

History of Architecture and Culture III

Lecture 7

Baroque

First and foremost, we will see the Baroque architecture. You can see what is Baroque architecture all about from this picture. This picture directly conveys the grandeur of Baroque architecture. That is why I have used this picture in the beginning itself to help you understand how clustered and elaborate is this style of architecture.

We will see what is Protestant Reformation all about. The Protestant reformation, often referred to simply as the Reformation because that is the reformation in the history of Christianity. It was a schism from the Roman Catholic church in 16th century Europe. What happened in the 16th century in Europe? As I said earlier when we saw how Christianity rose and conquered, how Europe was completely under christianity. Europe took Christianity as its sole major religion and Catholic belief started, Pope culture started. All these were the major things that contributed to the Christian architecture of that era. Along with the architecture, many other sectors of the society including literature, science, humanities, everything kind of happened around the Christian outlook. Pope was the single most important person of the religion and of the society as well. People looked upto him, the Bishop, the priests to tell them or dictate what to do next. There had already been several attempts to reform the Catholic church but Martin Luther is widely acknowledged to have started the reformation. Martin Luther was a German professor of theology, composer, a priest and a former monk. What happened was, Martin Luther wrote a book with which this reform started happening against the principles of the Roman catholic church and that is what is called as the Protestant Reformation. That is what ignited the Protestant reformation. Luther began criticizing the selling of indulgences, the selling of principles, the selling of morals by the Christian church and he said that the Pope had no authority over the Purgatory. That is what he said and that is what started the Reform against the Roman Catholic church and this is what is known as 'Protestant Reformation'. This is a picture of Martin Luther. The core motivation

behind these changes were theological, though many other factors played a part. There was rise of nationalism, the Western Schism. All these things that happened, these ideologies, whatever moment happened, that kind of eroded people's faith in the Papacy. This impacted the humanism and the new learning of the Renaissance which questioned the traditional thought of Christianity or Papism. As I said earlier, humanism happened, all these were happening simultaneously. But this Protestant Reformation had a direct impact in the Baroque architecture which you will learn about. The Baroque architecture is said to have taken place between 1600 - 1750. Baroque means something very fancy or elaborate or even over decorated space. If you go back to the beginning of the Christian period, architecture was very simple, very straightforward, it had its own understanding like this is what you want from a particular building and that is what the architect is going to give in that particular building, so the building being made is created in accordance with the kind of function it is going to serve, this is what architecture was all about. Later, as time passed, Christian architecture slowly evolved into something that was more related to aesthetics in addition to the functionality of the space. It went hand in hand. Eventually, functionality became a part of it and aesthetics became more of it. Hence, Baroque architecture is a style that brought more of an aesthetic understanding rather than the functions of a particular space. That is how much they gave importance to decoration, elaborate space, fancy decorations and murals; it was very clustered and over decorative that kind of became tough for the human eyes to perceive since there were so many colours, many small spaces that had a lot of workmanship involved. That is what Baroque architecture is all about. Baroque architecture was derived from a Portuguese word 'Borocca' which means a pearl of irregular shape. That itself tells you what is Baroque architecture all about. It is irregular, unique, out there form of architecture. It is the building style of Baroque era that took the Roman vocabulary of Renaissance architecture and used it in a new rhetorical and theatrical fashion. They took the Roman vocabulary as such and made turned it into a drama which is so elaborate since they believed that, that is how they could reach out to the people or revolt against Protestantism. This was often to express the triumph of the Catholic church and the absolutist state. It was characterized by new explorations of form, light and shadow and

dramatic intensity. The basic idea of this particular architecture to come into place, this era to come into place itself was to prove the triumph of the Catholic church over the Protestant reformation and that was the main idea why Baroque architecture came into existence itself.

Moving on, in these pictures you can see the various examples of Baroque architecture. This St.Peter Basilica is one of the main important example of the Baroque architecture. It implies strangeness, irregularity and extravaganza. When Baroque happened, it happened such that they decided to create something really different. There is no end to the vision of the human eye, it moves from one colour to another, one shape to another, even in paintings, there is no rest to the eye of the beholder because what happens is, when you see something, you move to the next, there is no rest to the eye at all. That's how irregular and extravagant the Baroque style of architecture was. Initially at least, it was directly linked to the Counter-reformation, a movement within the Catholic church to reform itself in response to the Protestant Reformation. Baroque architecture and its establishments were on the one hand more accessible to the emotions and on the other hand, a visible statement of the wealth and power of the Church since several minute details were added to the architecture. That implied how powerful and wealthy the church was. Baroque architecture was not just a fusion of one style but multiple styles. It included motion, it included energy, it included dramatic control, it included extravaganza, it included everything that was not one thing. It was a fusion of multiple ideas put together as one. St.Peter's Basilica is one example of Baroque architecture. It is brilliantly colourful, use of passionate artworks. They were fascinated with the light. They used light and colour to dissolve form, by having a dark background. They had dark backgrounds over which they had colours. They had passages from where light came in. All these things blended and played together with the dark background. That created the mesmerizing ideology of the Baroque architecture. It used contrast colours to heighten the dramatic effect. We will learn about St.Peter's Basilica, to further understand about Baroque architecture. Just before we move on, let me just give you a brief about certain distinctives about Baroque architecture. You can see the background, this is one Baroque painting that happened long back. Previously, the

