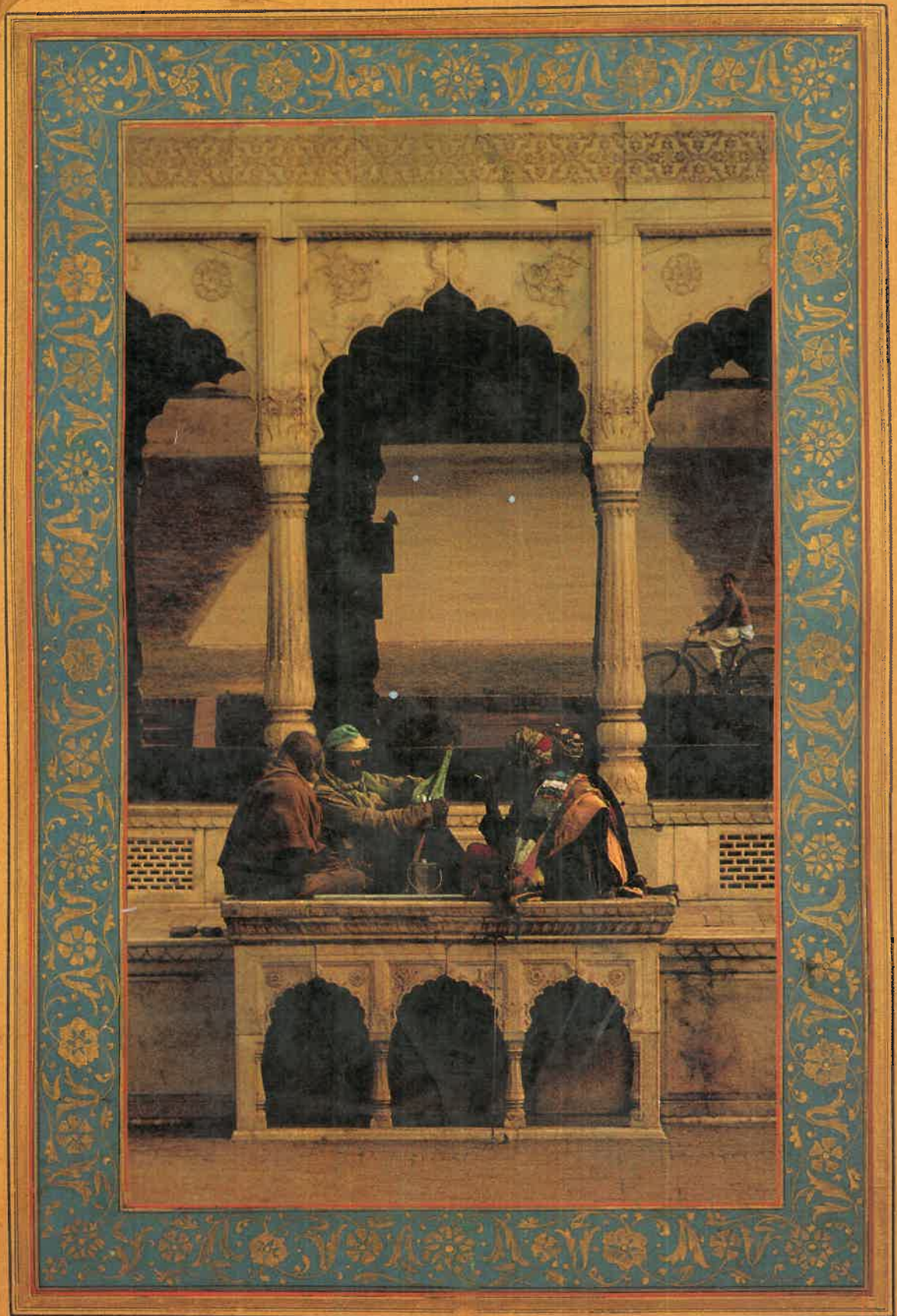


LAHORE

THE CITY WITHIN



Samina Quraeshi

With an essay by Annemarie Schimmel

Concept Media

