahi melekeler yakıştırarak kutsallık atfetmek, diğer bir deyişle kutsal hükümranlık / tanrısal egemenlik uygulamalarını hayata geçirmek yalnızca kaba kuvvet yoluyla asla başarılamayacak şekilde meşruiyetin güçlendirilmesine ve bağlılık ve sadakatin tesis edilmesine yardımcı olmuştur.[399] Dolayısıyla Babürlüler bu tür kutsal hükümranlık uygulamalarını bu amaçla kullanmışlardır. Ancak, Babürlüler örneğinde, Babürlü İmparatorunun kutsallığı doğrudan güneşle ilişkilendirilerek ilginç bir nitelik kazanmıştır.[400] Bu ideolojinin imparatorluğun hâkimiyeti altında yer alan çeşitli kültürlerde öne çıkan farklı sistemler ve gelenekler ile harmanlanması istisnai sonuçlar doğurmuştur ve imparatorluk kimliğinin genişletilmesi ve atfedilen kutsallığın sürdürülmesi amacıyla Babürlüler tarafından güneş sembolizmi ögeleri sanat ve mimaride ihtiyatlı bir şekilde kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu çerçevede, mevcut tez araştırması kapsamında aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmıştır: Babürlüler gibi bir imparatorlukta güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin yükselişini ve düşüşünü ve bu ögelerin kutsal hükümranlık anlayışıyla ilişkilendirilmesini nasıl açıklayabiliriz? Güneş sembolizmi ögeleri Babürlü sanatını ve mimarisini nasıl şekillendirmiş ve etkilemiştir? Babürlü sanat ve mimarlık tarihine yönelik mevcut akademik analizlere güneş ideolojisi merceğinden yaklaşılması bu konudaki mevcut bilimsel ve akademik anlatıları nasıl değiştirebilir?

Babürlü sanatı ve mimarisi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar ve Babürlüler'de görülen kutsal hükümranlık ve güneş sembolizmi uygulamaları üzerine yapılan çalışmalar

[398] Catherine B. Asher ve Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 115.

[399] Eaton, 249.

[400] Catherine B. Asher, "Ray from the Sun: Mughal Ideology and the Visual Construction of the Divine." In *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 171, 172.

ayrı ayrı olarak akademide iki farklı araştırma alanı oluşturmaktadır ve belirli noktalarda birleşip ayrışarak bu konulara ilişkin anlayışımızı şekillendirmeye ve yönlendirmeye devam etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bu iki ayrı akademik alan nadiren etkileşime girmekte ve bunun sonucunda da bir noktada birleşememektedir. Bu çerçevede, mevcut tez çalışmasında tespit edilen söz konusu boşluğun doldurulması hedeflenmiştir. Bu doğrultuda, Babürlüler hanedanlığının hâkimiyeti süresince (1526-1857) gelişen ve evrimleşen güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin karakteristik niteliklerinin bir bağlama oturtulması amaçlanmış, bu ögelerin yalnızca ortaya çıkışı ve gerilemesi değil aynı zamanda Babürlü sanatı ve mimarisindeki uygulamalarına da odaklanılmıştır. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışma, sanat ve mimarlık tarihi üzerine literatürde yer alan farklı araştırma alanlarını bir bütün haline getirmekte ve böylece bu konuların güneş imgeleri ve güneş sembolizmi merceğinden keşfedilmesini sağlayan yeni bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Babürlüler'de güneş sembolizminin en belirgin örnekleri ancak 16. yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren görülmeye başlanmış ve 17. yüzyılın sonlarından itibaren yavaş ama istikrarlı şekilde düşüşe geçmiştir. Buna karşın, bu tez çalışmasında Babürlüler hanedanlığının başından sonuna kadar geçen süreye odaklanılmış ve imparatorluğun kuruluşundan yıkılışına kadar güneş imgeleri ve güneş sembolizminin gidişatı takip edilmiştir. Bu yaklaşım sayesinde, Babürlüler'de güneşe atfedilen kutsallık, bunun üzerinden hükümdara yöneltilen kutsal hükümranlık ve bunun sembolik yansımalarının hem ortaya çıkışı hem de gerilemesi analiz edilerek konuya ilişkin en kapsamlı araştırma ortaya konulmuştur. Burada amaç, güneş sembolizminin gerilemesine ilişkin ayrıntılı bir analizin olmaması sebebiyle literatürde görülen başka bir eksiğin daha giderilmesi olmuştur. Dolayısıyla, bu tez çalışması Babürlü sanatı ve mimarisinde görülen güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin gerilemesinin altında yatan nedenleri ve bunun sonuçlarını ortaya koymaya yönelik ilk akademik çalışmalar arasında yer almaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, Babürlü İmparatorluğu'nda görülen güneş sembolizmine ilişkin kısıtlı literatürde yer alan çalışmalar yalnızca son derece spesifik vaka çalışmalarından ibarettir ve bu tez çalışması başta sanat ve mimari olmak üzere mevcut bulunan çeşitli kanıtları inceleyerek tutarlı bir anlatı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Babürlü imparatorlarının kendi imajlarını nasıl oluşturduğunu belirleyen güneş sembolizmi ve bunun etkileri üzerine yapılan bu araştırma, imparatorlukta sanat ve mimarinin nasıl geliştiği ve hükümranlık kavramıyla nasıl

