

**Agra: Sightseeing capital of India (1/4/2008 to 1/5/2008)**

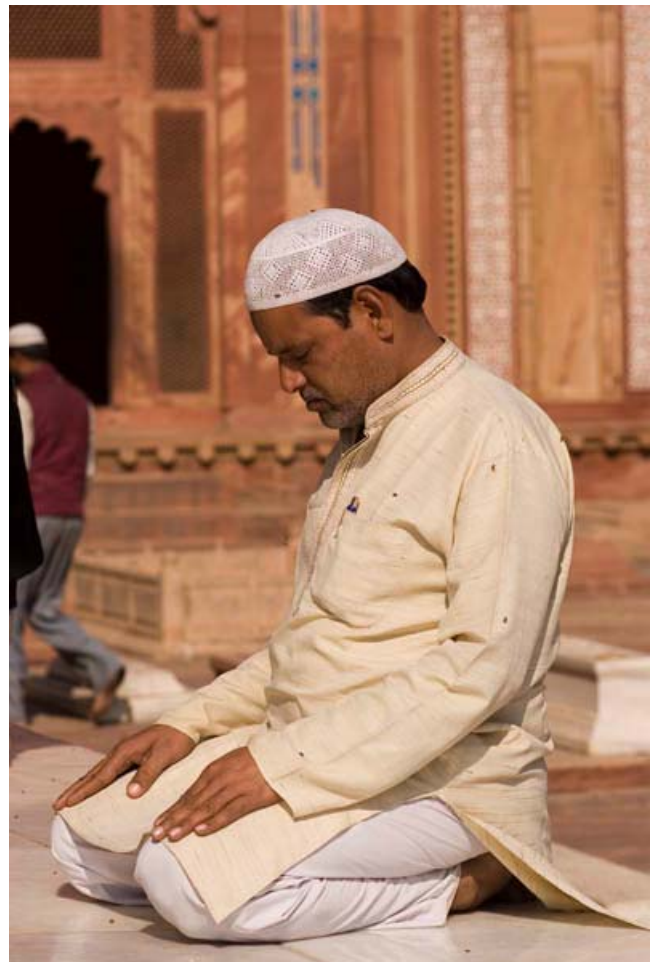
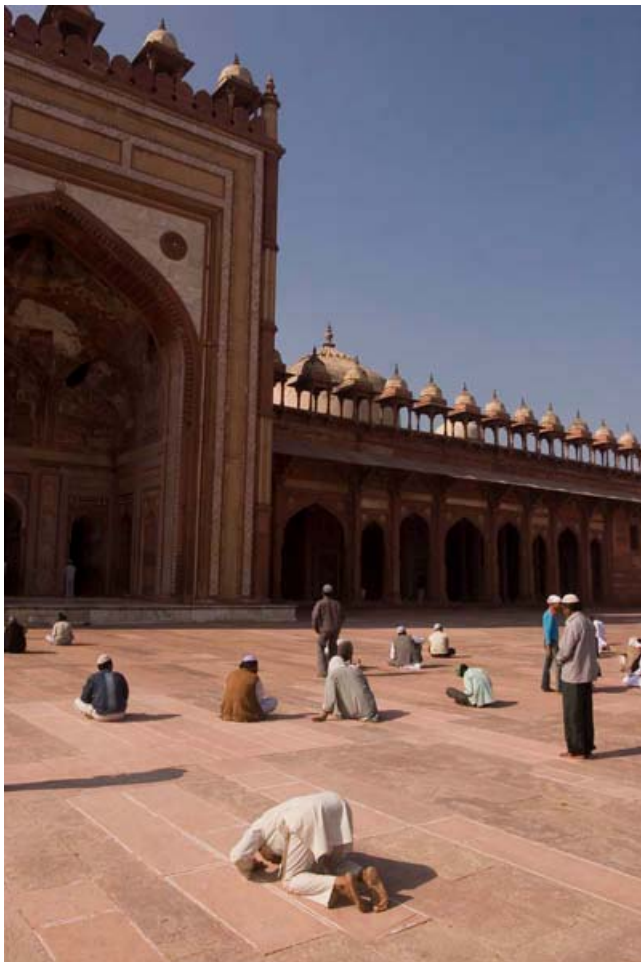
Karin and I had both been to Agra before but for the first timer among us, my brother-in-law, Jeff, it was a mandatory stop to see India's most famous sight, the Taj Mahal. In addition to the Taj, Agra is home to a number of lesser known spectacular sights including Akbar's (the Mughal Empire's greatest ruler and subject of my father's Ph.D. thesis) 16<sup>th</sup> century amazingly preserved abandon palaces at Fatehpur Sikri, the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah a precursor to the Taj Mahal, and the Mughal palaces of Agra's Red Fort. It was a fitting culmination to my sister and brother-in-law's trip, taking in an early morning view of the Taj Mahal. No mater how many times you've seen pictures, or even seen it in person, the Taj Mahal never fails to impress. As far as I'm concerned it has to be the most beautiful building in the world, and I don't even think it's a subjective opinion. If anyone knows of a building more stunning than the Taj let me know and I go there and compare for myself. After all I've got time.



