

Chapter IV.
MOSQUES AND SANCTUARIES

Khanqah of Shaykh Salim ad-Din Chishti

979/1571

AN: II, 530

The Khedive of the world, although it was the rainy season, marched every day in the discharge of his kingly duties, and, hunting on the way, arrived at Ajmir. On the day of Rash 11 Amardad, Divine month, corresponding to Tuesday 1 Rabi-al-awwal, 21 July 1571, he alighted at the delightful place, and visited the shrine of M^Cuinu-d-din, and implored strength. He worshipped his God, and united supplication with exaltation. When the stewards of fate and destiny desire to make a happy-starred one's outward and inward dominion increase daily, they restrain him from the heights of saint-ship. His thirst for pleasing God increases, and from excessive capacity and abundance of spiritual thirst the ocean round him appears as a mirage and he searches for the fountain-head of purpose. With this view a new stage of holiness is continually brought before him. Such is the condition of our Lord of the Age. After paying the dues of justice and after satisfying the desires of those attached to the shrine, he proceeded towards the capital. On the day of Asman 27 Amardad, Divine month, corresponding to Thursday 17 Rabi-al-awwal, he alighted at Fathpur. He took up his quarters in the lodging of Shaikh Selim. The grades of men who had been oppressed and were waiting to do homage obtained happiness.

991/1583

MT: II, 344

On the day of his starting they brought from Makkah the news of the death of Shaikh Badr-ud-din, son of Shaikh Islam Chishti, who had kept a voluntary fast for seven whole days, and in intense ecstasy had made the circuits of Ka'bah barefooted until his feet were blistered, and violent fever supervened. On the Feast of Qurban in the year nine hundred and ninety he drank the draught of martyrdom of death, in the path of God from the hand

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of the cup-bearer of eternal grace:--

"Last night on account of my sincerity and purity of my heart
In the wine tavern that soul-gladdener of my heart
Brought me a cup, saying 'Take and drink,'
I said 'No!' he said 'Do! for my heart's sake.'"

This news the Emperor sent to Haji Husain, the attendant of the monas-
tery of the said Shaikh, and great dismay and distress found its way into
that family, and the line of guidance and teaching which he had left was
cut short.

ca. 1605-17

TJ: I,2

At the time when my venerated father [Akbar] was on the outlook for a son,
a dervish of the name of Shaikh Salim, a man of ecstatic condition, who had
traversed many of the stages of life, had his abode on a hill near Sikri,
one of the villages of Agra, and the people of that neighbourhood had com-
plete trust in him. As my father was very submissive to dervishes, he also
visited him. One day, when waiting on him and in a state of distraction,
he asked him how many sons he should have. The Shaikh replied, "The Giver
who gives without being asked will bestow three sons on you." My father
said, "I have made a vow that, casting my first son on the skirt of your
favour, I will make your friendship and kindness his protector and preser-
ver." The Shaikh accepted this idea, and said, "I congratulate you, and I
will give him my own name.

See also: Chapter I.

Jami^c Masjid

976/1568

MT: II,112

On account of this bond of union between them the Emperor built a lofty
palace on the top of the hill of Sikri near the monastery and the ancient
chapel of the Shaikh. And he laid the foundation of a new chapel, and of a
high and spacious mosque of stone, so large that you would say it was part
of a mountain, and the like of which can scarce be seen in the habitable
world. In the space of about five years the building was finished, and he
called the place Fathpur.... And the author found the date of the com-
mencement of the whole palace, mosque, chapel &c. to be as follows:--

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This chapel is the dome of Islam,
May God exalt the glory of its builder!
The Spirit Gabriel gave its date:
Its like is not seen in the lands.

Another:—

"The heavenly Ka'bah came down from heaven".

And Ashraf Khan found this mnemosynon:—

"It is second only to the mosque at Mecca".

976/1569

TA: II, 356

For the Shaikh also the foundation of a new Khanqa, and a lofty mosque, the equal of which is not to be found to-day, anywhere in the world was laid in the neighbourhood of the royal palaces.

979/1571

TQ: 150

Trees were grown in the environs which had formerly been the habitat of rabbits and jackals, and mosques (masajid), markets (bazarha), baths (hamamat), caravanserais (karvan saraha) and other fine buildings (biqa^c) were constructed in the city (shahr).

981/1573

AN III: 102

... at this time on a Friday he was present in the Jama Masjid of Fathpur and was watching the crowd of ostensible worshippers. Maulana ^cAbdu-r-Rahman the preacher, who had recently come from Mawara-n-nahar (Transoxiana), was discoursing. In the course of his address he spoke of the infidelity of the parents of the Prophet and spoke of them as being in danger of hell. H.M. said: "Methinks this statement is not true, for when there has been intercession for so many offenders by this means (the Prophet), how can the father and mother be excluded, and be consigned to everlasting infidelity?" The assembly applauded and paid him the homage of devotion.