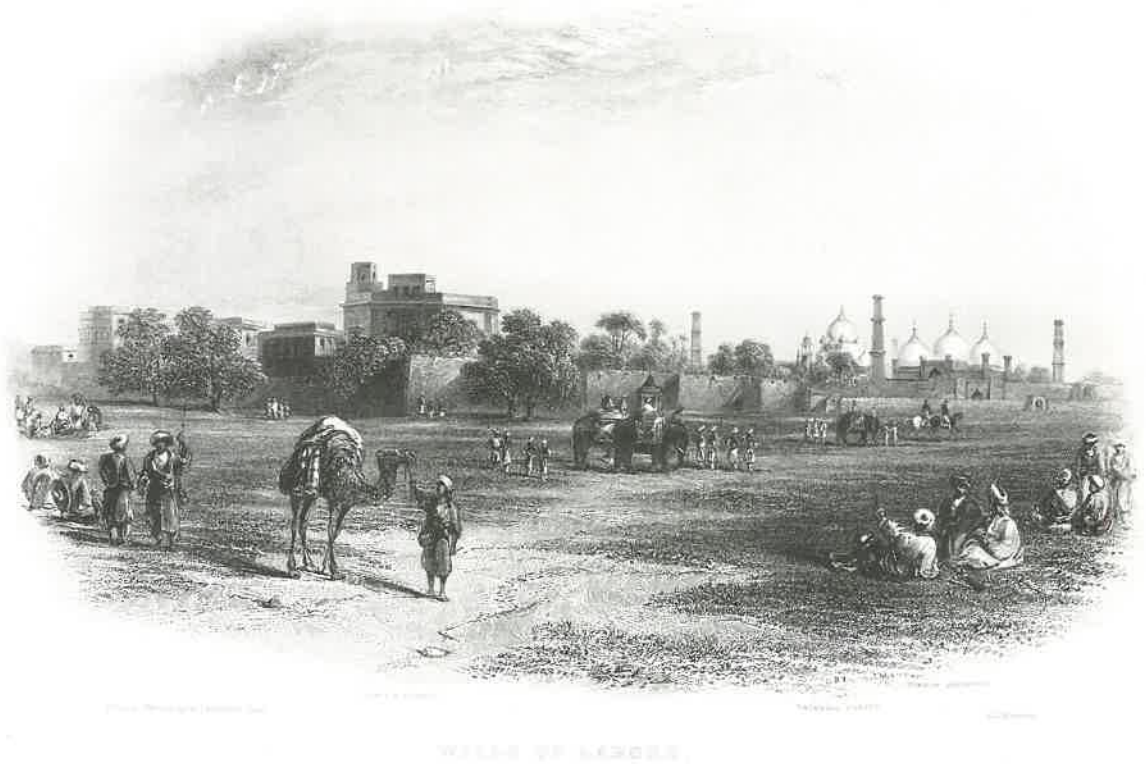
LAHORE

THE CITY WITHIN

Dedicated to my mothers
Badrunissa, Zebunissa and
Rahat Sattar Quraeshi.

