

# PREFACE.

---

The Gazetteer of Ajmer-Merwāra compiled by Mr. J. D. (now Sir James Digges) LaTouche in 1875, is the basis of the present work. The arrangement has been altered in accordance with Government's general scheme for the new District Gazetteers, and it has been brought up to date, but except where recent investigations have thrown new light on any subject, the matter, and in many cases even the wording of the original have been retained. I am indebted to Mr. R. C. Bramley for the use of material collected for his article on Ajmer-Merwāra in the Imperial Gazetteer at present under issue, to Colonel Melvill for helpful criticism and advice, and to many members of the District Staff for useful notes on various subjects. My clerk Munshi Kanahaya Lal has given much assistance throughout.

C. C. W.

*Abu, 21st August 1904.*



Akbar included Ajmer in a *sūbah* or province, which gave its name to the whole of Rājputāna. The great importance of the fort and district of Ajmer as a *point d'appui* in the midst of Rājputāna was early recognized by the Muhammadan rulers. It commanded the routes from northern India to Gujarāt on the one side, and to Mālwa on the other. Ajmer itself was a centre of trade, with a well-nigh impregnable fort to protect it. The situation was strong, central, and picturesque, and was well watered as compared with the arid tracts around. The Mughal sovereigns, like their predecessors, were not slow to grasp the advantages of the place, and Ajmer became an appanage of the royal residence.

Akbar had made a vow that, if a son were born to him and lived, he would go on foot from Agra to Ajmer, and offer thanks at the tomb of the saint Muin-ud-din Chishti, a holy man who came from Gor to India in 1143 A.D., and whose tomb, known as the Dargāh Khwāja Sāhib, has been a place of Muhammadan pilgrimage for several centuries. Salim, afterwards Jahāngīr, was born in A.D. 1570. Ten years later Akbar built a fortified palace, the Dar-ul-Khair, just outside the city. Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān both spent a considerable portion of their time at Ajmer, and it was here that the former received Sir Thomas Roe, the Ambassador from King James I, who reached Ajmer on the 23rd December 1615. He had his first audience with Jahāngīr on the 10th January 1616, and was received by the Mughal Emperor with "courtly condescension." Near Chitōr, on his way to Ajmer from Surat, Roe met the eccentric Thomas Coryat, whose mania for travelling brought him on foot from Jerusalem to Ajmer. The "World's foot post," as he describes himself, wrote a pamphlet, "From the Court of the great Moghul, Resident at the Town of Asmere in Eastern India," which is a quaint and early specimen of travellers' tales. Roe himself remained at Ajmer until November 1616, and afterwards accompanied Jahāngīr in his March to Ujjain. Although it appears doubtful whether he managed to obtain any substantial advantage for the East India Company as a result of his mission, his Journal has left us a vivid picture of the life both in Ajmer and in camp. It was at Deora, near Ajmer, that in A.D. 1659 Aurangzeb crushed the army of the unfortunate Dārā and forced his brother into the flight which was destined to terminate only by his imprisonment and death. The celebrated traveller Bernier met and accompanied Dārā for three days during the flight, and has given a graphic description of the miseries and privations of the march. During the war with Mewār and Mārwar, which was brought about by the bigotry of Aurangzeb, Ajmer was the head-quarters of that Emperor, who nearly lost his throne here in 1679 by the combination of Prince Akbar with the enemy.

On the death of the Sayyids in 1720 A.D., Ajit Singh, son of Jaswant Singh of Mārwar, found his opportunity in the weakness consequent on the decline of the Mughal Empire to seize on Ajmer, and kill the Imperial governor. He coined money in his own name and set up every emblem of sovereignty. Muhammad Shāh collected a large army and



talking and smoking. The village children play games similar to those in urban areas.

#### Festivals.

The principal festivals are the Holi, the Dewāli, the Ganger and the Tejā-jī-kā-melā (the fair of Tejāji) among Hindus, and the Moharram, the two Ids, and Urs Dargāh Khwāja Sāhib among Muhammadans. The Holi and the Dewāli are the two great festivals, held all over the country when the spring and autumn harvests are ripe. The Holi festival is attended with some local peculiarities of an interesting nature. The Oswāls of Ajmer have a procession, which they call *Rāo*; a man dressed as a bridegroom and seated on a cot is carried in procession through the Oswāl quarter. Men and women play on the *Rāo* with long syringes, in which they use water and the red powder (*gulāl*), which is the distinctive feature of the Holi. Women from the tops of houses use their syringes very effectively, while the *Rāo* carries an open umbrella to ward off the deluge. In Beāwar there is a procession of a much more dignified nature, known as *Balshā*, in which a man dressed as a Rāja is carried through the streets, with people dancing and singing and occasionally throwing red powder. After passing through the town, the Rājā is taken to pay his respects to the Assistant Commissioner, Merwāra.

Another peculiarity of the local celebration of the Holi in Merwāra is the game called *abera*, which is held on the first and last days of the festival. A whole village turns out into the jungle, each man armed with two sticks about a yard long, called *pokheri* or *kutka*. The people then form a line and beat for hours and deer, and, as they start up, knock them over with a general discharge of sticks. The village headmen provide opium and tobacco, and the bag is cooked and eaten at the feast which ends the day.

The festivals of Dewāli and Dasahra are the same as in other parts of the country. The Ganger festival, which is celebrated by Mahājans, begins a week after the Holi and lasts for 20 days. It is held in honour of the return of Pārvati, wife of Shīva, to the home of her parents, where she was entertained and worshipped by her female friends. Images of Shīva and Pārvati are paraded through the streets with music, and the places where they are kept are illuminated at night and worshipped. The festival of Tejā-jī is confined to the Jāts. This fair is held about September. The Jāts, both men and women, keep awake the whole of the previous night, and worship the deity by singing songs and bringing offerings of cooked rice, barley and fruit.

The principal Muhammadan festivals of the Moharram and the two Ids are the same as elsewhere. But an exciting spectacle is added by the sword dance of the Indarkotis, the inhabitants of the Indarkot *motalla* of Ajmer city, in which 100 to 150 men, armed with sharp swords, dance and throw their weapons about in wild confusion. The Urs Khwāja Sāhib is a fair held at the Dargāh in the Muhammadan month of *Rajab*, and lasts for six days. Muhammadans came from all parts of the country to worship at the tomb of the saint, Muin-ud-din Chishti, and the yearly number of



pilgrims approaches twenty-five thousand. The proceedings consist for the most part of recitations of Persian poetry of the Sufi School, at an assembly called the *mahfil*. The recitations are kept up until 3 o'clock in the morning, by which time many pilgrims are in the ecstatic devotional state technically known as *hāl*. One peculiar custom of this festival may be mentioned. There are two large cauldrons inside the Dargāh, one twice the size of the other, which are known as the great and little *deg*. Pilgrims to the shrine, according to their ability or generosity, propose to offer a *deg*. The smallest sum for which enough rice, butter, sugar almonds, raisins and spices can be bought to fill the large *deg* is Rs. 1,000. Besides this, the donor has to pay about Rs. 200 in presents to the officials of the shrine, and in offerings at the tomb. The small *deg* costs exactly half the large one.