ilişkili hale geldiği hakkında önemli çıkarımlar içermekte ve Babürlü sanatı ve mimarisine ilişkin mevcut akademik anlayışımızı derinleştirmektedir. Bu kapsamda, Babürlü İmparatorluğu'ndaki kutsal hükümranlık uygulamalarıyla bağlantılı olarak güneş sembolizmi ve ışık imgeleri üzerine yapılan bu araştırma, literatürde yer alan boşlukları doldurarak Babürlü sanat ve mimarlık tarihi külliyatına katkıda bulunmayı, daha bütüncül bir anlatı ortaya koymayı ve böylece Babürlüler tarihini oluşturan yapbozun bir parçasını daha yerine koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Tezi oluşturan içeriğe gelecek olursak, imparatorlukta güneş sembolizminin yükselişinden başlayıp gerileme ve düşüş dönemlerine odaklanılarak kronolojik bir sıra takip edilmiştir. Tezde analiz edildiği üzere, güneş sembolizmi ögeleri imparatora kutsallık/tanrısallık atfetme girişimlerinin önemli bir bileşeni olmuştur ve bu ögeler, aynı zamanda imparatorun 16. ve 17. yüzyıllarda istikrarlı ve etkili yönetimi engelleyen birçok gerçek ve hayali sınırı aşmasını da sağlamıştır. Bu bağlamda, güneşe kutsallık atfedilmesi ve güneşe tapınma uygulamaları en eski zamanlardan beri birçok kültürün bir parçası olmuş olsa da, mevcut çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda, Babürlüler hanedanlığında hem güneş ideolojisinin hem de ilgili motiflerin gelişmesine en çok katkıda bulunduğu düşünülen öncül örneklere vurgu yapılmıştır. Bu nedenle, başlangıçta da görüldüğü üzere, kuzey Hindistan'da Babürlü hâkimiyetinin kurulması, Hint alt kıtası, Orta Asya ve İran başta olmak üzere çeşitli kültürel etkilerin bir araya gelmesi için zemin hazırlamıştır. Babürlüler'in kendilerine özgü bir egemenlik anlayışı ve hükümranlık kimliği oluşturma çabaları neticesinde bu farklı kültürel arka planlardan gelen uygulamalar ve gelenekler harmanlanarak ışık ve güneşle bağlantılı yeni bir anlayış oluşturulması sağlanmıştır. Işık ve güneş teması bu topraklarda her zaman için farklı şekillerde var olan bir tema olmuştur. Tezin ikinci bölümünde, Babürlüler'i etkileyen üç coğrafi bölgenin tümünde görülen uygulamalar ve gelenekler arasındaki kesişim noktaları ve benzerlikler ele alınmıştır. Ancak yapılan analize göre, Ekber Şah tarafından uygulamaya konan politikalar olmasaydı bu üç bölgede yer alan uygulamaların başarılı bir şekilde harmanlanamayacağı da görülmektedir. Örneğin Ekber Şah, Hinduizm dinine mensup olan Rajput şefleriyle güçlü evlilik ittifakları kurmuş ve