**Gate to the Jami Masjid  
(Mosque) at Fatehpur  
Sikri.**



**Palace buildings at Fatehpur Sikri.**



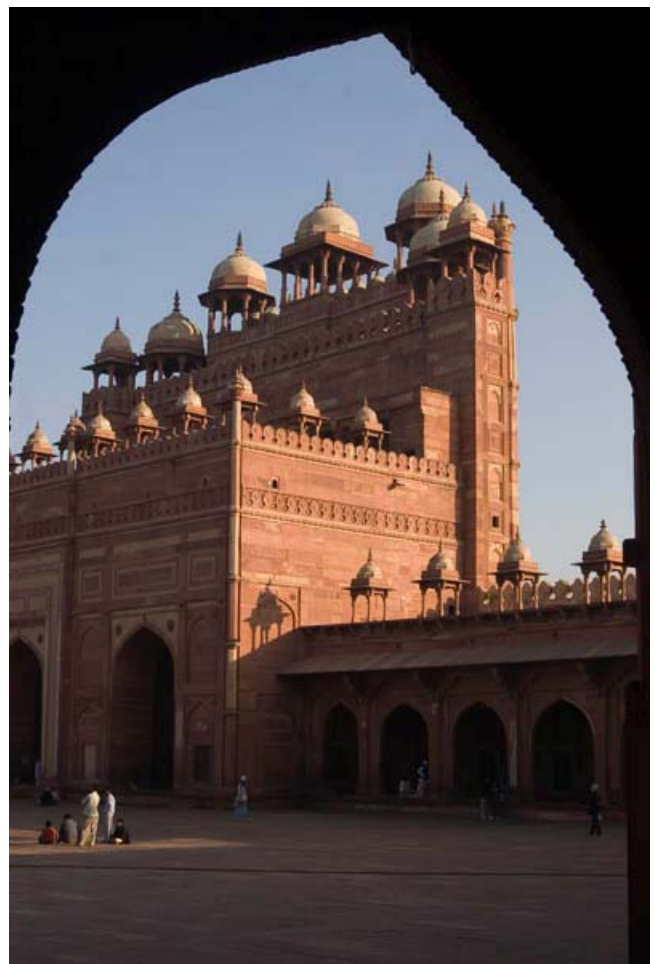
**Friday prayer in the Jami Masjid (Mosque) at Fatehpur Sikri.**



**Jami Masjid (Mosque),  
Fatehpur Sikri.**



**Panch Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri.**



**Gat to the Jami Masjid (Mosque) at  
Fatehpur Sikri.**



**Throne Pillar at Fatehpur Sikri.**



**Marble hall at the Red Fort in Agra.**



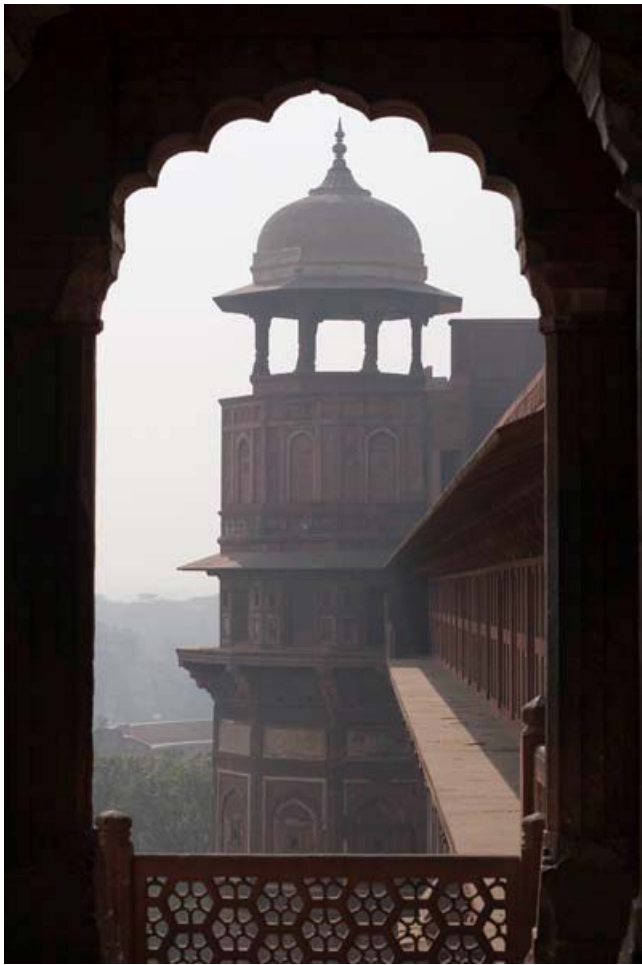
**Detail of marble inlaid with semiprecious stones in the Red Fort, Agra.**