LAHORE

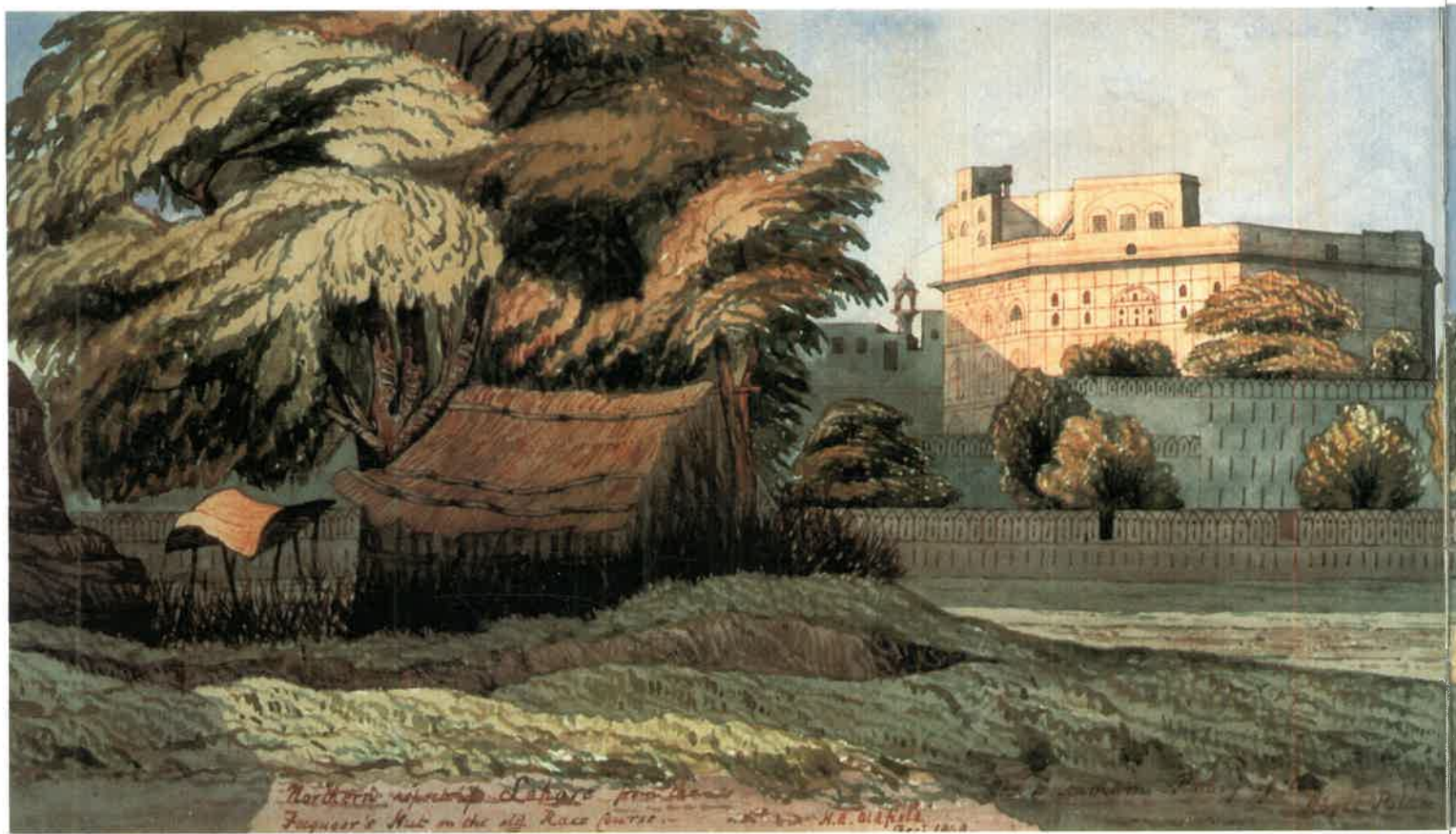
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Northern India, Lahore, from the
Fogues's Hut on the old Race Course.

Painted by H. A. G. G. G.



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on page 292.

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*Cover: The marble baradari in Hazuri Bagh is in the garden that separates Lahore Fort
from the Badshahi Masjid. Built in 1818 by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, it was once beautifully
decorated and inlaid with mirrors. Here the Maharaja used to sit in state transacting the
business of his empire, today it is the favoured seat of local poets, philosophers and dreamers.*

*Back cover: The palaces built by the Shah Jahan in the Lahore Fort are made with white
marble, carved, sculpted and embellished by architects and stonecutters of great skill. The
pierced stone screens are masterpieces of geometry allowing gentle breezes to flow through,
and creating wonderful patterns of light and shade.*