böylece, Babür Şah ve Hümayun Şah zamanındaki uygulamalardan uzaklaşılarak Hint alt kıtasını yönetmeye yönelik yeni bir yaklaşım benimsenmiştir.[401]

16. yüzyılda Kuzey Hindistan, kozmik temelli ideolojilerin ve evliyalık ideolojilerinin ön plana çıktığı bir coğrafya konumundaydı ve birçok grup hâlihazırda bu ideolojileri gelenek ve dinle birleştirerek bir hükümranlık aracı olarak kullanmaktaydı.[402] Babür Şah'ın Hindistan'da hâkimiyetin kurulmasından yalnızca dört yıl sonra zamansız bir şekilde ölmesiyle (ö. 1530) fetihlerle ve iktidarı sağlamlaştırma çabalarıyla geçen Babür Şah dönemi son bulmuş ve liderlik vasfı Hümayun Şah'a geçmiştir.[403] Hümayun Şah'ın on yıl süren saltanatı sırasında ise, güneş ve ışık imgelerini içeren kutsal bir hükümranlık kimliğinin oluşturulmasına yönelik ilk çabalar belirgin hale gelmiştir. Hümayun Şah, saray edebiyatında 'cennetin Güneşi' veya 'cennetlik Güneş'[404] gibi isimlerle anılmakta ve imparatorun yüzünün 'güneş gibi parladığı' veya 'güneşe ışık verdiği'[405] gibi tasvirler yapılmaktadır. Ancak imparatorun güneşle ilişkilendirilmesi edebi benzetmelerin ötesine geçmiş ve Hümayun Şah döneminde saray geleneklerine ve divan uygulamalarına da yansımıştır.[406] 1530'lu yıllarda Hümayun Şah'ın sarayında bir kozmos teması uygulandığı görülmektedir. Buna göre, imparator ve saray mensupları divan sırasında iç içe geçmiş, farklı renkli dairelerden oluşan ve evrenin modelini temsil eden bir halı üzerine oturmaktaydı.[407] Bu modelde, Hümayun Şah'ın kendisini güneş olarak konumlandırdığı ve modelin merkezinde yer alan altın renkli daire

[401] Eaton, 241.

[402] A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 18, 21.

[403] Eaton, 213.

[404] Khwandamir. Qanun-i-Humayuni. Çeviri: Baini Prashad. Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940, 14, 21, 22, 24.

[405] Khwandamir, 38, 65, 76.

[406] Eaton, Richard M. India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019, 221.

[407] Anooshahr, Ali. "Science at the Court of The Cosmocrat: Mughal India, 1531–56." The Indian Economic & Social History Review 54, no. 3 (2017): 295; Eaton, 221.

içinde oturduğu görülmektedir.[408] Bunun yanı sıra, imparatorun ve saray mensuplarının haftanın her bir günü için farklı gezegenlere denk gelen renk kodlu giysiler giydikleri de gözlemlenmiştir.[409] Ancak, 1540 yılında toprakların Surîler'e kaybedilmesi ve imparatorun Safevîler'e sığınması üzerine bu güneş projesi askıya alınmıştır.[410] Hümayun Şah'ın 1555 yılında geri dönmesi ve kaybedilen toprakların yeniden elde edilmesiyle birlikte projeye devam edebilmek için uygun ortam yeniden oluşmuş olsa da, Hümayun Şah'ın 1556 yılında zamansız şekilde ölümüyle proje bir kez daha sekteye uğramıştır.[411] Hümayun Şah kaybedilen toprakları yeniden fethettikten sonra yalnızca bir yıl kadar yaşamış olsa da, 1555 yılına kadar kurulan ordu ve sistemler oğlu Ekber Şah'ın sonraki yıllarda başarılı fetihler gerçekleştirmesini sağlamıştır.[412]