**Detail of marble floral relief carvings surrounded by inlay work in the Red Fort, Agra.**



**Detail of Takhti-i-Jehangir, a throne base in the Red Fort, Agra.**



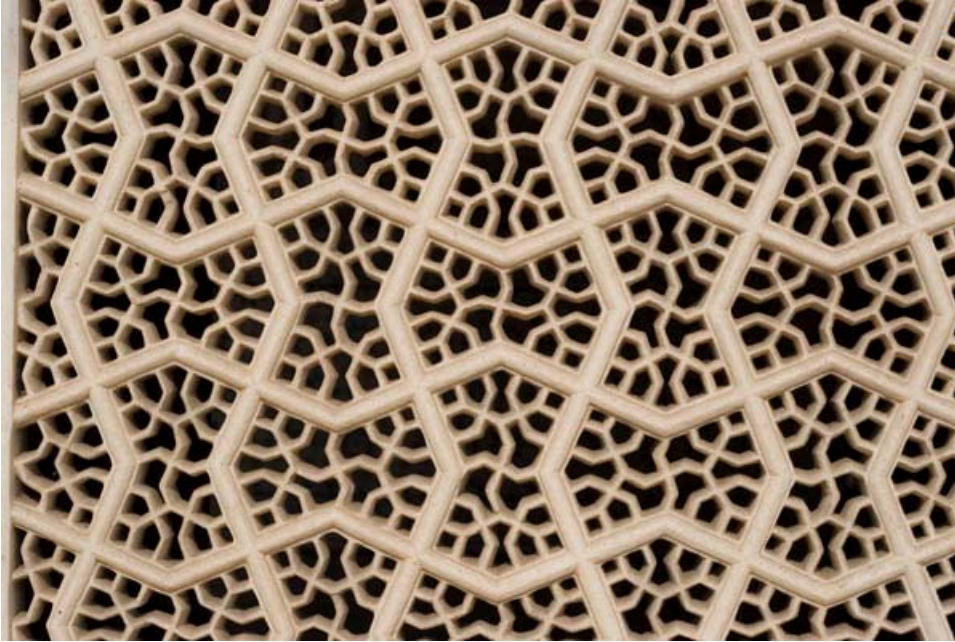
**Red Fort, Agra.**



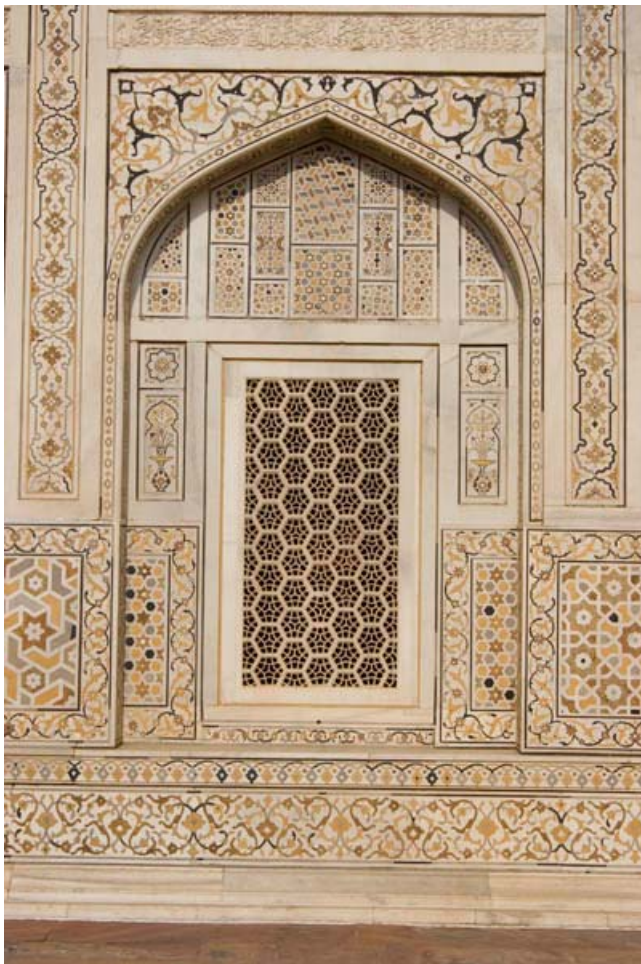