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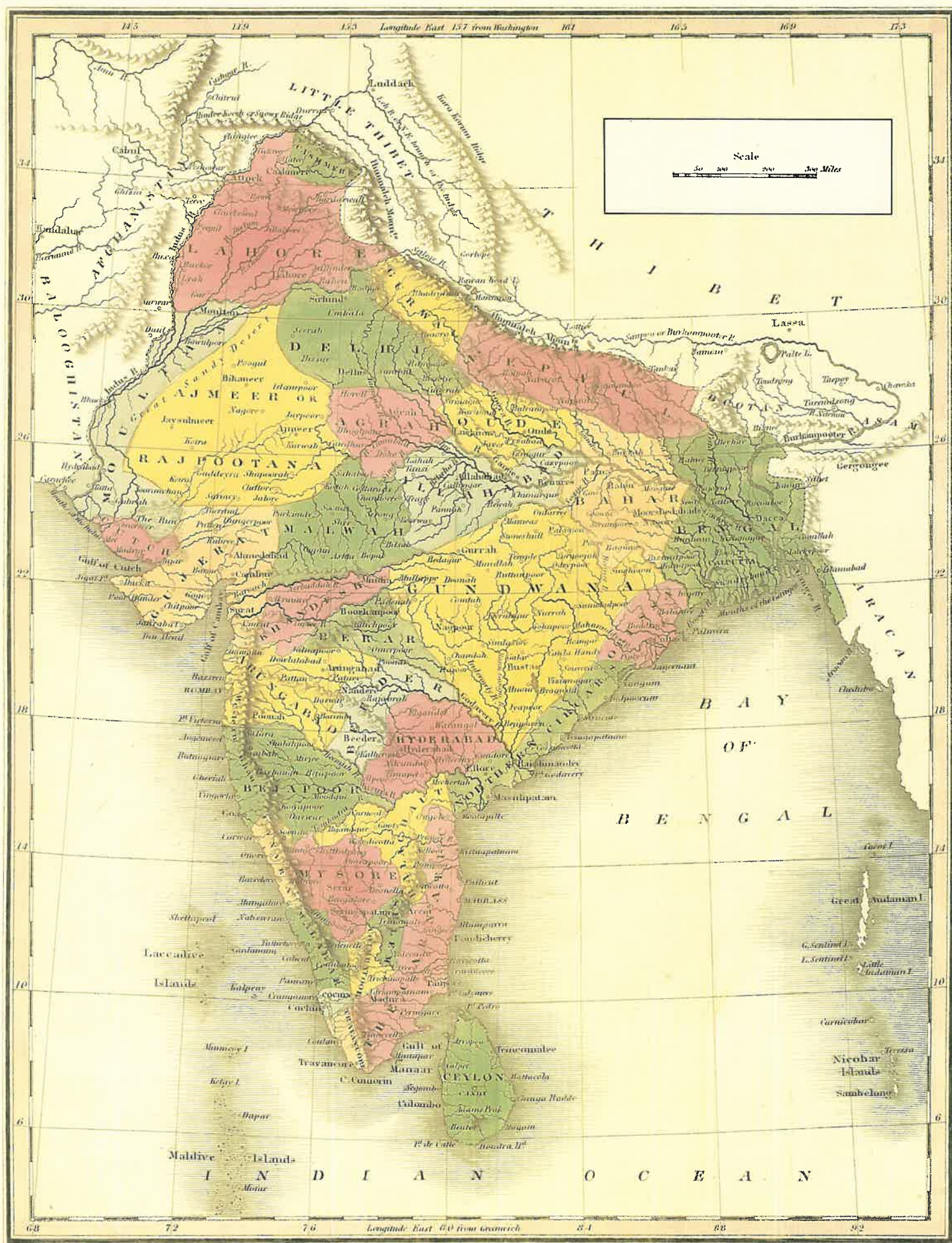
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PREFACE

I was ten years old when I first visited Lahore. My family had travelled there by car from Karachi for the Horse and Cattle Show — an annual event of great pomp and prodigious display of the wealth of Pakistan's various regions. The city of Lahore was the stuff of dreams. Lush green gardens, tall minarets, misty dew-laden mornings and streets filled with mystery.

I continued to appreciate the energy of Karachi, my home, on the edge of the desert and the Arabian Sea. I admired this fishing village transforming itself into a bustling metropolis, but it was Lahore that fired my imagination. And so I returned time and again for extended periods and short visits in various seasons. It has become familiar to me over the years. I have walked the streets searching out its many faces, the myths, the legends, its traditions and its hidden paths, but it still has many secrets. I have tried to "see" the city and understand its structure. First there is its geography, its location, its buildings, then there is its history, layer upon layer, and then there are the people and their living tradition. It is a rich, complex and baffling tapestry. I have had to omit a great deal, and so what is presented here is only a glimpse of the whole. Lahore is so much more than the sum of its monuments, its narrow lanes bustling with life, the hum of the cars nearly colliding with horse drawn *tongas* and avoiding the rickshaws weaving between lofty houses with crumbling balconies. It is not easy to comprehend; so the vision of Lahore that is offered here is circumscribed.

