

Chapter I.
EVENTS PRIOR TO 977/1569 IN SIKRI

Lake at Sikri

933/1527

AN: I, 259-60

On Monday, 9 Jumada-1-awwal (11th February, 1527), he [Babur] marched out from Agra to extirpate this sedition, and pitched his camp in the neighbourhood of the city. Reports were continually arriving that the ill-fated one (Rana Sanga) had attacked Biana with a large army, and that the troops who had come out of that town, had not been able to withstand him and had turned back. Sankar Khan Janjuha was killed on that occasion, and Amir Kita Beg wounded. Having halted four days, he (Babar) marched on the fifth and encamped in the plain of Mandhakar which lies between Agra // and Sikri. It occurred to him that there was no water-supply for the troops except in Sikri--(which after returning thanks for his victory, his Majesty Giti-sitani, by giving diacritical points, named Shukri [thanks-giving] and which is now by the auspicious felicity of the king of kings, known as Fathpur, from its giving victory to hearts)--and it might happen that the hostile army by using despatch, would get possession of this. In consequence of this just thought, he proceeded next day towards Fathpur and sent Amir Darvesh Muhammad Sarban in advance in order that he might find a proper ground for encampment. The said Amir fixed on an eligible spot in the neighborhood of Fathpur Lake (Kul) which is a broad sheet of water and an ocean-like reservoir, and that was made the pleasant ground of encampment. From thence messengers went to summon Mahdi Khwaja and the other officers who were in Biana. Beg Mirak who was a servant of Jahanbani and a number of the Emperor's special attendants were sent to collect information. In the morning intelligence was brought that the opposing army had advanced one kos beyond Bisawar and were eighteen kos distant. On the same day Mahdi Khwaja, Muhammad Sultan Mirza and the other officers who had been in Biana, arrived and did homage. During this time, daily skirmishes took place between the outposts in which gallant soldiers distinguished themselves and received the royal approbation.

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BN: 548-49

(Feb. 16th) Marching out of Agra on Saturday the 14th of the first Jumada, dismount was made where the wells had been dug. We marched on next day. It crossed my mind that the well-watered ground for a large camp was at Sikri. It being possible that the Pagan [Rana Sangram Singh] was encamped there and in possession of the water, we arrayed precisely, in right, left and centre. As Qismati and Darwish-i-muhammad Sarban in their comings and goings had seen and got to know all sides of Biana, they were sent ahead to look for camping-ground on the bank of the Sikri-lake (kul) //

The begs were appointed in turns for scouting-duty. When it was ^cAbd-u'l-^caziz's turn, he went out of Sikri, looking neither before nor behind, right along the road to Kanwa which is 5 kuroh (10 m.) away.

933/1527

TB: 181

It occurred to enlightened opinion and right-thinking mind of His Majesty that as in those neighbourhoods there was no other place better than Sikri with plenty of water from which a big army might be benefited, it was a good situation for a camp. Afterwards (in post-Kanawa days) Sikri was designated as Shukri by changing Sin into letter Shin and varying the diacritical points, and it now enjoys publicity by this name. It was possible that the pagans might anticipate the imperialists in occupying that well-watered place so as to make the situation difficult for the people of Islam. Pressed by necessity, he marched out towards Shukri with the army drawn up in order of battle, and arrayed in precise order of right, left and centre of the wing. Amir Darwesh Muhammad Sarban was sent ahead to locate and choose a suitable site for the encampment of the army. Qismati Mirza, who by his coming or going knew all sides of Biana, and was well aware of that well watered ground, became associated with the aforesaid Amir by the imperial orders. The said Amir saw that in the suburbs (environs) of Kol Shukri there was a large pool of stagnant water, broad and of a wide expanse as a river, which was a fit place as the camping ground for the royal army. The messengers conveyed the detailed circumstances to His Majesty and the confines of that very big tank were chosen for setting up a camp, establishing auspicious pavilions, and raising the lofty flag.