**Tomb of Itimad-un-Daulah, Agra.**



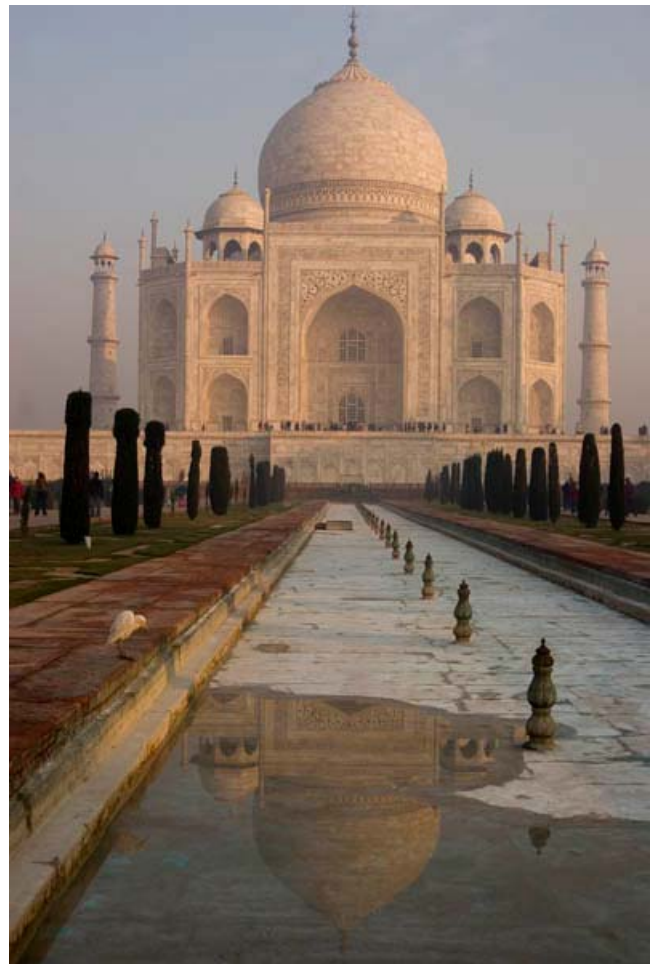
**Tomb of Itimad-un-Daulah,  
Agra.**



**Marble screen on the Tomb of Itimad-un-Daulah, Agra.**



**Tomb of Itimad-un-Daulah, Agra.**



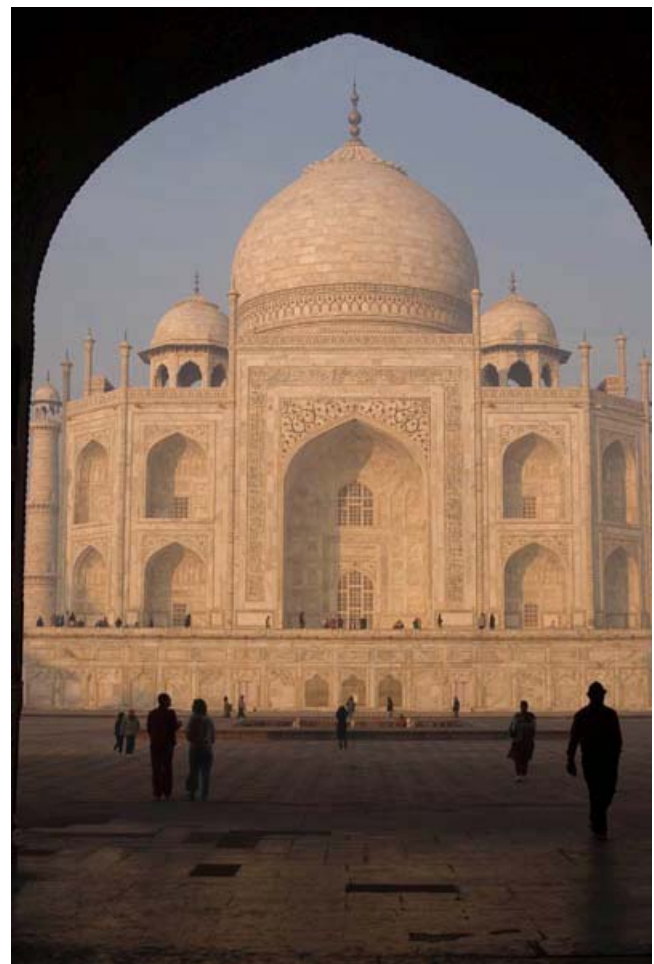
**Taj Mahal, Agra.**



**Taj Mahal at sunrise,  
Agra.**