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981/1573-74

TQ: 239-41

ACCOUNT OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE JAMI^C MASJID OF FATHPUR SIKRI IN THE TIME OF THE AUSPICIOUS SIGN OF THAT SUN OF THE SPHERE OF GOVERNMENT AND CHIEFSHIP

When His Majesty the Emperor Akbar laid the foundation of the dar al-khilafat of Fathpur with the rays of noble judgment and the blessings of graceful aspiration, he constructed a Jami^C Masjid inside the city (shahr), on top of the hill which is situated close to the imperial palace (dawlat-khana) of His Majesty the King, the refuge of the world, in the months of the year A.H. 981. Skilled engineers (muhandisan) and incomparable masters (ustadan) laid its foundation (asas-i an ra tarh andakhtand) at an auspicious hour and worthy astrological ascendancy, and dextrous masters (hunarvaran), each one of whom was the foremost in a country, engaged themselves in minute subtleties of delicacy. That building (^Cimarāt) of sublime status was brought to a pleasing completion through the diligent superintendence of the sons and kinsmen of the late and forgiven Shaykh Salim, and obtained splendor and purity through extraordinary elegance, beauty and worthiness. They put in their utmost effort in superintendence so that such a mosque (masjid), the like of which is rarely exhibited on the face of the earth, was completed and made ready within a short time through the blessings of the fortune of His Majesty the Emperor Akbar. Its entire wall (divar) was fashioned out of carved red stone (sang-i surkh-i tarashida), and the ivans were all erected of red stone. Its court (sahn) has been raised up on steps (paya), and subterranean reservoirs (sardabha) whose tops have been covered and made level [with the surface of the courtyard] have been made of stone and lime (chuna). // In some places they are latticed (mushabbak) so that whenever it rains the water collected in the courtyard (sahn) pours through those lattices (mushabbak) and is collected in the subterranean tanks (sardabha). Thus the general public has its need for water fulfilled. Consequently, its courtyard (sahn) provides refreshment and shelter in the arcade (rivaqha) of that vault (taq) like the face of a bride with arch-like (taq) eyebrows.

Verse:

Rizvan, who is the curtain-holder of the holy precincts (harim) of
good fortune,
You may say, has opened into it a door (dar) from the most sublime
paradise.

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Minarets (minarha), in which the pigeons of the repetitions of the formulae of God's praises alight like crowing cocks, were erected so that superior men of lofty judgment might make the grace and strength of that building (^Cimarat) the desired object of attention. Its steps (paya) and stages (darjat) have been raised so high that there is no need for any description. Since that building (^Cimarat) has come to be so lofty that its structure (^Cimarat) transgresses expression, dwelling upon its description is of no use and it has simply been restricted and shortened to a summary.

Verses:

This is the very work of the kings of kingship,
Who give strength to the foundation (bunyad) of religion.

Do not look at the stone of the mosque (masjid) which might be made
of gold;
For it would be proper if it were made of jewels.

The king ordered that a jami^C masjid (jami^C) should be constructed,
The roof (saqf) of which would reach the luminous sun.

Within a month such means were provided,
As to be beyond the imagination of sensible ones.

The mortar (gach) and stone became worthy of description,
Like the hearts of the beloved and the bodies of the lover. //

In short, he is offering jum^Ca prayers on Friday in that beautiful holy structure (buq^Ca) and soul-refreshing place (maqam). Since its minbar had a claim of superiority over the nine-stepped minbar of the sphere, the sublime khutba was adorned with the auspicious name of His Majesty the Emperor Akbar of excellent administration. The preacher of that blessed holy structure (buq^Ca) delivers the eloquent khutba in a beautiful voice with sweet intonation.

Hemistitch:

May there be no khutbas in the seven climes,
Except in his [Akbar's] name!

By the grace of God, from the beginning of the light of dawn until the end of the darkness of evening, its noble expanse is the place (mahall) of superogatory prayers and prayers that are written down (maktubat); and from the manifestation place of the vanguard of the morn up to the extremity of the extension of nightfall, it is the place (maqam) of the observance of jum^Ca prayer and congregations.

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Prayers for His Majesty the King:

It is hoped that [God] grants a palace (qasr) in the Eternal House (Paradise) for its every apartment (ghurfat), and for every brick (khisht) that has been laid, His Majesty the religion-nourishing Emperor Akbar be favored with Paradise. The Exalted God is the best of those from whom hope is cherished. [Be it so] by the honor of the Prophet and the companions of the Prophet!

984/1576

GI: II,250-51

From Ajmere the King marched to Dehly, and from thence towards Kabul. On this journey, a comet appeared every night (A.D. 1576). At Ajoodhun, Akbur visited the tomb of the famous Sheikh Fureed-ood-Deen; and giving up his intention of going to Kabul, returned to Futtehpour Seekry.