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934/1527

BN: 588

(Dec 1st, 1527) On Monday the 7th of the first Rabi I rode out to visit Sikri. The octagonal platform ordered made in the middle of the lake was ready; we went over by boat, had an awning set up on it and elected for maj'un.

ca. 934/1528

HN:102

From Dholpur his Majesty [Babur] went on to Sikri. He ordered a great platform made in the middle of the tank, and when it was ready, he used to go and sit on it, or to row about. This platform still exists.

See also: Chapter V.

Babur's Garden of Victory at Sikri

933/1527

BN: 581

Leaving this place we visited Biana again, went on to Sikri, dismounted there at the side of a garden which had been ordered made, stayed two days supervising the garden, and on Thursday the 23rd of Rajab (April 25th) reached Agra.

933/1527

BN: 584

Since my 11th year I had not kept the Ramzan feast for two successive years in the same place; last year I had kept it in Agra; this year, saying, "Don't break the rule!" I went on the last day of the month to keep it in Sikri. Tents were set up on a stone platform made on the n.e. side of the Garden of Victory which is now being laid out at Sikri, and in them a feast was held.

ca. 934/1528

HN: 102-03

They also made a chaukandi in the Sikri garden, and my royal father put in it a tur-khana, where he used to sit and write his book.

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935/1528

BN: 615-616

On the night of Wednesday, after opening the mouth and eating something we rode for Sikri. Near the second watch (midnight), we dismounted somewhere and slept.... At the top of the dawn, we bestirred ourselves from that place, and in the first watch dismounted at // the garden now in making at Sikri. The garden-wall and well-buildings were not getting on to my satisfaction; the overseers therefore were threatened and punished.

Sikri Given as Vaqf for Babur's Tomb

ca. 937/1531

HN: 110

The whole of Sikri--now known as Fathpur--together with five laks charged on Bayana, was given as an endowment to the tomb, for the support of the men of learning (^Culama) and the reciters who were attached to it.

Khanqah of Shaykh Salim ad-Din Chishti

952/1545

MT: I, 488

[952/1545, when Amir Khvass Khan was trying to regain the throne for ^CAdil Khan from his younger brother Islam Shah ibn Sher Shah Suri]

^CAdil Khan, however, heard of this and fled from Baiana taking refuge with Khawass Khan in Miwat. Khawass Khan then summoned Ghazi Mahalli, and bound him with that same golden chain which he had brought for ^CAdil Khan, and having gained over to his side all the Amirs, set out for Agra with a large army. Qutb Khan and ^CIsa Khan also, who were two of the chief nobles of the State, with whose concurrence the compact had been made, were annoyed at this breach of faith on the part of Islam Shah, and with great management summoned ^CAdil Khan at a time agreed upon, namely at day break after the Shab-i-barat, so that they might own allegiance to him. It so chanced that ^CAdil Khan and Khawass Khan, having arrived at Sikri on the Shab-i-barat, spent that night as a vigil in the service of Shaikh Salim Chishti, in voluntary prayers and benedictions, so that their departure for Agra was delayed long past the time agreed upon, and it was breakfast time when they reached the outskirts of Agra.

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952/1545

TA: II,180

It so happened, however, that when ^CAdil Khan and Khawas Khan arrived at Fatehpur Sikri, they went to Shaikh Salim, who was one of the great Shaikhs of that age. It was the Shab-i-barat, and Khawas Khan was delayed on account of the performance of the Namaz (prayers) that was fixed for that night; so it was the time of the early morning meal, when they reached the neighborhood of Agra.

952/1545

TD: 481

^CAdil Khan wrote in reply to Islam Shah, saying, "If these four persons, viz, Kutb Khan the naib, ^CIsa Khan Niazi, Jalal Khan Jalu, and Khawas Khan, come and insure my safety, I will proceed to visit you." ^CAdil wrote thus to these four nobles, "I leave myself to your guidance. What is your advice? Ought I to go, or remain?" Islam Shah sent all of these nobles to his brother; and after removing his fears for his safety by oaths and protestations, they promised him that he should be permitted to depart after the first interview, and that he should be allowed to choose any jagir in Hindustan which suited him. ^CAdil Khan went, accompanied by the nobles, to see his brother. When he reached Fathpur Sikri, Islam Shah came forth to meet him in the village of Singarpur, the place prepared for the meeting of the two brothers, and they had an interview there. They made professions of affection one to the other, and after sitting together for a short time, set off for Agra.