When the gigantic rice pudding is cooked, it is looted boiling hot. Eight earthen pots of the mixture are first set apart for the foreign pilgrims, and it is the hereditary privilege of the people of Indrakot, and of the menials of the Dargāh, to empty the cauldron of the remainder of its contents. After the recitation of the *Fātiha*, one Indrakotī seizes a large iron ladle, and mounting the platform of the *deg* ladles away vigorously. All the men who take part in this hereditary privilege are swaddled up to the eyes in cloths to avoid the effects of the scalding fluid. When the cauldron is nearly empty all the Indrakotīs tumble in together and scrape it clean. There is no doubt that the custom of "looting the *deg*" is very ancient, though no account of its origin can be given. It is generally counted among the miracles of the saint that no lives have ever been lost on these occasions, though burns are frequent. The cooked rice is bought by Mahājans and others, and most castes will eat it.

Unlike the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, where three names are in general used for the identification of a male, the proper name, father's name, and family name, in Ajmer-Merwāra as in all northern India, the practice is to use one name only. Occasionally it happens that two persons with the same name but of different castes, add their fathers' names for distinctive purposes; but this is rare. Each person has his *zāt* or family name, which in rare instances is derived from the place of his ancestors, but it is not used in addressing him either by speech or by letter.

Every male of the "twice-born" classes has two names (*a*) the *janam-rāsi-nām*, only used at weddings, at death, and when the stars are consulted, and (*b*) the *bolu nām* by which he is generally known. The system of nomenclature is simple, and the names are generally of religious origin, or are given out of affection or fancy. Instances of the former are Har Lāl, Rām Singh, Shiv Charan, and of the latter Sundar Lāl, Gulzāri Lāl, and Pritam Chand. But there is an almost infinite variety of such names. Among the usual suffixes attached to names it may be remarked that Chand, Mal, Bhān, Pāl and Karan are principally used by Jains. On the other hand Datt (given) is exclusively a Brahman suffix.

Names and  
Titles.



declined 12 per cent. In the last two famines active measures of relief have largely reduced the deaths from actual privation, but epidemics of disease and especially the autumn fevers proved excessively fatal. The effects upon the social condition of the survivors have been equally apparent, and it will be long before the previous standard of comfort is attained by the cultivating classes. A tendency towards loss of self-respect and reliance has also been remarked and each succeeding famine finds the poorer classes more ready to clamour for and accept relief from Government. During the famine a loosening of family ties was sometimes evident; children were found showing greater signs of privation than their parents, while child desertion was a deplorably common feature among the wanderers from Native States.

#### Protective Measures.

Protective measures, properly so called, are extremely hard to find in Ajmer-Merwāra. Irrigation can only be perfectly protective where the water supply is beyond being effected by the vicissitudes of rainfall. But the province has no large perennial rivers, and natural springs are rare. Increase of tanks and wells may do something, but most of them are dependent upon the monsoon for their water, and where that fails, remain dry and useless. What can be done, however, in this direction is being effected by loans under the Land Improvement Act of 1883. An attempt is being made to store grass in the forests as a provision against famine, and each villager contributes a head-load yearly. Such measures, however, can be only palliative in the face of severe scarcity. Fortunately the province is now well served by railways, and will shortly be even better. Importation of grain to meet local scarcity is easy, and unless famine is wide-spread throughout India, prices need hardly be affected. When the crops have failed, the further measures for protection of the people are prescribed in the Ajmer-Merwāra Famine Code, now revised and improved according to the teachings of past experience. If the local officials are watchful and energetic they can hardly fail to be successful.

Ordinary private charity in times of famine cannot be much counted upon to supplement Government aid. This is due not so much to deficiency in quantity as to complete want of organization in distribution.

An exception is, perhaps, the institution attached to the Dargāh Khwāja Sāhib at Ajmer, known as the *Langar-khāna*, the only permanent poor-house in the district. Two maunds and six seers of grain with six seers of salt are cooked and distributed to all comers before day-break in the morning, and the same quantity before 5 o'clock in the evening. The average daily attendance is about 900: no enquiry is made as to recipients. The expenses of the morning distribution are chargeable to the income from the Dargāh *jāgīr* villages, while those of the evening meal are met from a *jāgīr* given by the Nizām of Hyderābād. Besides the 1,570 maunds of grain which are thus yearly consumed, 644 maunds are annually distributed to infirm women, widows and other deserving persons at their own houses. During the last famine an extra amount of grain was added at each distribution, both morning and evening. Rs. 1,644 per

Langar-khāna  
of Dargāh  
Khwāja  
Sāhib.

year are spent in fees to *hakims* and doctors for attendance upon the poor sick. The normal cost of the charity is about Rs. 5,000 per annum. It is controlled by two *dāroḡās*, under a manager appointed by the Dargāh committee. They receive their pay from the funds of the Dargāh. The cost of supervision is a somewhat high percentage of the total expenses.

The Indian Charitable Relief Fund, supplemented by local subscriptions and distributed by Government officers, did much to relieve distress during the recent famines.

---



## The Chishtis

THE Chishti order of sufis is essentially an Indian one. Other branches emanating from the town of Chisht in modern Afghanistan did not survive for long in the Perso-Islamic world. Chisht, written as Khisht in the Persian geographical work, the *Hudud al-'Alam*, which was compiled in 372/982, is now a small village known as Khwaja Chisht on the river Hari Rud, some hundred kilometres east of Herat.<sup>1</sup> It was in this region that the Ghurid Sultans of the Shansab dynasty established their rule in the twelfth century. Until the tenth century the region was constantly invaded by the governors of Khurasan<sup>2</sup> and this resulted in the Islamization of the multi-religious population, many of whom had taken refuge there after the Arab conquest of Iran. Previously, the Buddhists had been displaced by Jews, the Jews by Manichaeans, and they in turn by Muslims. After the gradual Islamization of the area, its principal towns, such as Herat, Chisht and Jam, became great centres for sufis from other parts of the Islamic world. By the end of the ninth century these towns were competing with each other for supremacy as the chief sufi centre which supported the greatest number of that movement's followers. Nevertheless, they all remained of equal importance.

Among the sufi migrants to Chisht was Shaikh Abu Ishaq Shami from Syria. The Shaikh traced his spiritual origin from 'Ali and the Prophet Muhammad, and then through Hasan Basri, in the following spiritual genealogy:

Hasan Basri—'Abdu'l-Wahid bin Zaid—  
Fuza'il bin Iyaz—Ibrahim Adham Balkhi—  
Khwaja Sadidu'd-Din Huzayfa al-Mar'ashi—  
Abu Hubayra Basri—Khwaja Mamshad 'Alwi Dinawari—  
Abu Ishaq Shami.<sup>3</sup>

Abu Ishaq returned to Syria and died in 329/940, at Akka, the Acco of

<sup>1</sup>V. Minorsky, tr., *Hudud al-'Alam*, London, 1937, p. 343.

<sup>2</sup>G. Le Strange, tr., *Nuzhat al-Qulub* of Hamdu'llah Mustawfi, London, 1919, p. 152.

<sup>3</sup>K.A. Nizami, ed., *Khairu'l-Majalis*, Aligarh, 1959, p. 8. A.S. Usha, ed., *Futuhu's-Salat* by 'Isami, Madras, 1948, pp. 7-8. Many scholars dispute the authenticity of this genealogical tree.

the Old Testament, leaving Khwaja Abu Ahmad Abdal Chishti as his successor.<sup>1</sup> Possibly Shaikh Abu Ishaq reached Chisht sometime before 260/873-74 as he is said to have prophesied the birth of Khwaja Abu Ahmad Abdal which occurred during the same year.

