

## Maryam Zamani Masjid

This is one of the most ancient mosques of the city. It is situated close to the *Masti* Gate of the city, opposite the eastern walls of the fort. As the inscription on the Northern gateway shows,

"God is great."

"God be thanked through whose grace

"Under the auspices of His Majesty this building was completed.

The Founder of the edifice, the place of salvation, is the Queen Mariam Zarnani.

"For the completion of this edifice, which resembles paradise?

I was thinking (of the date) when at last I found it in the words what a fine mosque"  
(Latif 1892)

From the word "*khush Masjidi*" its date of construction extracted as 1023 A.H. (1614 A. D). On the Eastern gate inscription is as under;

"The inscription on the mosque states its founding by Maryam Zamani, mother of Emperor Jahangir's in 1615; the date derived from the text "Khush Masjidi on its eastern gate". (Rehmani 2016)

Inscription on the Eastern gateway:-

"May the conqueror of the world, King Nur ud din Muhammad Shine in the world like the sunward moon, O GOD" (Latif 1892)

Mother of Emperor Noor ud Din Muhammad Jahangir whose title was *Maryam Zamani* had constructed it. According to the *Ain,-i-Akbari*, she was the daughter of Raja Behari Mal, and sister of *Raja Bhagwan Das*. Whole structure of the masjid based on the heavy arches. The style of the building is transitional between the Pathan and Mughal. Its massive domes, one large and two side ones, and bulky arches, are in the old Pathan style, but the gateways, the balconies and the side-rooms are more Mughal in their construction than Pathan. The mosque is surmounted with four arched towers, one at each corner, built with burnt bricks in kankar lime of the best quality, so excellent, indeed, that the strength of the building seems to depend entirely on its adhesive properties. Fresco paintings on the walls of the Masjid either in

geometrical pattern, floral or calligraphy are one of the best of all times. In the center of the court-yard of the mosque is a fountain of water for the ablutions of the faithful. The Masjid was used by Ranjit Singh as a gun and powder manufactory, and on that account came to be called the *Barood-khana Wali Masjid*. The establishment was under the superintendence of *Jawahar Mal*, Mistry. The mosque was restored to the Muhammedans by Major McGregor, Deputy Commissioner of Lahore in 1850, together with the shops and houses attached to it. In the corner there are some graves one is Ghulam Qadir Bhervi died in 1908 A.D, rest are among who served the Masjid in their own times.

It has recently been repaired from subscriptions raised by the Muhammedans. The whole masjid has been encroached and almost covered by the local shop keepers of shoe market and frames of the heavy vehicle. The shop keepers have fixed heavy hammering machinery to prepare the parts of the heavy vehicles which is great threat to the ancient monuments. Government of Punjab has promised to shift the shops to protect the monument from all sort of threats. General visitor could hardly locate the masjid due to unauthorized and illegal shopkeepers. Government and Civil Society should try to release the monument from unauthorized and illegal shopkeepers so that original beauty of the masjid be regained and easy access for a common visitor be made possible.

Inscription on the Northern gateway:-

On the central arch is inscribed the Muhammedan confession of faith, and the *Ayat-ul-Kursi*, a passage from the Koran.

“So said the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him! The faithful is in a mosque as a fish in water”. (Latif 1892)

## Bibliography

Latif, Khan Bahadur Syad Muhammad. *Lahore: Its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*. Lahore: Sang e Meel, 1892.

Rehmani, Anjum. *History and architecture of Mughal Monuments*. Karachi: Oxford, 2016.