952/1545

TD: 483

Kutb Khan and ^CIsa Khan, who had been concerned with him in the business of the oath, stimulated him to advance, and advised him to manage so that ^CAdil Khan should reach Agra a little before daybreak, in order that the people might, without feeling ashamed, forsake Islam Shah and join him.

When ^CAdil Khan and Khawas Khan reached Fathpur Sikri, they went to visit Shaikh Salim, one of the holy men of the age. By chance, that night happened to be the Shab-i Barat, and the performance of the prayers appointed for that occasion delayed Khawas Khan. They did not, therefore, arrive in the neighbourhood of Agra until the forenoon.

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ca. 1553-55

MT: III,162

Salim Shah [Islam Shah Sur] used to call him Shah Mubarak, and used to place his shoes before his feet. The Shaikh generally claimed to be a Sayyid, and was in great repute among the Afghans. Thus when their power was on the wane and they were fleeing before the Mughuls some of the Afghans seized Shaikh Islam of Fathpur suspecting him of being a wealthy man, and, having confined him in a strange manner, carried him off to the fort of Rantambhor. Shaikh Mubarak went thither from Alwar by way of Basawar, and was the means of Shaikh Islim's liberation.

Pre-968/1561

MT: II,41-42

The Khan Khanan always had a sympathetic heart, and was devoted to the words of the great Shaikhs (God be favourable unto them!) and in his noble company the talk was ever of the Word of God, and the Word of the Prophet. One day he went to Sikra [sic] to see a certain ascetic Dervish, and asked the meaning of this verse of the Quran [3:25]: "Thou exaltest whom thou wilt, and thou // humblest whom thou wilt". And since the Dervish had not read a commentary, he gave no answer.

972/1564-65

MT: II,73

In this year Shaikh-ul-Islam Fath-puri Chishti, who in the year nine hundred and seventy-one (971), on his return from Mekkah and Madinah honoured Badaun with his presence, and wrote from that place a letter in Arabic to the Author of this history (as will be related in its proper places, if God, He is exalted! will), laid the foundation of the building of a new monastery, the like of which cannot be shown in the whole of the inhabited world. The following is a mnemosynon for the date:--

"Shaikh-ul-Islam, the leader of mankind,
(May God exalt his sublime power!)
When he came from Madinah to Hind,
That renowned Depository of Spiritual direction,
From his auspicious advent Hind
Found anew a happy fortune.
Take a certain letter and subtract it
From Shaikh-ul-Islam, to find the date."

And another like unto it:--

"Shaikh ul-Islam, the perfect saint,
That breath of Messias, that footstep of Elias,
A flash from whose forehead was a glimpse of Eternity,
A beam from whose face was the light of Eternity,
When from Madinah he turned to Hind,
That breath of Messias, that footstep of Elias,
Reckon a letter and reckon not a letter
From Khair-ul-maqdam, to find the date."

This monastery, having taken 8 years to complete, vaunted itself above the eight heavens.

976/1568

MT: II,113

And such was the disposition of that paragon of excellence, his Grace the Shaikh, that he allowed the Emperor to have the entree of all his most private apartments, and however much his sons and nephews kept saying, "Our wives are becoming estranged from us," the Shaikh would answer, "There is no dearth of women in the world, since I have made you Amirs, seek other wives, what does it matter?"

Either make no friendship with an elephant-driver
Or make a house fit for an elephant.

976/1568

MT: III,26-27

In accordance with the Shaikh's exalted command I remained for two days with Shaikh Azam, who has been already mentioned, in a cell in the old hospice, and enjoyed detailed conversations with the Shaikh. Then I obtained leave to depart for Basawar. Subsequently, in the year H. 978 (A.D. 1570-71) I repeatedly had the honour of paying my respects to the Shaikh, and one of his extraordinary acts which I observed was that in the cold wintry air of the highlands of Fathpur he never wore anything on the upper part of his body but a shirt of a single thickness of fine cotton cloth, woven thin, and an upper garment of muslin, and this in spite of the duty that he imposed upon himself of bathing twice daily. His daily food in the // quadragesimal fasts of union with God was half a water-melon, or even less than that. He passed away to the next world in the year H. 979 (A.D. 1571-72) and the words "the Indian Shaikh" were found to give the date of his death.