Although Khwaja Abu Ahmad's father was an eminent citizen in Chisht, he failed to dissuade his son from following the sufi path. Abu Ahmad<sup>2</sup> died in 355/965-66, having appointed his son Abu Muhammad successor, and the latter in turn nominated his sister's son, Khwaja Yusuf, to succeed him.<sup>3</sup> Khwaja 'Abdu'llah Ansari of Herat was extremely friendly with Khwaja Yusuf.<sup>4</sup> After the latter's death in 459/1066-67, his son, Khwaja Maudud Chishti, succeeded him. Khwaja Maudud travelled through Balkh and Bukhara, being trained for four years<sup>5</sup> in various forms of mysticism.

Khwaja Maudud died in 577/1181-82 after having appointed his son, Khwaja Ahmad,<sup>6</sup> successor. However, among Maudud's disciples, Ruknu'd-Din Muhammad, who came from a village called Sanjan, in Khwaf, and Khwaja Hajji Sharif, were also prominent sufis. Khwaja Hajji Sharif appointed Khwaja 'Usman, from Harwan near Nishapur, as his successor.<sup>7</sup>

The deaths of Khwaja Maudud's disciples marked the end of the great spiritual peak in sufism which had occurred in Chisht. Some of their disciples moved elsewhere or lived as wandering dervishes. The rise of the Ghurid Turks in the tenth century, and the founding of the fortress of Firuzkuh on the headwaters of the Hari Rud by a Ghurid king, Qutbu'd-Din Muhammad, deprived Chisht of its former peaceful existence as it was close to the fortress. The region became a fierce battle ground between rival Turkic tribes. Tranquillity returned to the region only after the rise to power of Sultan Ghiyasu'd-Din Muhammad, who ruled as Sultan of Ghur from 1163 to 1203. His brother, Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad, the founder of the Shansabani dynasty in India, governed at Ghazna between 1173 and 1206. The capital of Ghiyasu'd-Din was Firuzkuh. The spoils of conquests had made it affluent in the same manner that two centuries earlier Ghazna, under Sultan Mahmud, had become wealthy. Many prominent poets and scholars settled in Firuzkuh, but the town was not favourably disposed towards the sufi movement. In Chisht itself, Ghiyasu'd-Din Muhammad built a *madrassa* and a mosque, but Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti, one of the greatest sufis of

<sup>1</sup>NU, pp. 322-23.

<sup>2</sup>NU, pp. 323-24.

<sup>3</sup>NU, p. 324.

<sup>4</sup>NU, pp. 325-26.

<sup>5</sup>NU, pp. 326-27.

<sup>6</sup>NU, pp. 330-31.

<sup>7</sup>Some Indian Chishti genealogical trees do not mention Khwaja Ahmad or Ruknu'd-Din, \**Khairu'l-Majalis*, p. 8.



the middle ages, decided to settle in the east in Ajmer, on the borders of the Ghurid empire.

#### *Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din*

Both medieval and modern scholars have showered copious praise on Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti, but no reliable information regarding his early life, before he settled in Ajmer, remains. The only information recorded is the name of the area where he was born, the name of his teacher, and the fact that he had travelled widely. Strangely enough, the voluminous book, *Khairu'l-Majalis*, does not mention Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din in any connection, and the *Fawa'idu'l-Fu'ad* refers to him merely in passing.

The earliest works which relate anecdotes of the early life of Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti and his encounters with the court of Prithviraj at Ajmer are the apocryphal *mal'uzats*. These tend to indicate that within about a hundred and fifty years of his death, the Khwaja had become a legend in India. The *Siyaru'l-Auliya'*, drawing on this literary source and also on family anecdotes, gives the following account of the Khwaja.

Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Sijzi was the embodiment of sufi virtues and famous for his outstanding spiritual achievements, which included the performance of miracles. He was the *khalifa* of Khwaja 'Usman Harwani, an eminent Chishti sufi who lived in Nishapur. Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din related that after he had entered the service of Khwaja 'Usman Harwani and been enrolled as his disciple, he then served his master for twenty years without a moment's rest. Finding him steadfast both in service and the practice of spiritual exercises, the Khwaja passed on to his disciple divine blessings which he himself had acquired.

The Sultani'l-Masha'ikh (Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya') believed that when Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din reached Ajmer, India was ruled by Pithaura Ra'i (Prithviraj) and his capital was Ajmer. Pithaura and his high officials resented the Shaikh's presence in their city, but the latter's eminence and his apparent power to perform miracles, prompted them to refrain from taking action against him. A disciple of the Khwaja's was in the service of Pithaura Ra'i. After the disciple began to receive hostile treatment from the Ra'i, the Khwaja sent a message to Pithaura in favour of the Muslim. Pithaura refused to accept the recommendation, thus indicating his resentment of the Khwaja's alleged claims to understand the secrets of the Unseen. When Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din (the spiritual King of Islam) heard of this reply he prophesied: 'We have seized Pithaura alive and handed him over to the army of Islam.' About the same time, Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad's army arrived from Ghazna, attacked the forces of Pithaura and defeated them. Pithaura was taken alive, and thus the Khwaja's prophesy was fulfilled.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Amir Khwurd, *Siyaru'l-Auliya'*, Delhi, 1885, pp. 45-7.

The *Akhbaru'l-Akhyar* also contains the same account,<sup>1</sup> and a large number of medieval and modern scholars confirm the validity of the story and recount fantastic miracles performed by the Khwaja at Ajmer.<sup>2</sup> A modern author states rather naively:

<sup>1</sup>AA, pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup>Some of the anecdotes from the *Jawahir-i Faridi* written in 1623 are as follows. Twelve years before the Khwaja's arrival at Ajmer, Pithaura's mother, an expert in astronomy and magic, had prophesied the Khwaja's arrival. She drew pictures of the Khwaja and the Ra'i distributed them to his officers to prevent his entry into the kingdom. Every foreigner's face was compared with that picture. When the Khwaja reached Delhi from Lahore, the people of Delhi would run away at the sight of Muslims. The Khwaja stayed in Delhi with his forty disciples only because of his spiritual power. The *Fawa'idu'l-Fu'ad* says that seven hundred people, besides Hamidu'd-Din Dihlawi, embraced Islam, although this story is not recorded in the *Fawa'idu'l-Fu'ad*. From there the Khwaja went to Ajmer. At Samana, Pithaura's officials recognized the Khwaja from his picture and, requested that he stay in the palace. But the Prophet Muhammad had warned the Khwaja, during meditation, against the treachery of officials so he left for Ajmer. Reaching there he decided to sit under a tree, but the camel keepers ordered him away as the area belonged to the Ra'i. The Khwaja and his followers moved to a place near the Anasagar Lake. His servants killed a cow and cooked kebabs for him. Some members of the Khwaja's party went to Anasagar and the others to Pansela Lake for ablutions. There were one thousand temples on the two lakes. The Brahmans stopped the ablutions and the party complained to the Khwaja. He sent his servant to bring water for his ewer. As soon as the ewer touched the Pansela Lake, all the lakes, tanks and wells around became dry. The Khwaja went to the Anasagar Lake temple and asked the name of the idol. He was told it was called Sawi Deva. The Khwaja asked whether the idol had talked to them. On receiving a negative reply he made the idol recite *kalima* and converted it into a human being, naming it Sa'di. This caused a sensation in the town. Prithviraj ordered his prime minister Jaipal who was also a magician, to avert the evil influence of the Khwaja. Jaipal proceeded to fight the Khwaja with 700 magical dragons, 1,500 magical discs and 700 disciples. The Khwaja drew a circle bringing his party within it under his protection, and succeeded in killing all the dragons and disciples. Pithaura and Jaipal begged the Khwaja's forgiveness. The Khwaja's prayers restored water to the lakes, tanks and wells. A large number of people accepted Islam. Jaipal decided to compete with the Khwaja in the performance of miracles. Sitting on his deer skin he flew to the heavens. The Khwaja ordered his slippers to bring Jaipal back to earth, which they did. On Jaipal's request to show him some miracles, the Khwaja's spirit flew to the highest heaven, where Jaipal also joined him. Getting nearer to the divine presence, on the Khwaja's orders Jaipal accepted Islam in order to gain the full benefit of that spiritual bliss. When they returned the Khwaja and his party stayed in the town. Pithaura refused to accept Islam and the Khwaja prophesied he would be handed over to the Islamic army. 'Ali Asghar Chishti, *Jawahir-i Faridi*, Lahore, 1884, pp. 155-60. Abu'l-Fazl relates: 'Before Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din Sam came from Ghazni to India, his *pir* permitted him to leave for India. He settled at Ajmer, where Ra'i Pithaura, the ruler of India, resided'. *Akbar Nama*, II, Calcutta, 1879, p. 154. In the *A'in-i Akbari* he writes: 'In the same year that Mu'izzu'd-Din Sam seized Delhi, he (the Khwaja) arrived at that city and, in order to lead a life of seclusion, he withdrew to Ajmer.' *A'in*, III, p. 168. Both latter accounts make the Khwaja's encounter with Prithviraj an impossibility. See also *Gulshan-i Ibrahimi*, Lucknow, nd, *maqala*, XII, p. 377. Muhammad Sadiq Dihlawi says that in the year in which Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din defeated Raja Pithaura and seized Delhi the Khwaja reached Lahore from Ghazni and from there left for the capital. *Kalimatu's-Sadiqin*, Mashhad MS., 7879, p. 23. So Firishhta's account that the Khwaja reached Ajmer after its conquest concurs with Abul-Fazl's.



'Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din laid the foundations of the Chishti order in India and worked out its principles at Ajmer, the seat of Chauhan power. No authentic details are available about the way he worked in the midst of a population which looked askance at every foreigner. It appears that his stay was disliked by Prithvi Raj and the caste Hindus but the common people flocked to him in large numbers'.<sup>1</sup>

A very detailed, interesting account of Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din is given in the *Siyaru'l-'Arifin*, whose author, Jamali, collected legends from both India and Iran. As pointed out earlier, the anecdotes which his hosts in Irani khanqahs related are not necessarily correct, but they are set in the perspective of contemporary mystical traditions, and Jamali cannot be censured for accepting them. Below is a summary of Jamali's account.

<sup>1</sup>K.A. Nizami, *ET* (new), II, p. 50. In an earlier work he writes:

'Ajmer was not merely the seat of Chauhan power; it was religious centre also where thousands of pilgrims assembled from far and near. Shaikh Mu'inu'd-Din's determination to work out the principles of Islamic mysticism at a place of such political and religious significance shows great self-confidence. Unfortunately, no details are available about the way he worked in the midst of a population which looked askance at every foreigner. It cannot, however, be denied that his stay in Ajmer must have been a serious trial for the principles of the Chishti *silsilah*. On his success or failure in Ajmer depended the future of the Muslim mystic movement in Hindustan. Some of his sayings, as recorded by Mir Khurd, supply the quintessence of his religious and social ideology and reveal him as a man of wide sympathies, catholic views and deep humanism.' *Some aspects of religion and politics in India during the thirteenth century*, Aligarh, 1961, p. 184. It is obvious that in his story of Hindu mistrust of Islam, Nizami borrows from al-Biruni, who relates only the situation created by the plundering raids of Mahmud of Ghazna. E.C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, I, 1964, 22-3. Although Nizami admits that authentic details were unavailable, he did not hesitate to claim that Prithviraj and the high caste Hindus disliked the Khwaja nevertheless the common people flocked to him. This only indicates the thinking of modern Muslims who seek the support of a theory that the caste system was responsible for the Hindu defeat in India and that by it Islam rescued the low caste Hindus from degradation. It is curious that Nizami writes a section on Muslim settlements before the Ghurid conquest in his book, mostly on the basis of legends contained in the *District Gazetteers*, pp. 76-9, and neglects to ask the question 'How could Hindus amongst whom Muslims lived look "askance at every foreigner?"'

A more quaint appraisal of the Khwaja's work by another modern Muslim scholar is as follows:

'From Lahore Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti went to Delhi and then to Ajmer, which was ruled by Ra'i Prithivi Raj. One cannot think without admiration of this man, almost alone, living among people who considered the least contact with a Muslim as defilement. Sometimes he was refused water to drink. In the torrid climate of Rajputana this was the hardest punishment one can imagine. The high-caste priests demanded of the Raja of Ajmer that he should banish the Khwaja, whose influence had begun to make itself felt among the lower classes of the place. The Raja sent the order of expulsion through Ram Deo, head of the priests of Ajmer. Legend relates that in approaching the Khwaja, Ram Deo was so much impressed by his personality that he became, from that moment, a faithful disciple of the Khwaja and spent the rest of his life in the service of the helpless and downtrodden. After the death of the Khwaja in 1234, his numerous disciples continued his apostolic work.' Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of medieval Indian culture*, Bombay, 1957, p. 37.

The Khwaja was born<sup>1</sup> in Sijistan (Sistan) and brought up in Khurasan. His father, Khwaja Ghiyasu'd-Din Hasan, was a most pious and God-fearing man. When he died the Khwaja was fifteen years old. The Khwaja lived on the earnings from a garden and a water-mill, inherited from his father. One day, while working in the garden, a *majzub* (ecstatic) named Ibrahim Qunduzi passed by. The Khwaja, kissing his hands, offered the *majzub* a seat under the trees, while placing before him a bunch of grapes. The *majzub* took out some sesame seeds, chewed them, and put them in Mu'inu'd-Din's mouth. This aroused in him a great spiritual illumination. After a few days Mu'inu'd-Din sold his possessions and distributed the money amongst the local dervishes.<sup>2</sup> For many years he lived in Samarqand and Bukhara, learning the *Qur'an* and studying theology. From there he travelled to Harwan, a suburb of Nishapur, where under Shaikh 'Usman Harwani, he practised rigorous austerities for about two and a half years.<sup>3</sup> The Shaikh was highly

<sup>1</sup>As he died on 6 Rajab 633 Hijri at the age of ninety-seven, he must have been born in 536/1141-42. Abu'l Fazl says he was born in 537/1142-43. *A'in-i Akbari*, III, Lucknow, 1893, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Nizami believes that the devastation of the Qara Khita and Ghuzz Turks drove 'the Shaikh's mind inwards and he realized the futility of hankering after worldly glory or looking after worldly goods.' *Some aspects of religion and politics in India*, p. 183. The Ghuzz invasion of Sistan began in 564/1168-69, see *Tarikh-i Sistan*, Tehran, nd, p. 391; they were therefore not responsible for the Khwaja's migration from Sistan. After 523/1129 Sistan was repeatedly subjected to Isma'ili incursions, *Tarikh-i Sistan*, pp. 391-92. It would seem that neither of the two raids were the cause of the Khwaja's migration. He was prompted to devote his life to education and to spiritual perfection through his introspective temperament, and the visit of Khwaja Ibrahim would have been only a minor incentive. As he is believed to have met Shaikh 'Abdu'l Qadir Jilani, who died in 1166, he would have left Sistan shortly after his father's death.