This book is a very personal view of only parts of a wonderful old city — the walled city of Lahore. As such, it cannot lay claim to being a thorough representation of modern Lahore; for instance, neighbourhoods and monuments built under the British are given only a passing glance, as they were usually outside the walled area. Modern construction is completely

excluded. On the other hand, I have included the Shalimar Gardens and the Tombs of Jahangir and Nur Jahan; even though they are outside the city, they were built during the same period of time and by the same people who were responsible for the masterpieces of the Fort and city proper.

I first want to thank the people of the old city who have offered me over the years their generous support: children who carried my cameras, housewives who brought me tea, merchants who gave me delicious food and hours of conversation. For years of gracious hospitality, I thank Begum Abid Hussain, Syeda Abida Hussain and Syed Fakhar Imam. This family welcomed me into their home. Their advice, knowledge and support provided both the inspiration and the ability for me to produce this book. Abida Hussain introduced me to her city and to the people that make it what it is. I am indebted to Syed Babar Ali who gave me advice and encouragement; to Mohammed Hasan Rumi and Mohammed Shafi of Packages Ltd. without whose enthusiasm and help many of these images would not have been possible; and to Sher Zaman whose calligraphy brings to life the inspired words of the poets.

I would like to thank Ambassador Jamsheed Marker and Arnaz Marker for their interest in and support of this project; General Gilani and the Punjab Arts Council whose grant made much of the photography possible; Kamil Khan Mumtaz who guided me patiently through the ancient streets of the old city as if he were introducing me to his oldest friend; and to Anwar Almas who showed me views of his city I am still rediscovering.

My research in London would not have been possible without the love and support of my friends Bashan Rafique and Mana Sarabhai. Their generosity with time and space and the many hours of discussion have enriched this work. My sincere thanks to Mildred Archer who helped me see my own world through the eyes of the great British artists: Hardinge, Harcourt, Oldfield and others. At the India Office Library, B.C. Bloomfield, Pat Katterhorn and Salim Kureishi made available to me the depths of material to be found on any topic regarding the Subcontinent. Giles Eyre has generously lent me photographs from his own collection and has helped me appreciate the material I was collecting. Our conversations over endless cups of tea are a treasured part of my process.

At Harvard University, I am especially indebted to Dr. Annemarie Schimmel who has been the guiding light for this work. "Apaji" has contributed time, advice, and a superb essay giving a wonderfully unique view of Lahore through the eyes and writings of the many poets and literary figures who have lived in Lahore in the past thousand years. Her deep and thorough knowledge of the languages and poets involved has enabled her to share her rare and unique perspective on Lahore. Stuart Cary Welch has supplied criticism and inspired suggestions which include beautiful historical images and the appropriate context for them. The work of these scholars has been a

great resource; the generous sharing of their knowledge illuminates the path for the rest of us. My thanks also to Vishakha Desai of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. And to Robert Gardner, my thanks for providing the moral support and encouragement to continue my search.

Numerous friends and aides along the way have helped in so many ways to shape and trim the scope and scale as the book emerged: Julia Walker for her abiding belief and affection, Jasbir Singh for her time and patience, and Linda Kern, Jamie Jett, Miriam Ahmed, Marcia Lausen, and Blythe Agee. I want especially to thank Elizabeth Rock for the many fruitful hours we have spent together. I owe a great deal to her wit, her insight and her curiosity. I am deeply grateful to Michael Rock for the many hours he laboured with me over the design. His support, understanding and aesthetic judgement have enriched this presentation.

I want also to add my gratitude to Karen Longeteig for her gentle editing of this manuscript and to Hasan-Uddin Khan whose belief in this idea made it into a reality.

There have been many rare and wonderful people who have contributed in countless ways. Most important among them are my family: my mother, Rahat Quraeshi who has nurtured my rebellious spirit and provided for all of us a home that is a haven; my husband, Richard Shepard, who has shared my work through the years; his love for Pakistan and his talent as an architect and photographer have given me perspective and made our travels together into voyages of discovery. My children, Sadia and Cassim, whose patience, love and enthusiasm for my storytelling have encouraged me immeasurably.