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1835

Parks: I,404

A very intelligent person, by name Bisharut Ali, who acted as cicerone, was much pleased to show off the place, and relate his wonderful stories. Amongst other traditions, he told me that, "in former times, Fathipoor Sicri was infested with wild beasts, and the people who came to see the saint marvelled he was not afraid to live in such a wilderness; the next day, they found a lion and a wolf at the holy man's door; the lion walking up and down and keeping guard, and the wolf brushing away the dust and dirt before the habitation of the saint"--with his tail, I suppose, for they say nothing of a broom.

See also: Chapter IV.

General

ca. 932-35/1526-28

BN: 520

Mulla Sharaf, writing in the Zafar-nama about the building of Timur Beg's Stone Mosque, lays stress on the fact that on it 200 stone-cutters worked, from Azarbaijan, Fars, Hindustan and other countries. But 680 men worked daily on my buildings in Agra and of Agra stone-cutters only; while 1491 stone-cutters worked daily on my buildings in Agra, Sikri, Biana, Dulpur, Gualiar and Kuil.

ca. 932-35/1526-28

TB: 134

For example, in the royal edifices at Agra 680 stone-cutters who are the natives of the city have been at work every day in special departments of the governments, and in laying in the foundation of the buildings of Sikri,* Biana, Dholpur, Gwalior, Kol, and, in carrying out the imperial command, as many as 1491 stone-cutters worked daily.

[* In the published English translation "Fathpur-Sikri" has incorrectly been substituted for "Sikri."]

933/1527

BN: 552

What wine we had with us was poured on the ground; what Baba Dost had

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brought was ordered salted to make vinegar. At the place where the wine was poured upon the ground, a well was ordered to be dug, built up with stone and having an almshouse beside it. It was already finished in Muharram 935 (A.H.--Sep. 1528 A.D.) at the time I went to Sikri from Dulpur on my way back from visiting Gualiar.

933/1527

HN: 100

Next morning, which was March 16th, 1527 (Jumada II [13th], 933H.), his Majesty arrayed battle against Rana Sanga on the skirts of the hill of Sikri, where now Fathpur has been built and peopled. By the Divine grace he was victorious and became an avenger of the cause of God.

947/1540

HN: 143

Then the Emperor [Humayun] set out for Fathipur (Sikri) with Mirza ^cAskari and Yadgar-nasir Mirza and the amirs who had come safely off the battlefield [of Chausa].

Mirza Hindal sent on before him her Highness his mother, who was Dildar Begam, and his own sister, Gul-chihra Begam, and Afghani aghacha, and Gul-nar aghacha, and Nar-gul aghacha, and the amirs' wives and families, etc. He was marching along when the Gawars pursued him in great numbers. Some of his troopers charged and defeated them. An arrow struck his horse. There was much fighting and confusion. Having saved the helpless women from the bond of the Gawars, he sent on (to Lahor) his mother and sister, and many of the amirs' people, etc., and went to Alwar. Here he got together tents and pavilions and numerous requisites, and then started for Lahor.

947/1540

TV: 24

The King [Humayun] having mounted proceeded towards the town of Futtumpur Sikry, on the march he was joined by the Prince Hindal, who, after paying his respects, presented a rich dagger and inlaid sword, which he had brought from the arsenal of Agra. The first day the King halted in the garden of the late Emperor Baber, but while he was seated there an arrow came from the hill of Sikry, two of the attendants were immediately sent up the hill to discover who was the perpetrator [sic] of this act, but they

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both soon returned severely wounded without seeing any body.

His Majesty, suspecting some treachery might be intended, again mounted his horse and proceeded towards the village of Chuneh.