The great mosque in Futtehpour was finished // during this year.

987/1579

AN: III,396

Several times he [Akbar] distributed enlightenment in the chief mosque of the capital (Fathpur) and the audiences gathered bliss. One of the discourses (Khutba) which my most excellent of brothers, S. Abu-l-Faiz Faizi, put by his orders into verse was as follows--

Verse:

In the name of Him who gave us sovereignty
Who gave us a wise heart and a strong arm,
Who guided us in equity and justice,
Who put away from our heart aught but equity;
His praise is beyond the range of our thoughts,
Exalted be His Majesty, Allah Akbar

987/1579

MT: II,276-77

In this year the Emperor was anxious to unite in his person the spiritual as well as the secular headships, for he held it to be an insufferable burden to subordinate to any one, as he had heard that the Prophet (God be gracious to him, and give him peace!), and his lawful successors, and some of the most powerful kings, as Amir Timur Cahibqiran, and Mirza Ulugh Beg-i-Gurgan, and several others had themselves read the khutbah, he resolved to do the same, apparently in order to imitate their example, but in reality to appear in public as the Mujtahid of the age. Accordingly on the first Friday of Jumada'l-awwal of the year nine hundred and eighty-seven,

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in the chief mosque of Fathpur, which he had built near the palace, His Majesty began to read the khutbah. But all at once // he stammered and trembled, and though assisted by others, he could scarcely read three verses of a poem, which Shaikh Faizi had composed, but came quickly down from the pulpit, and handed over the duties of Imam to Hafiz Muhammad Amin, the Court Khatib. These are the verses:--

"The Lord, who gave to us sovereignty,
Who gave us a wise heart, and a strong hand,
Who guided us in equity and justice,
And drove from our thoughts all save equity,
His description is higher than the range of thought,
Exalted is His Majesty, Allahu Akbar!"

987/1579

TA: II, 520-21

It had been brought to the emperor's notice that His Holiness the last of the Prophets, may the blessing and peace of God be on him! and the noble Caliphs, may God be pleased with them all, used themselves always to read the prayers on Fridays, and on the days of the two 'Ids, and each one of the Abbaside Caliphs also, keeping alive (i.e., adopting) this correct practice read the public prayers in their own proper persons. After the Abbaside Caliphs, many enthroned Sultans, such as the Sahib-Qirani, Amir Taimur Gurgan and Mirza Ulugh Beg following His Holiness the Khair-ul-Bashar (literally the good of man or the Prophet) and the four Caliphs read the public prayer themselves, so the opinion, which pointed to the right course, (of the emperor) came to this decision, that he should on a Friday act in accordance with the practice of the Caliphs and of the guiding Imams. Accordingly on Friday, the first of Jamadi-ul-awwal, in the // 25th year of the Ilahi era he placed his foot of honour on the top of the pulpit in the Jama^c Masjid in the capital city of Fathpur, and uttered these words, in the way of the public prayer with his miracle-speaking tongue;

Verse:

The Almighty God, that on me the empire conferred;
A mind of wisdom, and an arm of strength conferred!
To justice and to equity, He did me guide;
Expelled all but justice, from my thought;
His attributes beyond all comprehension soar!
Exalted His greatness, Almighty God!

Finishing with these eloquent couplets, which comprised praise and prayer and thanks for all the favours he had received, and his guidance to justice and equity he read the Fatiha, (i.e. the words alhamd ullah, etc.)

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and descending from the pulpit he performed the Friday Namaz.

1610

Finch: 149-50

... and on the further side hereof, upon an ascent, stands the goodliest meskite of the East [the Jama Masjid]. It hath some twentie foure or thirtie steps of ascent to the gate [the Baland Darwaza], which is one of the highest and fairest (I suppose) in the whole world; on the top are a number of clustering pinnacles, curiously disposed. The top of this gate may be plainely seene eight or tenne miles distance. Within is a goodly spacious court, very curiously paved with free stone, about sixe times the largnesse of Londons Exchange, with faire large walkes amongst the side more then twice as broad and double the height of those about the Burse of London [the Royal Exchange], the pillars upholding them beeing of one intire stone; and round about are entrances into many goodly roomes, neatly contrived. Opposite to the gate toward the further side stands // a faire and sumptuous tombe, artificially inlaied with mother of pearle and inclosed with a grating of stone curiously carved. Over head is rich pargetting and paynting. Herein lyeth the body of a great Kalender [saint], at whose cost the whole meskite was builded.

1615

Withington: 227

Between Fettipoore and Agra is the sepulcher of this king's father [Akbar's tomb at Sikandra], which is a wonderful rich and curious building, and to my judgement the fairest that ever I sawe in Christendome or elsewhere; and yet the churche of Fettipoore cometh verye neare yt, and is likewise builte by geometrie.