Amir Khwurd's statement that he served as Shaikh 'Usman's apprentice for twenty years does not correlate with the Khwaja's visit to Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Qadir. It is, however, not unlikely that the Khwaja met his teacher again in Khurasan and Central Asia and stayed with him for a few more years. Jamali, who earlier stated that the Khwaja was appointed the *khalifa* of Shaikh 'Usman, relates, in a different context, that Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din obtained his *khirqah* from Shaikh 'Usman at the age of fifty-two, Jamali, p. 7. This would imply that he received his *khirqah* in 588/1192-93 in the Ghazna region, and later left for India after having first obtained permission from Shaikh 'Usman. This would also make the Khwaja's visit to India before the Ghurid conquest impossible. Jamali relates that Shaikh 'Usman so dearly loved Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din that he himself began a journey walking behind his disciple. After travelling some distance he reached a Zoroastrian fire temple. He sat under a tree and asked his servant to bring him some fire. The priests would not allow him to take it. The Shaikh went himself to the fire worshippers. Their leader was seated on a throne with his seven-year old son on his lap. Shaikh 'Usman asked if their hands were put into the fire would they be burnt. At the receipt of a negative reply the Shaikh snatched the boy and jumped into the fire with him. After some hours they both emerged unharmed. The head priest embraced Islam and the fire temple was demolished. Shaikh 'Usman stayed there for about two and a half years. Jamali, pp. 8-9. In the *Khairu'l-Majalis* the Zoroastrian priests are replaced by Hindus and the conversation is reported in the Hindawi, *KM*, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>Jamali, p. 5.



impressed and gave Mu'inu'd-Din a *khirqah*, appointing him his *khalifa*.<sup>1</sup> The Khwaja set off for Baghdad and, reaching Sanjan, met Shaikh Najmu'd-Din Kubra.<sup>2</sup> He lived with the Shaikh for a short period, then moved to Jil where he stayed with Shaikh 'Abdu'l-Qadir Jilani for eight weeks. The Khwaja's next long stay was at Baghdad, a week's journey from Jil. There he kept company with such sufi saints as Shaikh Ziya'u'd-Din,<sup>3</sup> the uncle and teacher of Shaikh Shihabu'd-Din Suhrawardi, Shaikh Auhadu'd-Din Kirmani<sup>4</sup> and Shaikh Shihabu'd-Din<sup>5</sup> himself.

From Baghdad the Khwaja returned to Hamadan where he met Shaikh Yusuf Hamadani. From there he went to Tabriz and saw Shaikh Abu Sa'id Tabrizi, the teacher of Shaikh Jalalu'd-Din Tabrizi. Then he went to Mayhana and Kharqan and visited the tombs of Shaikh Abu Sa'id bin Abi'l Khair and Shaikh Abu'l-Hasan Kharqani. The Khwaja remained for about two years in that region, and then travelled to Astarabad where he visited the tomb of Shaikh Nasiru'd-Din Astarabadi. From Astarabad, Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din went to Herat where he lived near the tomb of Khwaja 'Abdu'llah Ansari. Refusing to remain in one place, the Khwaja, accompanied by a servant, wandered throughout the area surrounding Herat. His fame attracted a large number of people. He disapproved of such popularity and fame, and left for Sabzwar,<sup>6</sup> where he converted the local Shi'i governor, Muhammad Yadgar, to Sunni orthodoxy.<sup>7</sup> After some time, accompanied by Muhammad

<sup>1</sup>Jamali, pp. 6-7. <sup>2</sup>The celebrated founder of the Kubrawiyya order, see Chapter One.

<sup>3</sup>Shaikh Ziya'u'd-Din Abu'n-Najib as Suhrawardi, see Chapter One.

<sup>4</sup>Ziya'u'd-Din died in 563/1168. Jamali says that this was the beginning of Shaikh Auhadu'd-Din Kirmani's mystic career, but as he died in 697/1298, the meeting would have been impossible.

<sup>5</sup>Shaikh Shihabu'd-Din was only three years younger than his distinguished visitor, see pp. 86-8, *supra*. Jamali's statement is confusing. It relates that he visited the three saints but according to Firishta, the Khwaja went to Isfahan from Tabriz and then went to Kharqan and Astarabad. *Gulshan-i Ibrahimi*, p. 376. A visit to Isfahan is not unlikely but it might have taken place during his journey from Baghdad to Tabriz, via Isfahan and Hamadan.

<sup>6</sup>This means that he returned from modern Afghanistan to the Khurasan region.

<sup>7</sup>Sabzwar was notorious for Shi'i sympathies. Mulla 'Abdu'l-Qadir Bada'uni gives an interesting anecdote concerning Sabzwar.

"This state of affairs reminds us of the story that a certain king who was a bigoted Sunni who led an army against Sabzwar, which is a hotbed of schism, its inhabitants being all fanatics. The chief men of the place came out and made their representations to the king, saying, "We are Musalmans; what fault have we committed that you should have brought an army against us?" The king replied, "Your fault is your zeal for schism." They replied, "This is a false accusation that has been brought against us." The king said, "Produce from your city in support of your allegation a man of the name of Abu Bakr, and I will swerve from my intention of slaying you and of plundering your city." After much search and with much difficulty they produced before the king an unknown pauper, saying, "This man is called by the name which you desired." After observing the man's old garments and despicable condition, the king asked, "Had you nobody better than this to produce before me?" They said, "O king, ceremony apart, the climate of Sabzwar cherishes an Abu Bakr no better than this." And the *Maulavi-yi-Ma'nawi* (May his tomb be hallowed) refers to this story in his *Masnawi* as follows:

Yadgar, the Khwaja reached Hisar Shadman.<sup>1</sup> Leaving Yadgar at Hisar Shadman, the Khwaja travelled to Balkh. There he miraculously converted Maulana Ziya'u'd-Din Hakim to sufism. The Maulana was a philosopher and considered sufism the delirious ravings of lunatics. He ran a seminary and a garden in the vicinity of Balkh. The Khwaja went to the Maulana's seminary, so the story goes, where he killed a crane and asked his servants to make a fire to roast it. The cooked bird was brought to the Khwaja who offered a leg to the Maulana and began to eat another himself. As soon as the Maulana had eaten the leg he underwent a deep spiritual experience, after which all philosophical learnings were obliterated from his mind. He threw his philosophy books into the river and also abandoned his property. The Maulana's students became followers of Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din. The Khwaja appointed Ziya'u'd-Din his deputy in Balkh and left for Ghazna.

In Ghazna, Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din met Shamsu'l-'Arifin 'Abdu'l-Wahid, the preceptor of Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Abu'l-Muy'id.<sup>2</sup> From there he reached Lahore and stayed near the tombs of Shaikh Husain Zanjani and Shaikh 'Ali Hujwiri.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, Mu'izzu'd-Din Muhammad bin Sam had conquered Delhi and, departing for Ghazni, left his favourite slave, Qutbu'd-Din Aibak, as head of his forces in the occupied city. On route to Ghazni, Sultan Mu'izzu'd-Din died. The Khwaja left Lahore for Delhi where he

"This unstable world is a Sabzwar to us,

We, like Bu-Bakrs, live in it mean and despised."

W. Haig, *Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh*, III, Calcutta, 1925, pp. 117-18. Jamali says that Muhammad Yadgar was a scoundrel and a Shi'i. He abused the Prophet's companions and was cruel to people who were even called Abu Bakr, 'Umar or 'Usman. He built a beautiful garden near the town where he indulged in debauchery. One day the Khwaja rested in the garden. Yadgar Muhammad came to the garden and the sight of the Khwaja frightened both him and the people with him. Yadgar placed his head at the Khwaja's feet and his followers fell prostrate before him. Repenting of his sins, Yadgar became a Sunni. The Khwaja initiated him into his discipleship. On his *pir's* advice, Yadgar freed his slaves and sought the forgiveness of those he had previously victimized. Jamali's account of Yadgar's conversation is a stock-in-trade sufi story, similar to later ones involving the Khwaja's conversion of Hindus.

<sup>1</sup>Before the Arab conquest the place was called Shuman. From the ninth century it was known as Hisar Shuman and in the 14th century it came to be called Hisar Shadman. After the Russian conquest of Bukhara, in 1868, Hisar came to be called Gissar.

<sup>2</sup>Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Abu'l-Muy'id was a contemporary of the Khwaja and migrated to Delhi. He was famous for his masterly religious sermons. Shamsu'l-'Arifin was said to have been his grandfather. Among the descendants of Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din, Shaikh Jamal became very famous at Kol (Aligarh), where he also died. *AA*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Jamali says that the same year the Khwaja reached Lahore, Shaikh 'Ali Hujwiri died but that Shaikh Husain Zanjani was still alive. According to *Fawa'idu'l-Fu'ad*, Hujwiri reached Lahore in the year Shaikh Husain Zanjani died. According to Abu'l-Fazl, Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din lived with Shaikh Husaini Zanjani. *Ain*, III, p. 168. *Fawa'idu'l-Fu'ad's* statement appears to be correct and it is likely that the Khwaja stayed near the two tombs. Firishta simply mentions that after leaving Ghazna, the Khwaja stayed at Lahore.



remained for some months. During this period he stayed at a place which is now marked by the grave of Shaikh Rashid Makki. Traces still remain of the arch of the Khwaja's mosque.

Once again crowds of followers and devotees gathered around the Khwaja and he was forced to leave Delhi for Ajmer. Although the region had already been 'glorified' (conquered) by Islam, the local tribesmen (*kafirs*) indulged in continual raiding near Ajmer. Qutbu'd-Din had appointed Saiyid Husain Mashhadi as the *darogha* (military governor) of the area. The Saiyid served the Khwaja with great devotion. He was killed by tribesmen and buried in Tulambli. Many prominent *kafirs* of the region accepted Islam because of the *barakat* (blessings) of the *asar* (relics, monuments or traditions) of that (embodiment of) sufism, meaning the Khwaja, who contained 'the essence of the divine secrets.' Even those who refused to accept Islam would send large offerings and *futuh* to what Jamali called *Hazrat Ishan* (His Holiness Court, here meaning tomb). Even today, the *kafirs* of that area are devoted to the Khwaja's tomb in the same manner as their ancestors had been. They visit it each year and 'prostrate themselves on the dust of the tomb of that eminent one and the full moon of the heavens of his sainthood.'<sup>1</sup> At the same time, large amounts of money are paid to those who tend the shrine.<sup>2</sup>

Despite some discrepancies noted in footnotes, and his acceptance of stock-in-trade anecdotes of sufism, Jamali's research on the Khwaja's career appears, to a large degree, to be factual. He was convinced that the Khwaja left for Delhi after Mu'izzu'd-Din's death on 15 March 1206, and he seems to have reached Ajmer towards the end of the same year. The inconsistencies between the Chishti legend and Jamali's study are irreconcilable, but the latter's account is supported to a greater degree by political events and the Khwaja's own philosophy of what entailed a saintly life. Politically, Mu'izzu'd-Din's victory in 1192 over Prithviraj at the battle of Tarain failed to make the Turks masters of the whole of northern India. Occupying troops stationed at Indraprastha near Delhi under Qutbu'd-Din Aibak were forced to make several invasions in the Doab and the regions around Ajmer to consolidate their power. It was only around 1206 that continual Turkic raids finally liquidated Rajput resistance. Moreover after Mu'izzu'd-Din's death, Lahore had become the capital, and this would naturally have impelled Khwaja Mu'izzu'd-Din to seek another home; he left both Lahore and Delhi and ultimately chose Ajmer, on the borders of the Delhi Sultanate, for this purpose.

<sup>1</sup>Jamali's account is unclear. However, it does not refer to conversions made by the Khwaja himself, but to the process of conversions beside the Khwaja's shrine which was visited by the Hindus of the region. Firishta, however, says that a number of *kafirs* embraced Islam because of the Khwaja's spiritual blessings. *Gulshan-i Ibrahimi*, p. 377. According to Abu'l-Fazl the Khwaja: 'lit a large number of (spiritual) lamps and crowds of people benefited from his intuitive soul.' *Ain*, III, 168. Abu'l-Fazl's statement does not necessarily imply conversion. It would seem that the beneficiaries were the Muslims.

<sup>2</sup>Jamali, *Siyaru'l-'Arifin*, Delhi, 1893, pp. 5-13.

By so doing, he followed the tradition of the founders of the Chishti *silsila*, who had chosen for their activities remote Chisht, rather than other great centres of political power either in Iran or Central Asia.

Jamali's evidence is substantiated by the seventeenth century work, *Gulzar-i Abrar*, whose author had at his disposal a multitude of sources. It adds that Saiyid Mashhadi exhibited great courage in the conversion of some *zimmis*<sup>1</sup> to Islam, and by helping to make others subservient to Muslim rule.<sup>2</sup>

It would appear that the Khwaja lived in Ajmer fort and his simple, ascetic life was an inspiration to both the Turkic *ghazis*, who swelled the Islamic forces through a lust for plunder, and to the Hindus who were forcibly converted to Islam. His style of living tended to remind both conqueror and vanquished of the social ethics of Islam, as interpreted by sufis, which attached no importance to material power and wealth, stressing only piety, simplicity and devotion to God.

A story about the Khwaja during his period at Ajmer involved a dervish who visited him, and asked what was expected of a true ascetic. The Khwaja replied that according to the *Shari'a* one who fully obeyed the commandments of God and abstained from what He had forbidden had, in fact, renounced the world. But the *Tariqa* prescribed nine conditions each of which had to be followed, otherwise one could not be called a real dervish. Upon being requested to specify these conditions, the Khwaja asked his disciple, Hamidu'd-Din Nagauri, to both explain and write them down so that such rules could be made known to a wider section of Muslims. Shaikh Hamidu'd-Din described the ascetic path as follows:

1. One should not earn money.
2. One should not borrow money from anyone.
3. One should not reveal to anyone nor seek help from anyone if one has eaten nothing, even for seven days.
4. If one gains plenty of food, money, grain or clothing, one should not keep anything until the following day.
5. One should not curse anyone; if anyone is very hurt, one should pray to God to guide one's enemy towards the right path.
6. If one performs a virtuous deed, one should consider that the source of the virtue is due either to one's *pir's* kindness, to the intercession

<sup>1</sup>*Ahl al-Zimma*, a non-Muslim subject of a Muslim state, such as Jews and Christians who paid the poll-tax and were regarded as protected subjects. Later Zoroastrians were also given the status of *zimmis*. Idolaters, however, were not regarded as *zimmis*. On the analogy that the idol worshippers of Arabia were not given the status of *zimmis*, many jurists also refused to regard Hindus or Buddhists as *zimmis*. From the time of the earliest conquest of the Arabs by Muhammad bin Qasim in 711-13, Hindus and Buddhists, however, have been recognized as *zimmis*.