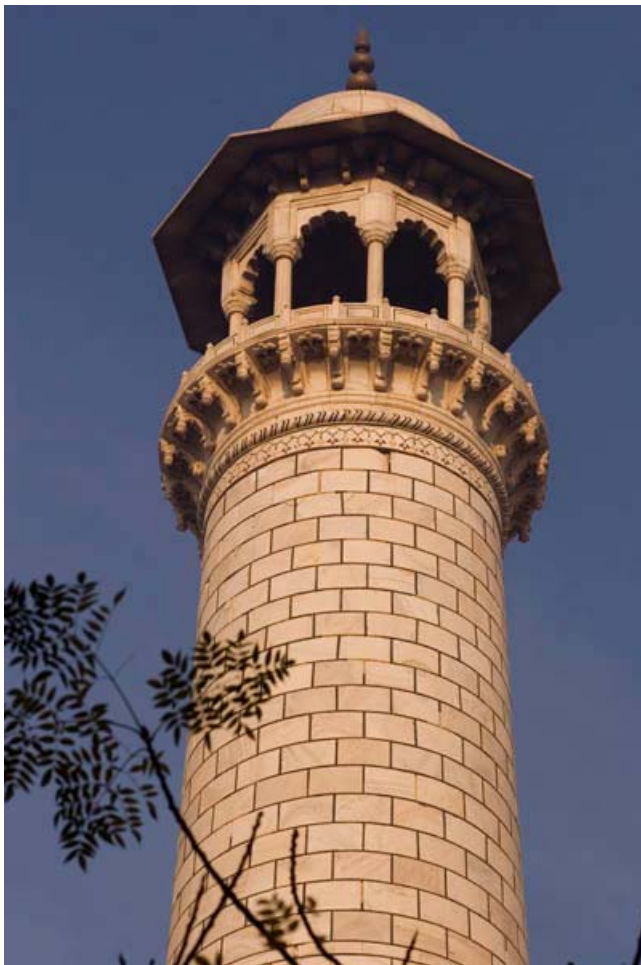
**Taj Mahal, Agra.**



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**Taj Mahal, Agra.**



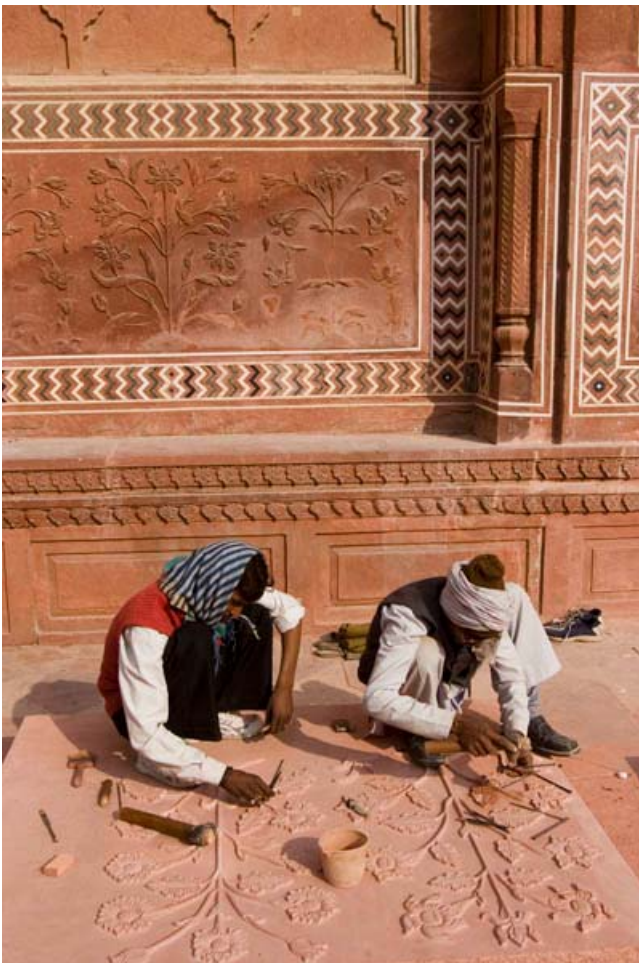
**Minaret of the Taj Mahal, Agra.**



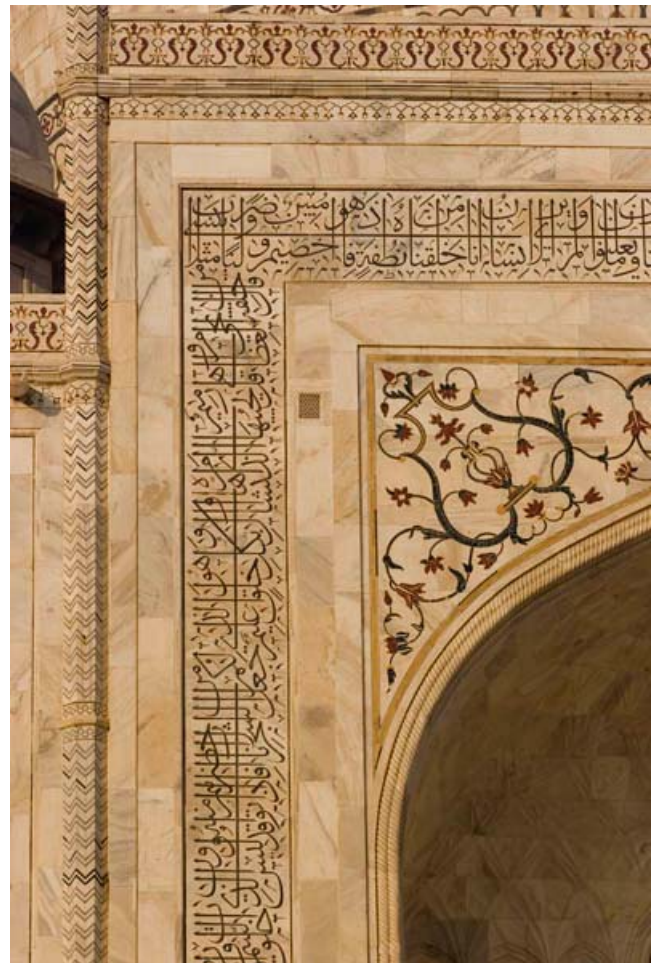
**A Sikh man visiting the Taj Mahal, Agra.**



