

The Mughal Throne – The Saga of India's Great Emperors
by Abraham Eraly. Weidenfeld and Nicolson 2003.

The period between the early 1500s and the 1700s is one of the richest in Indian history. This was the time when a succession of Mughal Emperors ruled in the sub-continent and changed its inner and outer perception for ever. The three centuries that bore the Mughal stamp were overflowing with activity of every kind – military, political, artistic, architectural, linguistic and literary – making it one of the greatest periods in human history. It is also a time bestrode by larger than life characters, kings and courtiers, and full of intrigue and plotting for power.

Any book on this subject is an almost sure-fire winner, and in some ways Abraham Eraly's *The Mughal Throne* is no exception to the rule; the author is clearly passionate about his subject and very knowledgeable and he presents it in a manner that would seem bound to interest and inspire the reader. That it failed to do so with this reviewer, in spite of a passionate interest in the subject is puzzling, but perhaps due to the unfortunate density of text unrelieved by illustrations or pictures of any kind. I find it extraordinary that the publisher did not see fit to dignify a fine piece of work with examples of the great and lasting artistic and architectural achievements of the Mughal Emperors. They have done both the author and his readers a great disservice by failing to do so.

Nevertheless, Eraly brings the period to life, and the individuals stand out from the page as flesh and blood men and women, no where more so than in his description of Shah Jehan, constructor of the immortal Taj Mahal.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh