

# In Search of the Essence of Mughal Architecture

An illustrated talk by **Taimoor Khan** exploring the proportional system of the Shish Mahal and the Taj Mahal, organised by [The Matheson Trust for Comparative Religion](#) and [The Pakistan Society](#).

Wednesday, 12 July, 2017—6pm  
High Commission for Pakistan  
36 Lowndes Square  
London SW1X 8JN

This talk aims to solve a centuries-old mystery: what were the design methods used to achieve the sublime beauty of the best known and loved examples of Mughal architecture? Two of these masterpieces, the Shish Mahal in Lahore and the Taj Mahal in Agra will be the focus of this presentation.

Taimoor Khan will begin by outlining the context in which these buildings were created when the emperor Shah Jahan (1628–58) presided over a court that patronised all the arts. One of the greatest Mughal architects who worked for him was Ustad Ahmed Mimar Lahori (originally from Lahore). The question often asked is whether he was the designer of both the Shish Mahal and the Taj Mahal. This talk seeks to provide the answer, showing us how the use of geometry was used to achieve the proportions in both buildings.

Maintaining that architecture should be viewed as any other classical art form with a given grammar, vocabulary and concepts of beauty, Taimoor will also illustrate how proportion is the common principle between architecture and music — reminding us of al-Ghazali's statement that proportion or harmony is the root of all sensorial beauty.

*'The transcendent world is the world of loveliness and beauty, and the source of loveliness and beauty is harmony (tanashub). All that is harmonious manifests the beauty of that world, for all loveliness, beauty and harmony that is observable in this world is the result of the loveliness and beauty of that world...'*

*al-Ghazālī, 1058-1111AD.  
Alchemy of Happiness,  
Chapter on 'Listening to Music'*

**Taimoor Khan** trained as an architect at the National College of Arts in Lahore. He gained an MA in South Asian Design and Architecture from De Montfort University in Leicester, UK. He is also the founding director of [Hast-o-Neest](#) —Institute of Traditional Studies & Arts, Lahore— which promotes the research and study of traditional art and culture. He will be in London as a guest of the Matheson Trust and will be leading a [workshop for The Prince's School of Traditional Arts](#), July 10–14.

**Admission:** This event is free, but **registration is required**. Please email [themathesontrust@gmail.com](mailto:themathesontrust@gmail.com) to register or for further information.