

## **1. Shrine of Hazrat Mian Mir**

One of the most famous saints of Lahore, Hazrat Mian Mir, after whom the whole area was named, his shrine is approximately in the centre of the two railway crossings on the road which leads to Allama Iqbal Road.

It is a large compound, the beautiful mausoleum with its unusual architectural character, presenting itself in its full glory. Across the road to the east of tomb of Hazrat Mian Mir, is a large Chahar Bagh (four-quartered garden or paradisiacal garden) in the centre of which stands the tomb of Nadira Begam. The whole area is known as Mian Mir after the saint, and in fact the Lahore Cantonment which was established by the British Raj in 1852 AD was originally given the name of Mian Mir Cantonment as it was close to the shrine.

The impressive doorway of soft pink stone embellished with ceramic tiles opens to an enormous courtyard; dominated by a large tree, through the foliage of which an unusual roof of the Mughal day tomb is visible. The sepulcher itself is placed on a raised white marble platform carrying delicate inlay patterns. The steps lead up to the square structure, with overhanging structure. Although, some renovation is evident, the tomb surfaces are beautifully embellished with the fine Mughal fresco and ceramic tile-work, with fretwork screens spanning the openings.

The saint arrived in Lahore at the age of twenty five during the reign of the Emperor Akbar. His piety and practice of meditation and detachment endowed him with a legendary status and it was widely believed that he had unmatched virtue, beneficence and learning. He was fond of

religious, devotional music the “Sama'a” as well as the local ragas. He was invited by the Sikh of Amritsar, to lay the foundation of Darbar Sahib, which is the holiest shrine of the Sikh religion.

Among his most devout disciples was the poet-prince Dara Shikoh, who has narrated at length the extraordinary powers of the saint, and his nature of denouncing the world, to engage him in meditation in seclusion and wilderness.

Dara Shikoh's father the Emperor Shah Jahan also held the saint in great esteem, twice paid his respects to the saint, on his royal tour to Lahore. Being conscious of the saint's indifference to worldly wealth, presented him with simple gifts of a rosary and turban of white cloth.

Hazrat Mian Mir died in the reign of Shah Jahan, in Mohallah Khawafipura. It was Prince Dara Shikoh who buried him in the present tomb and began its construction, in an area which at that time was known as Darapur established by the prince himself and named after him.

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