1028/1619

TJ: II,71-72

One of the greatest monuments of my father's [Akbar's] reign is this mosque and cemetery (rauza). Certainly they are exceedingly lofty and solid buildings. There is nothing like this mosque in any other country. It is all built of beautiful stone, and five lakhs of rupees were expended from the public treasury upon it. Qutbu-d-din K. Kokaltash made the marble railing (mahjar) round the cemetery, the flooring (farsh) of the // dome and portico, and these are not included in the five lakhs. The mosque has

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two great gateways. The one towards the south is extremely lofty, and is very beautiful. The archway (pishtaq) is 12 yards broad, 16 long, and 52 high. One must mount thirty-two steps to get to the top of it. The other gateway is smaller, and is towards the east. The length of the mosque from east to west, including the width of the walls, is 212 yards. Out of this, the Maqsura (the chancel) is 25-1/2 yards, the middle is 15 yards by 15, the portico (pishtaq) is 7 yards broad, 14 yards long, and 25 yards high. On each side of the large dome are two smaller domes 10 yards by 10. Then there is a veranda (aiwan) which is pillared. The breadth of the mosque from north to south is 172 yards. Round it are ninety verandas (aiwan) and eighty-four cells. The breadth of each cell is 4 yards, and the length 5 yards. The verandas are 7-1/2 yards broad. The courtyard (sahn) of the mosque, exclusive of the maqsura, and the verandas, and the gates, is 169 yards long and 143 yards broad. Above the verandas, the gates, and the mosque, small domes have been constructed, and on the eves of anniversaries and on holy days lamps are placed in these, and they are enveloped in coloured cloths, so that they look like lamp-shades (?). Under the courtyard they have made a well, and they fill this with rainwater.

1626

Herbert: 1626

...the other side is glorious in a Mosque ascended by thirty steps barr'd with a brave gate, in all so observable, that it is scarce equall'd throughout Indya: the top is full of Piramyds, the court within six times bigger than the Royal Exchange in London, singularly paved with free stone, the Iles are large and paved, the columns of one stone high & beautiful.

1633

Peter Mundy: II, 228-29

The Great Messitt.

The Messitt [masjid] is the fairest I have yett seene in India, standing verie high, built by [Salim Chishti], // a Fackere much reputed of. Soe that a certaine Amrawe [amir] being bound for the warrs, and haveinge noe sonne, left his meanes with [t]his Fackeere, with Condition that if hee returned not it should bee all his. The Amrawe was slaine and hee [the fakir] remained with all his riches, wherewith hee built this Messitt, as also his owne Tombe. It is a very Curious [elaborately constructed] buildinge; a faire arched entrance full of copulaes round about on the walls,

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very large, paved with Marble. It hath many Fackeers etts. to attend it, whoe att certaine tymes in the day and night beat on great drumms and sound with Trumpetts, which is usually done att all great mens Tombes according as they are of abillitie.

1053/1644

PN: II, 353

On the 10th [of Dhu'l-Hijja] he (Shah Jahan) celebrated the prayers of 'id al-azhar there (Fatehpur-Sikri) in the Jami^c Masjid, which is one of the great monuments (athar) of the late Emperor Akbar and equal with the sky in terms of size and elevation. After the performance of the prayers and having returned to the imperial palace (dawlatkhana) he fulfilled the rite of offering [by slaughtering the sacrificial animal]. When the crowd of people had grown to such an extent that a thronging and milling assembly spilled into the gateway (darvaza) of the mosque (masjid), one of the fallen died from the blow of a dagger from another which had come out of its sheath and hit him. Many people were injured from being trampled.

1783

Hodges: 131

On the summit of the highest hill is a large mosque, which was built by Acbar. The building is in a high style of Moorish architecture. The ascent from the foot of the hill is by a flight of broad steps, extending to the principal entrance, which is through a portal of great magnificence. After this we enter a large square, paved throughout, in which is the mosque, and round the sides are apartments for the different priests.

1825

Heber: II, 350-51

We found our tents pitched among the ruins and rubbish, about a bow-shot from the foot of the hill, and in full view of the great gate of the mosque, which is approached by the noblest flight of steps I ever saw. The morning was still cool, and we determined to see the curiosities without loss of time. The steps of which I have spoke lead to a fine arch surmounted by a lofty tower; thence we pass into a quadrangle of about five hundred feet square, with a very lofty and majestic cloister all // round, a large mosque surmounted by three fine domes of white marble on the left hand, and opposite to the entrance two tombs of very elaborate workmanship,

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of which that to the right contains several monuments of the imperial family; that to the left a beautiful chapel of white marble, the shrine of Sheikh Soliman, who had the good fortune to be a saint as well as a statesman.