Güneş sembolizminin tohumları Hümayun Şah'ın çalkantılı hükümdarlığı döneminde mütevazı bir şekilde atılmış olsa da, güneş sembolizminin Babürlülere özgü kutsal hükümranlık geleneklerinin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak gelişmesi, kodlanması ve özümsenmesi ancak Hümayun Şah'ın oğlu Ekber Şah döneminde olmuştur. Ekber Şah'ın neredeyse yarım asırlık saltanatı süresince imparator, hâkimiyetini sağlamlaştırmaya ve pekiştirmeye çalışmış ve bunun için de farklı kimlikler benimseyerek dengeli bir politika izlemenin istikrarlı bir imparatorluk kurabilmek için doğru yol olduğuna karar verilmiştir. İmparatorun benimsediği kimlikler arasında, Timur soyundan gelen bir prens, geleneksel Hintli bir hükümdar, ikinci İslami milenyumu başlatması beklenen mutasavvıf bir evliya ve Tanrı'ya en yakın konumda olan ve bunun sonucunda da tüm dini ve mezhebi ayrımların üstünde yer alan kutsal ışıkla aydınlanmış güneş imparatoru kimlikleri bulunmaktaydı.[413] Bu

[408] Moin, 134, 136, 235; Anooshahr, 295; Eaton, 222.

[409] Anooshahr, 295; Moin, 134; Eaton, 165.

[410] Richards, 9, 11; Asher, 32; Eaton, 217.

[411] Eaton, 220.

[412] Ibid, 223.

[413] Eaton, 249.

kimliklerin oluşturulması ve benimsetilmesi girişiminde güneş sembolizmi, edebiyattan sanat ve mimariye kadar birçok alana yayılabilecek ve böylece her alanda imparatorun kutsallığını artıracak bir ideoloji olarak görülmekteydi.

Esasen bakıldığında, güneş sembolizminin bir ideoloji olarak benimsenmiş olması, imparatorun mevcut kimliğine katkı yapacak şekilde bir hükümranlık kimliğinin oluşturulmasına yardımcı olacak farklı unsurların benimsenmesi konusunda Babürlü yönetici elitlerin herhangi bir sınır tanımadığını göstermektedir. Nitekim güneş sembolizmi 16. yüzyılın sonlarına gelindiğinde imparatorun kimliğinin ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, dini, kültürel veya bölgesel farklılıklara bakılmaksızın herhangi bir uygulamanın imparatorun kimliğini yücelteceği, daha da kutsal bir hale getireceği ve mevcut anlatıya da uyacağı düşünülüyorsa, söz konusu uygulamanın her zaman için uyarlanarak bu anlatıya dâhil edildiği görülmektedir. Güneş imgesi, kutsallık atfederek imparatora ilahi bir kimlik kazandırmak ve halkın gözündeki meşruiyetini pekiştirmek amacıyla her fırsatta aktif olarak kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca tez kapsamında gerçekleştirilen analize göre, güneş temasının sanat ve mimaride kullanımı her bir hükümdara ve bu hükümdarların kişisel zevklerine göre değişiklik göstermiştir.[414] Bunun yanı sıra, mevcut tez kapsamında, Ekber Şah döneminde gelişen ve yaygınlaşan güneş ideolojisinin ve ışık imgelerinin Cihangir ve Şah Cihan dönemlerinde görsel temsil açısından nasıl tekâmüle eriştiği ortaya konmuş ve ardından sanat ve mimaride görülen çeşitli güneş sembolizmi örnekleri ayrıntısıyla analiz edilmiştir.