<sup>2</sup>Ghausi Shattari, *Gulzar-i Abrar*, Manchester manuscript, f. 11a.



- of the Prophet Muhammad on one's behalf, or to divine mercy.
7. If one performs an evil deed one should consider one's evil self responsible for the action, and try to protect oneself from such deeds. Fearing God, one should be careful to avoid actions which may involve him again in evil.
  8. Having fulfilled all the above conditions, one should regularly fast during the day and spend the night in prayer.
  9. One should remain quiet, and speak only when it is imperative to do so. The *Shari'a* makes it unlawful both to talk incessantly and keep totally silent. One should utter only such words as those which please God.<sup>1</sup>

These lofty principles were the sole guide to the Khwaja's mystic path. His sufi views were based on the statements of Abu Sa'id bin Abi'l Khair, Khwaja 'Abdullah Ansari and 'Ainu'l-Quzat Hamadani, which involved a belief in the concept of an ecstatic love for God. This, according to the Khwaja, did not allow a differentiation between the lover, the beloved and love itself. The distinguishing mark of one who had recognized God was his flight from crowds of people (*khalq*). The *hajjis* walked around the Ka'ba, but the *'arifs* (spiritualists) circumambulated the heart. The most superior kind of worship was to assist the helpless and to feed the hungry. All those possessing the following three virtues were friends of God: munificence like an ocean, kindness like the sunshine and humility like the earth.<sup>2</sup>

After finally settling at Ajmer, Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din, who until then had been celibate, took two wives. According to tradition he decided to marry in order to imitate all the Prophet's practices. The *Sururu's-Sudur* states he was then ninety,<sup>3</sup> but this would appear to be incorrect. A few years after his arrival at Ajmer, he married the daughter of Saiyid Wajihu'd-Din, a brother of Saiyid Husain Mashhadi. Ghausi Shattari's statement that the Khwaja and his wife lived together for twenty-seven years<sup>4</sup> would seem to be reinforced by circumstantial evidence. The wedding seems to have taken place in 606/1209-10. The Khwaja's second wife was a daughter of a local Hindu chieftain who had been seized in war.<sup>5</sup> Both are said to have borne the Khwaja children.<sup>6</sup>

During his period spent in Ajmer, the Khwaja twice visited Delhi.

<sup>1</sup>*Sururu's-Sudur*, Habibganj collection, Aligarh University manuscript, pp. 51-2.

<sup>2</sup>*SA*, pp. 46-7.

<sup>3</sup>*Sururu's-Sudur*, p. 227.

<sup>4</sup>*Gulzar-i Abrar*, f. 15a.

<sup>5</sup>*AA*, p. 114.

<sup>6</sup>The Khwaja's three sons were called Shaikh Abu Sa'id, Shaikh Fakhru'd-Din and Shaikh Husamu'd-Din. The first was the son of the daughter of Mashhadi. According to some authorities the mother of Shaikh Fakhru'd-Din and Husamu'd-Din was the Raja's daughter, but other people believed that Mashhadi's daughter was their mother. *AA*, p. 114.

According to the *Siyaru'l-Auliya'*, he had an *ihya'*<sup>1</sup> village near Ajmer. The *muqta'*<sup>2</sup> of Ajmer urged him to obtain a royal *farman*<sup>3</sup> for the land. On the insistence of his son, the Khwaja went to Delhi to obtain a *farman* and stayed with Khwaja Qutbu'd-Din Bakhtiyar, who requested his master to stay in his house while he went to Sultan Iltutmish, who was well disposed to sufis. Despite the Sultan's earlier requests, Qutbu'd-Din had never previously visited him and this unexpected call naturally elated him. He immediately granted the *farman*.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly this anecdote is apocryphal. Firstly, no *muqta'* would dare to harass the Khwaja to gain a *farman* for wasteland. Secondly, the Khwaja could have sent a messenger to Qutbu'd-Din Bakhtiyar and gained a *farman* without personally going to Delhi. In fact a large number of the Khwaja's friends from the eastern Islamic world had migrated to Delhi and Khwaja Qutbu'd-Din Bakhtiyar had also settled there. The Khwaja made his first visit to the Sultan's capital sometime after 1221. It appears that Shaikhul-Islam Najmu'd-Din Sughra, who will be referred to later in greater detail, had joined with other sufis in inviting the Khwaja to Delhi.<sup>5</sup> The latter made a further trip there apparently in order to be personally acquainted with the struggle between the 'ulama' and the Chishtis and the general crisis brewing in the life of sufis in Delhi.

### Ajmer

On 6 Rajab 633/16 March 1236, Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din died in Ajmer at the old age of ninety-seven.<sup>6</sup> His earthly remains were buried at the place where he had spent most of his life. The original grave was of bricks, later a stone cenotaph was built over it, leaving the brick construction intact. Khwaja Husain Nagauri built a tomb over the grave.<sup>7</sup> A khanqah on the tomb site was built by the rulers of Mandu, probably

<sup>1</sup>In Muslim legal literature *Ihya'* means 'bringing to life' and refers to unclaimed land lying fallow in distant and unpopulated areas. *Ihya'* becomes the property of anyone who cultivates it. According to *Hanafi* law, the previous authorization from the *Imam* is essential. At the beginning of Turkic rule in India, land was in abundance and the cultivators of waste lands were recognized as *de facto* owners and no advance authorization was apparently demanded.

<sup>2</sup>The chief officer of an *Iqta'* or revenue grant made to military chiefs in order to consolidate the power of the government, collect the revenue and maintain an army for military and administrative purposes.

<sup>3</sup>A royal command or authorization, an edict.

<sup>4</sup>*SA*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup>*Sururu's-Sudur*, pp. 15-6.

<sup>6</sup>*AA*, p. 23; *A'in*, III, p. 168. The age is calculated according to the lunar Hijri calendar. Biographical notes on the Khwaja are given in the following works: *SA*, pp. 45-8. Muhammad Bihamad Khani, *Tarikh-i Muhammad*, British Museum Rieu, I, 841, f. 140b; *AA*, pp. 22-5, Jamali, pp. 6-16; *A'in*, p. 168; *Gulzar-i Abrar*, f. 15a; *Gulshan-i Ibrahimi*, pp. 375-77; 'Abdu'r Rahman Chishti, *Mir'atu'l-Asrar*; ff. 221a-31a; Ghulam Mu'inu'd Din, *Ma'arifu'l-Wilayat*, Panjab University manuscript, ff. 2a-12b.

<sup>7</sup>*AA*, p. 182.



by Mahmud Khalji (1436–69). A gateway known as Buland Darwaza (High Gateway) seems to have been constructed near the tomb by Mahmud Khalji in 1455. The Malwa Sultans also built another mosque in the tomb complex, which was later extended by Jahangir and Aurangzeb.