The impression which this whole view produced on me will be appreciated when I say, that there is no quadrangle either in Oxford or Cambridge fit to be compared with it, either in size, or majestic proportions, or beauty of architecture. It is kept in substantial repair by the British Government, and its grave and solid style makes this an easier task than the intricate and elaborate inlaid work of Secundra and the Tage-mahal. The interior of the mosque itself is fine, and in the same simple character of grandeur, but the height of the portal tower, and the magnificence of the quadrangle had raised my expectations too high, and I found that these were the greatest as well as the most striking beauties of Futtehpoor.

1825

Heber: II, 354

After dinner I again walked to the mosque and went to the top of the gateway tower, which commands a very extensive view. The most remarkable object in the distance was the rampart of Bhurtpoor, eight coss from us, and hardly to be distinguished by the naked eye, but sufficiently visible with a pocket telescope. A number of miserable dependants on the religious establishment came up and begged for charity. One was blind, but officiated as porter so far as keeping the keys of the tower and other lock-up places. Another was deaf and dumb, and filled the place of sweeper; there were also some poor old women who "abode," as they told me, "in the temple gate, and made prayer night and day." These people, as well as the two principal Muezzins, who had been my ciceroni through the day, were very thankful for the trifles I gave them, and begged me in return "to eat some of the bread of the sanctuary," under which character they produced a few little round cakes of barley-meal, stuck over with something like sugar. On leaving the building I was surprised to hear a deep-toned bell pealing from its interior, but on asking what it was, was told that it was only used to strike the hours on.

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1828

Archer: 74

The mosque is a spacious edifice, having a magnificent doorway as an entrance.

1828

Captain Mundy: I, 61-62

Below the citadel gate we dismounted, and, after ascending a most disheartening flight of steps, found ourselves under the most lofty gateway in India. By the promise of a beautiful prospect we were induced to surmount this also; and, after climbing six stories, our labours were rewarded by a most extensive view, embracing Agra and the Taj on one side, the Bhurtpore on the other....

We next visited the great mosque, built by Acbar, A.D. 1570. This monarch had a great regard for Futtypore Sicree; his long-cherished ambition of having children being here gratified by the birth of two sons. In the quadrangle of the mosque stands a beautiful marble tomb, raised to the memory of a holy saint, of great learning and sanctity, and the friend and mentor of the above-named Sultan. By some scandalous annalists he has been considered the real father of Acbar's reputed sons. Be that as // it may, he died in the odour of sanctity, and his mausoleum is as pure and chaste as the whitest of marble and the most delicate sculpture can make it.

1835-36

Sleeman: 352-54

The quadrangle, which contains the mosque on the west side, and tomb of the old hermit in the centre, was completed in the year 1578, six years before his [Shaykh Salim's] death; and is, perhaps, one of the finest in the world. It is five hundred and seventy-five feet square, and surrounded by a high wall, with a magnificent cloister all around within. On the outside is a magnificent gateway, at the top of a noble flight of steps twenty-four feet high. The whole gateway is one hundred and twenty feet in height, and the same in breadth, and presents beyond the wall five sides of an octagon, of which the front face is eighty feet wide. The arch in the centre of this space is sixty feet high by forty wide. This gateway is no doubt extremely grand // and beautiful; but what strikes one most is the disproportion between the thing wanted and the thing provided--there seems to be something quite preposterous in forming so enormous an entrance for a

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poor diminutive man to walk through--and walk he must, unless carried through on men's shoulders; for neither elephant, horse, nor bullock could ascend over the flight of steps. In all these places the staircases, on the contrary, are as disproportionately small; they look as if they were made for rats to crawl through, while the gateways seem as if they were made for ships to sail under. One of the most interesting sights was the immense swarms of swallows flying round the thick bed of nests that occupy the apex of this arch, and, to the spectators below, they look precisely like a swarm of bees round a large honeycomb. I quoted a passage in the Koran in praise of the swallows, and asked the guardians of the place whether they did not think themselves happy in having such swarms of sacred birds over their heads all day long. 'Not at all,' said they; 'they oblige us to sweep the gateway ten times a day; but there is no getting at their nests, or we should soon get rid of them.' They then told me that the sacred bird of the Koran was the 'ababil', or large black swallow, and not the 'partadil', a little piebald thing of no religious merit whatever. On the right side of the entrance // is engraven on stone in large letters, standing out in bas-relief, the following passage in Arabic: 'Jesus, on whom be peace, has said, "The world is merely a bridge; you are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings upon it".' Where this saying of Christ is to be found I know not, nor has any Muhammadan yet been able to tell me; but the quoting of such a passage, in such a place, is a proof of the absence of all bigotry on the part of Akbar.