**Muslim men in front of the mosque at the Taj Mahal, Agra.**



**Restoration work at the mosque in the Taj Mahal, Agra.**



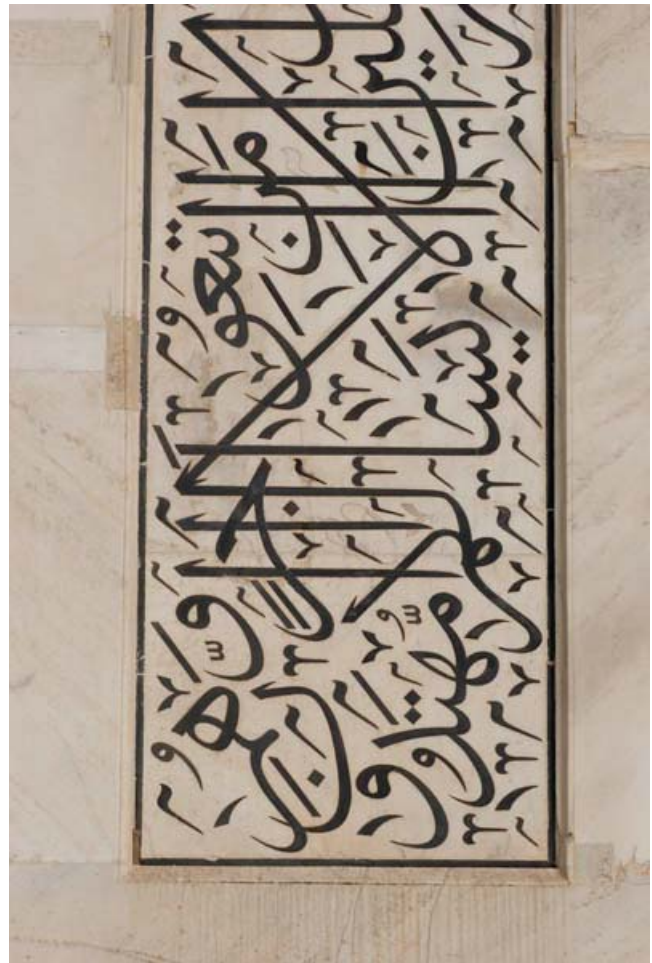
**Taj Mahal, Agra.**



Not only is the Taj Mahal, impressive from afar but it is covered in marble inlaid with semiprecious stones, Agra.



Detail inlay work on the Taj Mahal, Agra.



Detail of inlay of Koran texts on the Taj Mahal, Agra.



**Taj Mahal, Agra.**



**Inlay and carved marble screen inside the Taj Mahal, Agra.**



**Myself, my sister (Karin), brother in law (Jeff), and father, at the Taj**

**The end of our mini family reunion (minus my mom) fittingly enough at the Taj Mahal. From here I would take Karin and Jeff back to Delhi for their flight home before meeting up with my dad again in Jaipur.**