Akbar's desire to make a pilgrimage to the Khwaja's shrine occurred after hearing the songs of some minstrels at Midhakur, near Agra, glorifying the Khwaja.<sup>1</sup> He commenced his journey on 14 January 1562. A number of Akbar's humanitarian reforms date from that time. His marriage to the daughter of Raja Bihara Mal, and the birth of the crown prince, Salim, which was attributed to the spiritual intervention of the famous Chishti saint, Shaikh Salim of Sikri,<sup>2</sup> further increased the Emperor's devotion to the Khwaja. Akbar's earlier visit to Ajmer had been as a devotee of the Khwaja. Later the location of Ajmer in the heart of the Rajput states and on the route to Gujarat, which Akbar was to later conquer, gave Ajmer a new political significance. After his Chitor conquest, Akbar made a pilgrimage to Ajmer on 6 March 1568. On this occasion he presented the Khwaja's khanqah with a huge cauldron. Wealth from the offerings of Akbar and his entourage resulted in a dispute for it amongst the Khwaja's descendants. In February 1570, Akbar reached Ajmer by foot from Agra to offer thanks for the birth of Prince Salim on 30 August 1569. The dispute over alleged family successors of the Khwaja between Shaikh Husain, who claimed to be a descendant, and his rivals, was placed before the Emperor for judgement. The Shaikh's opponents alleged that the Khwaja had left no descendants and that the claims of Shaikh Husain were false. The descendants of Shaikh Salim and some qazis supported Shaikh Husain's rivals. After a laborious investigation, Akbar ruled against the Shaikh, and transferred the administration of the shrine to Shaikh Muhammad Bukhari, a trusted officer and a member of a distinguished family of holy men. It would appear that Shaikh Muhammad greatly improved the shrine's management while attempting to provide better conditions for pilgrims.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, he looked after the erection of mosques and khanqahs in the territory. The great mosque of Ajmer was built under his supervision.

Early in 1614, Akbar's successor, Jahangir, stayed in Ajmer and presented a smaller cauldron than Akbar's, to the shrine. Food for the poor was cooked and 5,000 assembled people were fed from the cauldron.<sup>4</sup> The two survive, but the gold enclosure around the cenotaph, donated by Jahangir, has been replaced by a silver one. Shah-Jahan constructed

<sup>1</sup>Abu'l Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, II, Calcutta, 1879, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup>cf. S.A.A. Rizvi and V.J.A. Flynn, *Fathpur-Sikri*, Bombay, 1975, see Chapter One.

<sup>3</sup>Abdu'l-Qadir Bada'uni, *Muntakhabu't-Tawarikh*, III, p. 87. For details of earlier disputes see Chapter Four, also S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual history of Akbar's reign*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 182–83.

<sup>4</sup>Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, Ghazipur and Aligarh, 1863–64, p. 125.

a mosque of white marble in the tomb complex and added a gateway.

Both Jahangir and Shah Jahan distributed generous gifts to all connected with the Khwaja's tomb. A story associated with Aurangzeb's first visit to the mosque is as follows. Because the Emperor's officers had stopped the musicians from playing, they refused to accept the customary gift. On a subsequent visit, the Emperor prevented his officers from interfering with the playing of music performed in memory of the Khwaja. The anecdote relates that the Emperor was deeply moved by it and paid the musicians double the normal gift.<sup>1</sup>

### Nagaur

In close contact with Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din Chishti during his lifetime was his young disciple, Shaikh Hamidu'd-Din. The latter's real name was Muhammad. His father, Ahmad, migrated from Lahore to Delhi where the Shaikh was born after its conquest in 1192. The story that in his youth he was extremely handsome and led a gay life before becoming the Khwaja's disciple is apocryphal. His early teachers were Maulana Shamsu'd-Din Halwa'i and Shaikh Muhammad Juwaiyni. Hamidu'd-Din received an excellent education, both in Arabic and Persian and had a good command of the Hindawi dialect of Rajasthan. Both his mother and wife were virtuous women, and their influence on the Shaikh's life was very deep. He became the Khwaja's disciple at Ajmer and accompanied him on his first visit to Delhi. During this visit he amazed his audience, which was far from uneducated, by telling them that the greatest contemporary Shaikh was *jital* (copper coin), and that he who possessed *jital* in abundance was marked as a Shaikh.<sup>2</sup> This analogy implied that piety was of little concern to anyone for people were only attracted to worldly riches.

Shaikh Hamidu'd-Din led a withdrawn, ascetic life. According to tradition, on one occasion Khwaja Mu'inu'd-Din asked his companions to request anything of God and it would be granted. Some asked for riches, others begged for a glorious eternity, but the Shaikh replied that he desired nothing as he had already surrendered himself to the divine will. Such an annihilation of self-desire resulted in the Khwaja bestowing on his disciple the title *Sultanu't-Tarikin*<sup>3</sup> (King of Hermits). This indeed benefited the saint who was to firmly place the sufi movement and the Chishti order in its new Indian environment.

Although Chishti saints were permitted to receive cash gifts, the Shaikh believed that his own path was different. Hamidu'd-Din had a small *ihya'* plot in the village of Suwali, near Nagaur. He lived from the income it gave and drank milk from his one cow, refusing offers from

<sup>1</sup>Frazer's, *History of Aurangzeb*, Bodleian, 262, ff. 11b–12a.

<sup>2</sup>Sururu's-Sudur, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>AA, p. 30.



Revised Edition of the old Ajmer  
Ajmer

WITH KIND PERMISSION

OF

Lt. Col. R. J. W. Heale, O. B. E., I. A.,  
*Commissioner, Ajmer-Merwara.*

DEDICATED TO

Captain W. F. Q. Shuldham, I. A.  
*Assistant Commissioner,*

**AJMER.**

By the author.

—

1926.



114. *Kharekree*.—This family is originally of the Chohan extraction, but was converted to Mohamedanism by the Emperors of Delhi. This village fell in the share of Jamalshah, the ancestor of the family, at the time when his brother Allah Bux partitioned his estate (which included the villages of Ajesur and Kharakee) between himself and his brother. The Khan pays Rs. 212-15-6 on account of Government tribute annually.

115. *Nosar*.—This family is originally of the Chohan extraction, but was converted to Mohamedanism by the Emperors of Delhi. It is said that Dilawar Khan, the ancestor of the family, was settled by the Moghul Emperors for the protection of the Pushkar Pass.

116. *Kotri*.—This village was donated by Raja Keramsen, the ancestor of the Bhinai family, to Bhawaneedan Charan at the time when he occupied the pergunah of Bhinai by turning Madia Bhil out of the village. The Charan pays Rs. 123-6-9 on account of Government tribute annually.

### **Diwan Durgah Khwaja Sahib.**

117. *Sajjadda Nashin*.—Lineal descendant of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, who came to Ajmer in A.D. 1195 from Sanjar in Khurasan.

The Dargah belongs to the Sunni sect and is endowed with 18 villages bringing in a Revenue of about 25,000. Emperor Akbar in company with his empress performed the pilgrimage to this temple on foot in expiation of a vow he made when entreating Heaven to grant him a son. The founder is said to have died at a great age in the year 1235 A.D. The Dewanji is the spiritual Head of the Dargah and besides large offerings, which he shares with the servitors of the shrine he holds 3 villages in Ajmer, besides Jagir in Hyderabad (Deccan) and Jaipur States for his own support. The great fair of the "Urs" in the month of Rajab at Ajmer to which Mohamedans from different places flock, is held in commemoration of the 7 days retirement of the saint, at the expiration of which term he was found dead in his cell. The Dewan is known to all Indian Mohamedans as "Wali-ul-Hind".