1845

Orlich: II, 66

The mosque is preserved nearly entire. It resembles, in the style of its architecture, that of Agra, but it is grander; for the inner side of the quadrangular court, which is surrounded by arcades, towers, and minarets, measures 476 feet.

1853

Taylor: 123-26

By this time it was two hours past noon, and I still had the famous Durgah to see. We therefore retraced our steps, and ascended to the highest part of the hill, where the tomb // rises like a huge square fortress, overtopping the palace of Akbar himself. We mounted a long flight of steps, and entered a quadrangle so spacious, so symmetrical, so wonderful

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in its decorations, that I was filled with amazement. Fancy a paved courtyard, 428 feet in length by 400 in breadth, surrounded with a pillared corridor 50 feet high; one of the noblest gateways in the world, 120 feet high; a triple-domed mosque on one side; a large tank and fountain in the centre.... The court, with its immense gate, seemed an enchanted fortress, solely erected to guard the precious structure within.... // ... The mosque, which is of older date than the tomb, is very elegant, resembling somewhat the hall of the Abencerrages in the Alhambra, except that it is much larger, and of white marble, // instead of stucco. Busharat-Ali informed me that the Durgah was erected in one year, from the wealth left by the Shekh Selim-Chishti at his death, and that it cost thirty-seven lacs of rupees--\$1,750,000.

1858

Minturn: 305-06

It stands within a marble-paved quadrangle, four hundred feet square, upon the very summit of the hill. A redstone wall forty feet high, with arched battlements surrounds the court, on the west side of which is a great mosque, with domes of white marble. The principal entrance is on the south side. It is a magnificent gateway of redstone, inlaid with marble. Its height is one hundred and twenty feet, and its breadth nearly the same. From it a noble flight of redstone steps descends pyramidally to the ground. On the right side of the entrance are the following words in Arabic, inlaid in the stone wall:--"Jesus, on whom be peace, has said: this world is merely a bridge; you are to pass over it, not build your dwellings upon it."

The quadrangle is surrounded by a pillared cloister leaning against the wall. On the east side, opposite the musjeed, is a smaller entrance leading to the palace square. In the centre is a large tank and fountain.... //

The quadrangle in which this tomb is contained, was considered by Bishop Heber so magnificent that "no quadrangle either in Oxford or Cambridge, is fit to be compared with it, in size or majestic proportions, or for beauty of architecture."

The whole is said to have cost thirty-seven lakhs (\$1,850,000), which, it is said, was all defrayed from the property left by the saint, so that, although a hermit, he seems to have been a considerable capitalist.

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1859

Ireland: 475-76

As his reputation increased, so did his riches; and at length he built this tomb and mosque, at an expense of 37 lacs, or \$1,750,000. It consists of a most imposing gateway, 120 feet high, with a portal arch of 80 feet. The entire front of red sandstone, studded with coarse mosaic. The effect is very fine. //

Around the interior is a pillared corridor, thirty feet high. On one side is a beautiful mosque, like the Hall of Reception at the Alhambra, only stone and marble here supply the place of wood, stucco, and azulejos.... The court of this mosque and tomb is 408 by 430 feet.

Tomb of Shaykh Salim ad-Din Chishti

979/1572

MT: II, 140

And towards the end of the blessed month of Ramzan of this year Shaikh Salim Chishti of Fathpur (who was one of the greatest Shaikhs of Hind, and a high master of the different stages of advancement in the knowledge of God, a little of whose history will be written in the sequel to this epitome, if God, He is exalted!, will) passed from the abode of transient pride to the abode of lasting glory. And one mnemosynon for his death is "Shaikh i Hindi;" and another:--

"The date of the death of Shaikh Islam [is]
The Shaikh of sages, and the Shaikh of princes."

1580

Monserate: 200

There is another great building, as large as the palace, in which is the tomb of Pirxocolidezcamus, the philosopher who persuaded the King to remove his residence to Siquiris, and who--with the greatest stupidity--is worshipped as a saint, although he was stained with all the crimes and wickednesses of the Musalmans.

1610

Finch: 149-50

Opposite to the gate toward the further side stands // a faire and sumptuous tombe, artificially inlaied with mother of pearle and inclosed with a

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grating of stone curiously carved. Over head is a rich pargetting and paynting. Herein lyeth the body of a great Kalender, at whose cost the whole meskite was builded.