CHRONOLOGY

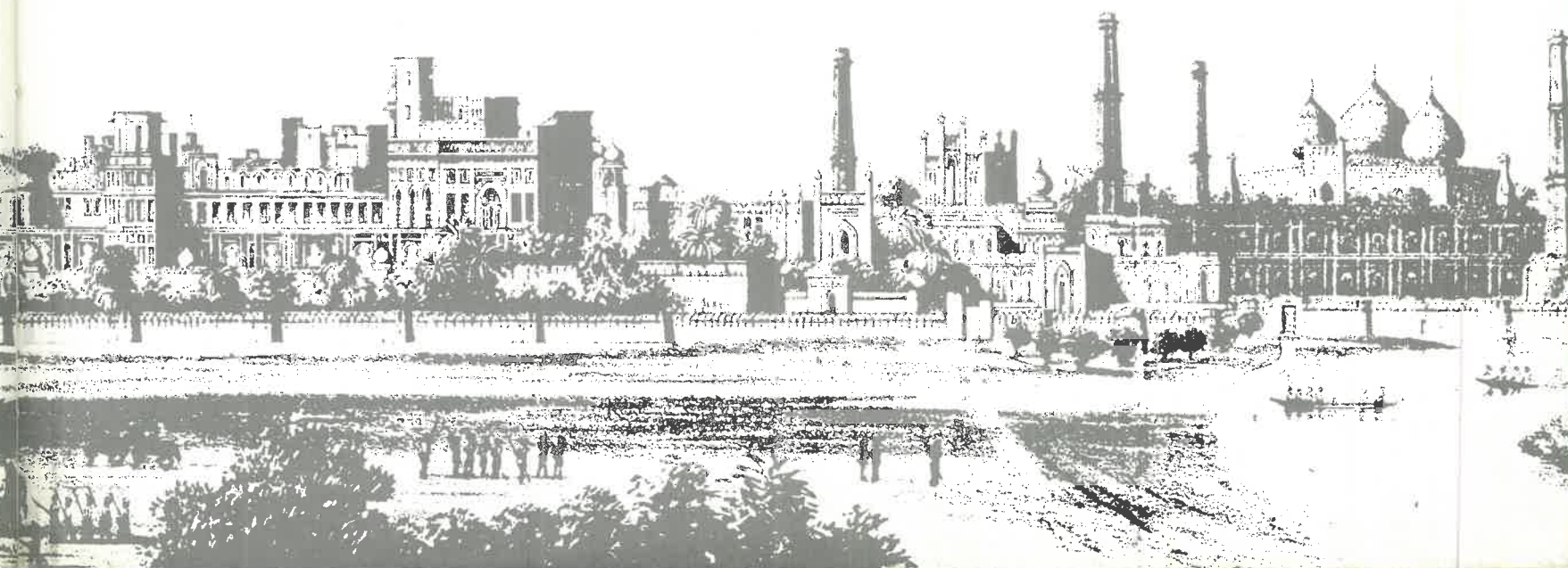
1000 BC	Mythology relates that Loh-Awar or Lahore founded by Lava (Loh), son of Rama, deity in Hindu epic <i>Rama-yana</i>
300 BC	Megasthenes, Greek ambassador, describes a city, presumably Lahore, of “great culture and charm”
c.1 AD -c.950	Consecutive Hindu kingdoms.
c.950-1000	Lahore part of the Quraishi estates in Multan
1026	Conquest of the Punjab by the Ghaznavids; Mahmud of Ghazna makes Lahore the capital of the Indian provinces of his kingdom
1072	Death of Hujwiri Data Ganj Bakhsh, the first major Sufi saint to settle in the Subcontinent. His shrine at Lahore still important pilgrimage site
c.1050-1131	Abu'l-Faraj Runi and Mas'ud ibn Sa'd-i Salman live in Lahore, composing important poems in Persian
1187	Invasion of the Ghauris from Afghanistan
1206	Lahore is briefly the capital of Ghauris before “Slave Dynasty” founded and the capital shifts to Delhi in 1210
1217-1400	Lahore repeatedly pillaged by the Mongols
1398	Invasion of Timur, destruction of major parts of Lahore
1412	Sayyid Khizr Khan, Timurid viceroy, founds the Sayyid Dynasty in Lahore