Güneş sembolizminin Babürlü sanatındaki etkilerinin incelendiği bölümde, imparatoru güneşle ilişkilendirilmek için kullanılan çeşitli araçların esasen güneşi ve güneşin metaforik sembollerini temsil etmenin farklı yöntemleri olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Tezde incelenen çeşitli örneklerde ortaya konduğu şekliyle güneş temasının farklı türdeki uygulamalarında ve bunların kombinasyonlarında güneşin karakteristik özelliklerinin temel alındığı görülmektedir. Güneş motiflerinden bazıları yalnızca belirli bir takım örneklerle sınırlı kalmamış, farklı alanlarda hem ayrı ayrı hem de farklı kombinasyonlar halinde kullanılmaya devam etmiştir. Güneş,

[414] Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Audience Hall: A Solomonic Revival Of Persepolis In The Form Of A Mosque", In *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires*, ed. Jeroen Duindam, Tülay Artan, ve Metin Kunt, 313-38. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 314.

aslan ve simurg (Zümrüdüanka) motifleri ve bunların farklı kombinasyonları buna örnek olarak gösterilebilir. Babürlü sanatında güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin analizi, imparatorluk sancak ve bayraklarında ve madeni paralarda görülen 'aslan ve güneş' motifinin incelenmesiyle başlamıştır. Bu motif imparatorluk hayatının her alanına nüfuz etmiş, savaş alanlarından, kraliyet törenlerine, prenslerin eve dönüşünden dini kutlamalara kadar birçok enstantanede Babürlü İmparatorluğu'nu cesurca temsil etmiştir. İmparatorun başını süsleyen güneş benzeri parlak halelerin (ışık halkaları) kullanımı ve sonrasında görülen 'hale politikası' güneş motifinin öne çıktığı diğer örneklerdir. Aynı şekilde, imparatorun ismini ve unvanlarını taşıyan 'şamsa' adı verilen mandala benzeri süslemeler de imparatorluğa ait el yazması eserlerin başında kullanılmıştır. Zümrüdüanka kuşları (simurg), tavus kuşları, ördekler ve balıkçıllar gibi farklı fauna motifleri ve bunların farklı dizilimleri de güneş imgesi olarak görülmüştür. Bu motifler Babürlüler döneminde yapılan resimlerde bordür süsü, tahtın üstünde yer alan kanopilerde desen ve imparatorluk tahtında süsleme olarak sık sık kullanılmıştır. Bunun neticesinde araştırma kapsamında imparatorluk tahtlarında ve imparatora ait diğer eşyaların üzerinde öne çıkan güneş ögeleri de analiz edilmiştir. Bu bölümde, imparatorun çevresinde bulunan objelerde kullanılan altın ve değerli taş gibi yapı malzemelerine de güneşe dayalı kutsallık çağrışımlarının yapıldığı ortaya konmuştur. Babürlü sanatında bu çeşitli araçların kullanılmasıyla birlikte, güneş ideolojisinin en gösterişli, çarpıcı ve belirgin örnekleri ortaya çıkmıştır. İmparatoru karakterize eden eserlerin çoğunda imparatorun doğrudan katılımı olduğu düşünüldüğünden bu örneklerin tümü bu çalışmada birincil kaynak olarak alınmıştır. Diğer bir deyişle, bu şaheserleri üreten imparatorluk atölyesinin imparatorun onayından geçmemiş eserleri üretmiş olması olasılığı oldukça düşüktür. Ancak imparatorluk sanatının ulaştığı kitlenin oldukça kısıtlı olduğu, yalnızca belirli kesimlerin söz konusu sanat eserlerine erişimi olduğu ve toplumun tüm katmanlarına ulaşılmadığı bilinmektedir. Bu açıdan, güneş sembolizminin mimarideki yansımaları, anıtsal niteliği ve büyüklüğü sayesinde daha geniş kitlelere ulaşma imkânı bulmuştur.