1028/1619

TJ: II,70-71

On the eve of Friday, the 12th (Bahman), I went to the mausoleum of the refuge of pardon, Shaikh Salim Chishti, a little concerning whose blessed qualities has been written in the preface to this record of prosperity, and the fatiha was recited. Although the manifestation of miracles and wonders is not approved by the elect of the throne of God, and from humility and a feeling of their low rank (as saints) they avoid such display, yet occasionally in the excitement of ecstasy an appearance is manifested unintentionally and without control, or for the sake of teaching someone the exhibition is made. Among these was this, that he before my birth gave my father the good news of the advent of this suppliant and of my two brothers. Again, one day my father incidentally asked him how old he was, and when would he depart to the abiding regions. He replied: "The glorious God knows what is secret and hidden." After much urgency he indicated this suppliant (Prince Salim), and said: "When the Prince, by the instruction of a teacher or in any other way, shall commit something to memory and shall recite it, this will be a sign of my union with God." In consequence of this, His Majesty gave strict orders to all who were in attendance on me that no one should teach me anything in prose or verse.... At length // when two years and seven months had passed away, it happened one day that one of the privileged women was in the palace. She used to burn rue constantly in order to avert the evil eye, and on this pretext had access to me. She used to partake of the alms and charities. She found me alone and regardless of (or ignorant of) what had been said (by Akbar), she taught me this couplet:

"O God, open the rosebud of hope
Display a flower from the everlasting garden."

I went to the Shaikh and repeated this couplet. He involuntarily rose up and hastened to wait on the King, and informed him of what had occurred. In accordance with Fate, the same night the traces of fever appeared, and the next day he sent someone to the King (with the request) to call Tan Sen Kalawant, who was unequalled as a singer. Tan Sen, having gone to wait upon him, began to sing. After this he sent some one to call the King.

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When H.M. came, he said: "The promised time of union has come, and I must take leave of you." Taking his turban from his head, he placed it on mine, and said: "We have made Sultan Salim our successor, and have made him over to God, the protector and preserver." Gradually his weakness increased, and the signs of passing away became more evident, till he attained union with the "True Beloved."

1028/1619

TJ: II,72-73

As Fathpur has little water, and what there is is bad, this well yields a sufficient supply for the // whole year for the members of the family (of Salim Chishti) and for the dervishes who are the mujawirs (caretakers) of the mosque. Opposite the great entrance and towards the north-north-east is the tomb of the Shaikh. The middle dome is 7 yards, and round the dome is a portico of marble, and on the front side of this is a marble lattice. It is very beautiful.

1626

Herbert: 73

...and affronting this gate [in the Jami^c Masjid] is a most sumptuous Monument, covered with paint and Oyster pearle shells, proud in the Kalender there buried.

1835-36

Sleeman: 354-57

The tomb of Shaikh Salim, the hermit, is a very beautiful little building, in the centre of the quadrangle. The man who guards it told me that the Jats, while they reigned, robbed this tomb, as well as those at Agra, of some of the most beautiful and valuable portion of the mosaic work. 'But,' said he, // 'they were well plundered in their turn by your troops at Bharatpur; retribution always follows the wicked sooner or later.' He showed us the little roof of stone tiles, close to the original little dingy mosque of the old hermit, where the Empress gave birth to Jahangir; and told us that she was a very sensible woman, whose counsels had great weight with the Emperor. 'His majesty's only fault was', he said, 'an // inclination to learn the art of magic, which was taught him by an old Hindoo religious mendicant,' whose apartment near the palace he pointed out to us.

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'Fortunately,' said our cicerone, 'the fellow died before the Emperor had learnt enough to practise the art without his aid.'... //

Shaikh Salim had, he declared, gone more than twenty times on pilgrimage to the tomb of the holy prophet; and was not much pleased to have his repose so much disturbed by the noise and bustle of the imperial court. At last, Akbar wanted to surround the hill with regular fortifications, and the Shaikh could stand it no longer. 'Either you or I must leave this hill,' said he to the Emperor; 'if the efficacy of my prayers is no longer to be relied upon, let me depart in peace.' 'If it be your majesty's will,' replied the Emperor, 'that one should go, let it be your slave, I pray.' The old story: 'There is nothing like relying upon the efficacy of our prayers,' say the priests, 'Nothing like relying upon that of our sharp swords,' say the soldiers; and, as nations advance from barbarism, they generally contrive to divide between them the surplus produce of the land and labour of society.

The old hermit consented to remain, and pointed out Agra as a place which he thought would answer the Emperor's purpose extremely well. Agra, then an unpeopled waste, soon became a city, and Fathpur-Sikri was deserted. Cities which, like this, are maintained by the public establishments that attend and surround the courts of sovereign princes, must always, like this, become deserted when these sovereigns change their resting-places. To the history of the rise and progress, decline and fall, of how many cities is this the key?

1835

Parks: I, 403

This beautiful mausoleum, in the centre of the quadrangle, is still in a state of the most perfect preservation; it is of white marble; the open work of the screen is of the most exquisite workmanship. The descendants of the shaikh still live at Sicri, and gain large sums by showing the tomb of the holy man, whose name is held in the highest veneration. The coffin, containing the mortal remains of the saint, is within the building, and is covered with a large pall of silk and brocade. When speaking of the shaikh they continually denominated him Shah, Selim Cheestie. The annexed sketch will give an idea of the outline of the tomb, and of the beauty of the fretwork of its walls of marble.