paintings were dedicated to the Almighty, they were many more details to it but Baroque paintings had a different outlook all together. There are a lot of similarities between Baroque and Rococo paintings that you will learn later in the next lecture. Basically, Baroque architecture in churches, broader naves were given sometimes oval forms. Fragmentary or deliberately incomplete architectural elements were used in this type of architecture which is a very important feature of this. Dramatic use of light as I said, the strong or shade contrasts. Opulent use of colour and ornaments that were very deliberate. Colours were the reasons that stirred mesmerism to the eyes. Large-scale ceiling frescoes and an external facade often characterized by a dramatic central projection.

St. Peter Rome

This is St.Peter's Basilica Rome which is the most important church in the world, that is why this is the most important part of Catholic belief, this church. This was constructed between AD 1506 = 1626. The most important building erected in this period. Many architects were engaged upon it. There was not a single architect who were a part of this instead, there were several architects who were a part of this. This picture shows the interior of this particular Basilica. In plan, it was a Greek cross, the later extension of the nave and aisles actually made the plan a more linear and Latin cross. This was designed principally by Donato Bramante, Michelangelo, Carlo Maderno and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. They were like the main architects of this particular cathedral where in Bramante, Michelangelo, Bernini are the most famous artists of all time. They are known to be the most important architects of this particular Basilica. This is the plan of St.Peter's, Rome. This is the entrance arcade which is like the most striking feature of this church and there is an obelisk in the centre which kind of makes the most important view of this particular building, this is that area and this is the church behind. St.Peter's Rome was probably effected so as to enclose the whole area of previously existing church. As I said, cross was the plan. Later, they extended the Nave and aisles to make it a Latin Cross, that was probably done in order to close the whole area that was part of a previously existing church at that point of time. The previously existing St.Peter's church, we studied about it in the 1st lecture. Its a Renaissance

church in the Vatican city, the papal enclave within the city of Rome and it's one of the largest churches in the world. As I said, it is one of the largest religious spaces in the world, not just churches. If you see any religious space, one of the richest and largest religious spaces in the world. It is regarded as one of the holiest Cathedrals.

Catholic tradition holds that the Basilica is the burial site of St.Peter, one of Christ's Apostles and also the first Pope. They believed that St.Peter's tomb is directly below the high altar of this Basilica and that is why this Basilica is of utmost importance to Christianity. There has been a church on this site as I said, since the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine. The construction of the present Basilica, began on 18th April 1506 and was completed on 18th November 1626. St.Peter's room had the Nave which is 80 ft and consists of four bays of immense size. The central crossing is covered by the dome that is 137 ft and 6 inches in diameter. You can see the plan, this is the area the dome covers and this is the interior of the dome. This is one of the largest domes of all times. The short transepts were terminated by the semicircular apses, the western arm by being precisely similar. The high altar stands under the dome within a 100 feet high, over the alleged tomb of St.Peter - 'baldacchino'. This is the panorama of the entire St.Peter's Basilica. You can see the whole Basilica in this picture. A vestibule at the East end extends the whole width of the church, the chancel being at the west end. One author wrote "Only gradually does it dawn upon us - as we watch people draw near to this or that monument, strangely they appear to shrink, they are of course, dwarfed by the scale of everything in the building. This in turn overwhelms us." He said that people were kind of dwarfed with the monumentality in that particular space and that's how huge the church is. That is how important this church is because everything about this church is monumental, everything about this church is beyond human perception/ insight, everything about this church is ahead of extraordinary, that's how the church was created at that point of time. Something that was created so long ago still continues to be one of the toughest architectural monument to build. That's how important the architecture of this particular church is.