Güneş imgesinin kutsallık atfederek imparatora ilahi bir kimlik kazandırmak ve halkın gözündeki meşruiyetini pekiştirmek amacıyla her fırsatta aktif olarak kullanıldığı göz önüne alınırsa, mimari de bir istisna değildir. Aksine mimari, imparatorların kendilerine ve saltanatlarına ait kalıcı bir miras bırakabileceği ve

geçen zamanın sıkıntı ve güçlüklerine dayanma şansı en yüksek yegâne alan olmuştur. Aynı zamanda, mimari himaye, imparatorun saltanatı sırasında hem imparatorluğun refahını ve zenginliğini göstermesini hem de güneşle olan ilahi çağrışımları çok büyük bir düzlemde ifade etmesini sağlamıştır. Bu eğilimi çeşitli mimari parametrelerde gözlemlemek mümkündür. 'Caroka-yı Darşan' isimli tören için kullanılan kraliyet binalarına bakıldığında, imparatorun her sabah güneş doğarken, parlak bir güneşi andıran yedi süslemeli, kavisli ve yaldızlı Bengal çatısının altındaki caroka denilen pencerede gözüktüğü bilinmektedir. Güneş ışınlarının çatıya çarpmasıyla birlikte bu yapı imparatorun altın bir ışıkla çevrelenmiş gibi görünmesini sağlamıştır. İmparatorun caroka şeklindeki tahtının bulunduğu kabul salonlarında ise, salonun yönü doğuya, güneşin doğduğu yöne doğru bakmaktadır ve batıda Mekke'ye doğru bakan caminin tam karşısına konumlandırılmıştır. Ekber Şah ve Cihangir'in anıt mezarları ise kubbesiz bir yapıya sahiptir. Bu yapılarda imparatorun beyaz mermerden yapılan lahdi güneşe bakacak şekilde tasarlanmıştır. Söz konusu anıt mezarlar, Babürlü mimarisinde beyaz mermer kullanımı ve bu malzemenin sembolik anlamları güneş ideolojisinin mimari tasarıma nüfuz ettiğini doğrulamaktadır. Bu nedenle, Babürlü İmparatorluğu'nun sarayında kabul edilen tebaadan herhangi birinin veya yabancı devlet adamının, mimari kullanımı ve saray törenlerine uygun şekilde tasarlanan alanın yönlendirmesiyle bilerek veya bilmeyerek kendilerini Babürlü imparatorunun güneş sembolizmi ile bezenmiş kutsal hükümranlık ideolojinin bir parçası olarak bulduğu söylenebilir. Esasında, mimari alanda güneş sembolizmi o kadar kurumsallaşmıştır ki, imparatora hem hayattayken hem de ölümünden sonra bulunduğu alanlarda kutsallık atfetmeye devam etmiştir. Hem sanatta hem de mimaride açıkla ifade edilen kutsal hükümranlık ideolojisi ve güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin görülme sıklığı imparatorluğun genel refah düzeyine paralel olarak ilerlemiştir. 6. Babürlü hükümdarı Alemgir Şah (Evrengzib) döneminde hem imparatorluğun hem de güneş sembolizminin gerileme dönemi başlamış ve imparatorluk 18. yüzyılda yıkılmıştır.

Tezde aynı zamanda Alemgir Şah döneminde güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin gerilemesi ve sonrasında bu ögelerden miras kalan unsurlar da incelenmiştir. Çalışma kapsamında, Alemgir Şah'ın güneş sembolizmi ögelerini içeren kutsal hükümranlık ritüellerine ilişkin politikalarda önceki imparatorlara kıyasla radikal bir değişikliğe

gitmesinin altında yatan nedenler açıklanmıştır. Bu değişiklik neticesinde, Ekber Şah döneminde oluşturulan ve sonrasında Cihangir ve Şah Cihan dönemlerinde pekiştirilen kutsallık anlayışından uzaklaşılmış ve halkın gözünde Babürlü hükümdarına ilahi bir statü atfedilmesi ve hükümdarın güneşle ilişkilendirilmesi azalmıştır. Başka bir ifadeyle, 17. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru güneş sembolizmi ögelerinde gerileme olması imparatorluğun genel gerileme ve düşüş dönemleriyle aynı zamana denk gelmiştir.