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1842

Fane: 88-89

Akbar built and endowed a tomb here, dedicated to a saint, by the aid of whose prayers he supposed himself to have been blessed with a son.... // The tomb itself was in very fair repair, and the interior presented one of the most lively pictures of Eastern dresses and assemblies I have ever seen, the whole of the great court-yard being filled with people come to the annual fair, which is held on the anniversary of the death of the saint. The burying-place itself was formed entirely of mother-of-pearl, with the windows of beautifully carved white marble, looking like the finest lace. From the top of the building we had a very fine view over the country.

1845

Orlich: II,66

In the middle of it, rather towards the north, the emperor erected a marble sepulchre for his favourite priest Sheikh Selim Tshish, from gratitude for his fervent prayers that Allah would give him a son and successor. It is made of filigree work, adorned in the style of the Florentine mosaic, and resembles an elegant jewel-box.

1853

Taylor: 124

... opposite the great portal, the mother-of-pearl and marble tomb of the Shekh, a miniature palace, gleaming like crystal, with its gilded domes, its ivory pillars, and its wreaths of wondrous, flower-like ornaments, inwrought in marble filigree.

1853

Taylor: 125

We are allowed to enter the inner corridor which surrounds the Shekh's tomb, and to look in, but not to cross the threshold. The tomb, as well as a canopy six feet high, which covers it, is made of mother-of-pearl. The floor is of jasper, and the walls of white marble, inlaid with cornelian. A cloth of silk and gold was spread over it like a pall, and upon this were wreaths of fresh and withered flowers. The screens of marble surrounding the building are the most beautiful in India. They are single thin slabs,

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about eight feet square, and wrought into such intricate open patterns that you would say they had been woven in a loom.

1858

Minturn: 305

The tomb is just north of the fountain. It is a small square building, approached by steps on each side, surmounted by a dome and surrounded by a closed verandah--the whole of the purest white marble, polished. The interior is elaborately decorated with carving, gilding, painting, mosaic, and inlaid work of mother-of-pearl. The ornamentation has been managed with so much skill, that notwithstanding its richness and profusion, it does not interfere with the exquisite taste of the architecture, or the simple purity of the white marble.

The body of the saint lies within this building, surrounded by a screen of that delicate marble openwork, which looks as Bayard Taylor says, "as if it had been woven in a loom."

1859

Ireland: 475-76

Then to the Durga, or tomb of Sheik Saleem-Shisty, who was a man of great sanctity, and favorite priest of Acbar. The tradition is, that he was discovered on this hill about three hundred and fifty years ago, by a wood or stone-cutter, who in vain persuaded him to leave it. One day he saw some tigers in his cave, with whom he appeared to be on terms of friendship. This established his sanctity as a Fakeer. As his reputation increased, so did his riches; and at length he built this tomb and mosque, at an expense of 37 lacs, or \$1,750,000.... //

In the centre of one side of the court opposite the gateway, is a beautiful white marble temple--tomb of the Sheik Saleem-Shisty. The tomb is like a high-post bedstead in appearance, with post and canopy of mother-of-pearl--the walls forming screen work in marble.

The floors are of beautiful tessellated marbles. In the rear is a perfect burying-ground of a mausoleum. The court of this mosque and tomb is 408 by 430 feet.

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Guristan

991/1583

MT: II,332

For the word jama'at His Majesty used Jima' and for hayya^c ala, he said ya-lala talala. The cemetery within the walls was allowed to run [to] waste.

Other Tombs and Structures

1028/1619

TJ: II,73

Opposite this tomb on the west, at a little distance, is another dome, in which are laid to rest the sons-in-law and sons of the Shaikh, such as Qutbu-d-din K., Islam K., Mu^cazzam K., and others, who were all connected with this family, and rose to the position of Amirs and to lofty rank. Accordingly, the circumstances of each have been recorded in their places. At present the son of Islam K., who is distinguished by the title of Ikram K., is the lord of the prayer-carpet. The signs of auspiciousness are manifest in him; I am much inclined to cherish him.

1835-36

Sleeman: 357-58

Close to the tomb of the saint is another containing the // remains of a great number of his descendants, who continue to enjoy, under the successors of Akbar, large grants of rent-free lands for their own support, and for that of the mosque and mausoleum. These grants have, by degrees, been nearly all resumed; and, as the repair of the buildings is now entrusted to the public officers of our government, the surviving members of the saint's family, who still reside among the ruins, are extremely poor.

1845

Orlich: II,66

Behind the mosque is a deep tank for the people to perform their ablutions; and round it are the wretched houses for the inhabitants of the present village.