The interior of the St. Peter's Rome has one gigantic order of Corinthian pilasters, crowned with semicircular barrel vaults, 150 feet high. You can see in the picture, these are Corinthian columns. Corinthian columns were basically used and amongst the toughest columns to construct. It was more detailed and intricate to make when compared to the Doric or Ionic columns. Inside St. Peter's Basilica, there was a particular use for these Corinthian columns and it was crowned with semicircular barrel vaults, 150 feet high. The walls were faced with plaster and coloured to imitate marble, producing a rich effect, and the dome is beautifully decorated in mosaic. As I said earlier, the interior of the Dome is extremely decorated with mosaic and that creates a dramatic effect within the church. The lights that fall inside act upon it. The facade of this church, roughly executed in travertine, has an immense order of Corinthian pilasters, 108 feet high including entablature, with an attic 39 feet high surrounding the entire building. You can see in the picture, these are the Corinthian columns in the front, they are 108 feet high. This is a dome of St. Peter's Cathedral, you can see the cross section of this particular dome. The Dome of St. Peter's rises to a total height of 136.57 metres from the floor of the Basilica to the top of the external cross. From the floor of the Basilica to this point, it is 136.57 metres and it is the tallest dome in the world. Its internal diameter is 41.47 metres, slightly smaller than two of the three other huge domes that preceded it. Maybe the Pantheon and the Florence Cathedral were more broader than this but other than those two, it is really wide in diameter. It is 41.47 metres in diameter. The view of the dome from the east except at a distance is nearly cut off behind the screen wall of the now extended nave. As I said, the nave and aisles were extended. Previously, before the nave and aisles were extended, the Dome could be seen from many parts of the facade, you can see from far. The view of the dome is kind of hidden because of the extended wall of the nave. The design owes much to the circular four-fold colonnades added by Bernini in the seventeenth century. This is particular colonnade I was talking about, the design of this particular church or the reason why this church is this big is because of this colonnade that was added later by Bernini in the 17th century. It is considered to be one of the noblest entrance courtyards in Europe. There is an obelisk in the centre. It shows how vast and

inhumane the proportion is, how huge the place is and people feel really small in front of the massive architectural wonder, St. Peter's Basilica.

French Baroque

French Baroque, what we learnt so far was about Italian Baroque, we learnt about Florence, Rome and Vatican. Now we will look into the French Baroque. The centre of Baroque secular architecture was France. On the other side, Baroque was more religious and more devoted to God almighty and France was the centre of the secular Baroque architecture where the open three-wing layout of the palace was established as the canonical solution as early as the 16th century. You can see, this is an example of French Baroque architecture in the background. It was a Palais du Luxembourg by Salomon de Brosse that determined the sober and classicizing direction that French Baroque architecture was to take. It was not a very extravagant Baroque like the Italian Baroque. Italian Baroque as I mentioned earlier is really flamboyant while the French Baroque is very sober and classy in nature. This is the Palace of Versailles which is the most important example of the French Baroque architecture. This is the aerial view of that particular palace. This was built in 1664 this is the facade of the palace. The Palace of Versailles or simply Versailles is a royal château in Versailles in France, it is also known as the Château de Versailles. The court of Versailles was the centre of political power in France from 1682, when Louis XIV moved from Paris, until the royal family was forced to return to the capital in October 1789 after the beginning of the French revolution. French revolution was very important in the history of France.

In order to understand the later period of architecture of French revolution, here are a few facts. The French revolution is a period of far-reaching social and political upheaval in France that lasted from 1789 until 1799 and was partially carried forward by Napoleon during the later expansion of the French empire. The Revolution overthrew the monarchy, established the republic, experienced violent periods of political turmoil and finally culminated in a dictatorship under Napoleon that rapidly brought many of its principles to Western Europe and beyond. Inspired by liberal and radical ideas, the Revolution profoundly altered the course of modern history, triggering the global decline of absolute

monarchies while replacing them with republics and liberal democracies. Whatever was there before the French revolution was slowly made to change from ideas to techniques, to the buildings and anything else that was important, was made to change after the French revolution. That made a mark in French architecture also. As you can see, this is Palace of Versailles. On the left, you have the exterior and on the right, the interior of the Palace. This was done by Jules Hardouin Mansard between 1647 - 1708 for Louis XIV and is remarkable only for the uniformity and tamedness of its design. You can see the interiors and notice that it is an extremely over decorated space with a lot eye-catching colours. All this depicts the Baroque ideology of construction. The dimensions are very large, the central projection measuring 300 feet and each wing 500 feet, thus giving a total of 1,320 feet, Le Notre laid out the gardens with their own fountains, terraces and arbours that are very fine. This particular architecture was very monumental in size, that brought in the characteristics of Baroque architecture in France. You can see, this is the plan of the Palace of Versailles and there is a central Cour Royale.