Evrengzib, babası Şah Cihan hala hayattayken üç erkek kardeşine karşı taht savaşını kazanmasının ardından 1658 yılında 'Alemgir' (Dünya Fatihi) unvanını alarak tahta çıkmıştır.[415] Alemgir Şah'ın saltanatı süresince, birçok kutsal hükümranlık uygulaması da dâhil olmak üzere kendisinden önce gelen hükümdarların ortaya koyduğu yerleşik geleneklerden kopuş yaşanmıştır. Güneş sembolizmi ögeleri de bu kopuştan nasibini almıştır. Alemgir Şah ilk başlarda babası Şah Cihan döneminde hâlihazırda yürürlükte olan birçok kutsal hükümranlık ritüelini devam ettirmiştir[416] ve imparatorun tasviri ve takdimini içeren uygulamalarda güneş sembolizmi ögeleri kullanılmaya devam etmiştir. Saltanatının ilk on yılında Alemgir Şah her gün gün doğumunda 'Caroka-yı Darşan' seremonisine katılmış, güneş ve ay yılına göre doğum günlerinde ağırlığınca altın ve gümüşü yoksullara dağıtma uygulamasını sürdürmüştür.[417] Bunun yanı sıra, döneme ait minyatür eserlere bakıldığında, Şah Cihan döneminde geliştirilen birçok güneş sembolünün kullanılmaya devam ettiği görülmektedir. Bunlara örnek olarak imparatorun başını süsleyen parlak hale ve imparatorun oturduğu yerin üstündeki güneş şemsiyelerinin iç kısmında yer alan güneş ve Zümrüdüanka (simurg) motifleri verilebilir (bkz. Şekil 52). Alemgir Şah'ın uzun saltanatı boyunca, özellikle de saltanatın ilk on yılından sonra imparatorluktaki kutsal hükümranlık ritüellerinin uygulanmasında belirli değişimler gözlenmiştir.[418] Bu değişimlerden en önemlisi, Alemgir Şah'ın imparatorluğun yönetim şeklini

[415] Truschke, 3; Eaton, 293, 315; Stuart Cary Welch, *Imperial Mughal Painting* (New York: George Braziller, 1978), 113.

[416] Truschke, 41, 45.

[417] Truschke, 41.

[418] Truschke, 43.

değiştirmesi olmuştur. Bu çerçevede, kutsal hükümranlık ideolojisine dayalı tanrısal egemenlik uygulamasına son verilerek, Hanefi Sünni itikadına dayalı şeriat uygulamasına geçilmiştir ve imparatorluğun güçlü ve tarafsız bir yargı tarafından yönetilebilmesi için Fetâvâ-i Alemgiriyye ismiyle yasal bir külliyat derlenerek hukuk sistemi oluşturulmuştur.[419] Bu adım önceki Babürlü imparatorlarının yerleşik geleneklerinden tamamen bir kopuş yaşandığı anlamına gelmiş ve bunun neticesinde hem imparatorun kendisine hem de imparatorluğa atfedilen kutsallık ortadan kaldırılmıştır.[420] Yaşanan bu ideolojik değişim, Alemgir Şah'ın 1669 yılında 'Caroka-yı Darşan' seremonisini kaldırmasında da kendisini göstermiştir.[421] Alemgir Şah'ın girişimleri neticesinde kutsal Babürlü İmparatoru ilahi niteliklerden arındırılmış olsa da, Alemgir Şah kendi işine yaradığı noktalarda kutsal hükümranlık geleneklerinden bazılarını kullanmaya ve bunlardan faydalanmaya devam etmiştir. Ancak kendisinden sonra gelen hükümdarlar bu kadar talihli olmamış ve Alemgir Şah'ın ölümünün ardından imparatorlukta düşüşün yıkıcı etkileri tamamen hissedilmeye başlanmıştır.

1707 yılında Hint alt kıtasının büyük bir kısmına hükmeden bir imparatorluktan 18. yüzyılın sonunda başkalarının kontrolü altında kukla konumunda olan hükümdarlarla yönetilen bir imparatorluğa dönüşme süreci ani ve geri dönülmez biçimde gerçekleşmiştir. Babürlüler bu düşüşten sonra toparlanamamış ve halkın gözünde imparatorun kutsal ve ilahi statüsünü tesis etmeye yardımcı olan güneş sembolizmi ögeleri ise bu süreçte anlamlarını kaybetmiştir. 18. yüzyılda çökmekte olan imparatorluktan birçok yeni devlet ve güç ortaya çıkmış olsa da, güneş sembolizmi Babürlüler'de görülen uygulamalara benzer şekilde yeniden kullanılmamıştır. Bunun nedeni, İngiliz Doğu Hindistan Şirketi kuruluncaya kadar, Babürlüler'in hüküm sürdüğü kadar büyük bir alanı fethedip hâkimiyet kurabilen tek bir yönetimin ortaya çıkmamış olmasıdır. Doğu Hindistan Şirketi yönetimi altında ise aynı şekilde hükümranlık uygulamalarının devam ettirilmesi gerekli görülmemiştir çünkü söz konusu Şirket kar amaçlı bir kurum olarak, kimlik inşasını ve sürdürülmesini

[419] Eaton, 340, 342; Sheikh, 559;

[420] Sheikh, 580.

[421] Ibid.

gerektiren yüce bir imparatora ihtiyaç duymamıştır. ‘Caroka-yı Darşan’ seremonisinin son örneği 1911 yılında İngiliz Kral ve Kraliçe’sinin ziyareti sırasında eski Babürlü başkentinde gerçekleşmiş olsa da, ideoloji 18. yüzyılda imparatorluğun çöküşüyle birlikte sessiz bir şekilde ortadan kalkmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, bu tezde, Babürlü kozmolojik düşüncesinde güneş sembolizmine ilişkin kısıtlı literatür tutarlı bir anlatı olarak sunulmuş, akademide yalnızca spesifik vaka çalışmaları çerçevesinde incelenen sanat ve mimariye ait unsurlar ve mevcut diğer kanıtlar kapsamlı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma kapsamında edebiyat, sanat ve mimarideki örnekler analiz edilerek Babürlü İmparatorluğu’nda güneş imgelerinin ve güneş ideolojisinin yükselişi ve düşüşü açıklanmıştır. Bu çerçevede, güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin sanat ve mimariyi ne ölçüde etkilediğine odaklanılmış ve hangi şekillerde uygulandığı ortaya konmuştur. Bu sembolizmin en belirgin örnekleri 16. yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren ortaya çıkmış ve 17. yüzyılın sonlarından itibaren yavaş ama istikrarlı bir şekilde düşüşe geçmiş olsa da, tezde Babürlüler hanedanlığının başından sonuna kadar geçen sürede güneş sembolizmi ele alınarak kapsamlı bir resim çizmiştir. Bunun neticesinde, mevcut tez çalışması, Babürlü sanatı ve mimarisinde güneş sembolizmi ögelerinin gerilemesini analiz eden ilk araştırmalar arasında yer almıştır.

Ayrıca mevcut tez çalışması, hem Babürlüler hem de çağdaşı olan diğer imparatorluklarda güneş sembolizmi ve kutsal hükümranlık uygulamalarına ilişkin olası araştırma alanlarını ortaya koyarak gelecek çalışmalara yol göstermektedir. Söz konusu uygulamaların Babürlü İmparatorluğu dışında nasıl algılandığının incelenmesi de araştırmaya değer başka bir alanı oluşturmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, tez çalışması, Babürlüler örneğinde güneş sembolizmini ele almış, konuya ilişkin bütüncül bir anlatı sunmuş ve böylece de Babürlü sanat ve mimarlık tarihine ilişkin geniş külliyata katkıda bulunmuştur.

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