1450	Bahlul Lodi seizes Lahore and founds the Lodi Dynasty; Delhi remains the capital
1524-1526	Babur Chaghtai, Timurid prince from Ferghana, overcomes the Lodis to found the Mughal Empire of Northern India. Lahore serves as court along with Agra and Delhi
1540	Sher Shah Suri occupies Lahore after the Mughal Emperor Humayun's defeat. Builds Grand Trunk Road linking Afghanistan-Bengal through the Punjab, and adding to Lahore's commercial and strategic importance
1555	Lahore reconquered by Humayun on his return from Iran
1556	Humayun's death; his 14-year-old son Akbar is crowned Emperor in Lahore. 'Abdur-Rahim, "Khankhanan", born in Lahore. Raised by Akbar, he becomes successful general as well as patron of the arts
1584-1598	Akbar makes Lahore his capital, reconstructing the Fort, rebuilding the Diwan-i 'Am
1588	Akbar sponsors innumerable literary and artistic projects, including the translation of Sanskrit texts into Persian; calls scholar-historian Badauni to Lahore to supervise work
1589	Khankhanan 'Abdur-Rahim offers Akbar his Persian translation of Babur's Turkish memoirs
1590	The poet 'Urfi leading master of Persian poetry, dies in Lahore
1593	Shaikh Mubarak, the father of Akbar's favourite poet Faizi and his chronicler Abu'l-Fazl, dies in Lahore; likewise the Persian poet Thana'i, and the first major Sufi poet to write in Punjabi, Madho Lal Husain
1594	The historian Nizamuddin, author of the <i>Tabaqat-i Akbari</i> , dies in Lahore. Akbar's ateliers produce superb illuminated and illustrated manuscripts
1595	The meeting of Prince Salim, the future Jahangir, with Anarkali, a court dancer; she is later allegedly immured alive by Akbar to prevent her marriage to Prince Salim
1605	Akbar's death; Jahangir ascends the throne
1606	Jahangir visits Lahore to put down rebellion of son; executes Guru Arjun of the Sikh community
1610	Jahangir has the Shiite <i>Qadi</i> -historian Nurullah Shushtari executed
1611	Jahangir's marriage to Nur Jahan The British visitor William Finch describes Lahore

1614	The British visitor Thomas Coryard admires Lahore Numerous new buildings and repairs in the Lahore Fort, such as in the Diwan-i 'Am
1627	Jahangir dies and is buried in Shahdara, near Lahore, where Nur Jahan erects a beautiful mausoleum for him
1628	Jahangir's son Shah Jahan is crowned in Lahore
1634	The Wazir Khan Mosque in the old city is built
1635	Death of Mian Mir, the Qadiri Sufi saint to whom Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and especially Prince Dara Shikoh and his sister Jahanara were very attracted
1636-42	Shalimar Gardens are constructed
1644	Shah Jahan visits Lahore where he commands new construction to the Fort, such as a new version of the Diwan-i 'Am, the private quarters, the Shish Mahal and the Saman Burj
1645	The Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) in the Fort is built. Death of Nur Jahan; she is buried outside Lahore
1646	Princess Jahanara founds the Chauburji Gardens
1648	The Canal, constructed by Ali Mardan Khan, is finally finished, bringing water to Lahore city as well as to Shalimar Gardens
1658	Death of Nadira Begum, Dara Shikoh's wife, during her husband's flight; her body is brought to Lahore and buried close to Mian Mir. Dara Shikoh is executed a year later by his younger brother Aurangzeb; Aurangzeb assumes power
1661	Death of Molla Shah Badakhshi, mystical guide of Prince Dara Shikoh and Princess Jahanara; buried in Lahore
1667	Visit of Venetian traveller Mannuci to Lahore; he describes wealth and well-being of the city. Aurangzeb enlarges the Fort and builds the Alamgiri Gate



1671	Gulabi Bagh is built, mausoleum and gardens of Dai Anga, Shah Jahan's wet-nurse
1674	Aurangzeb has the Badshahi Mosque built; considered the "crown jewel" of mosques
1712	Aurangzeb's son and successor Bahadur Shah dies in Lahore; city falls prey to invasions
1745	Sharafunnisa, a brave Mughal lady, lies in Lahore resisting Sikh invasion
1767	The Sikhs rule the Punjab; in 1797 Ranjit Singh takes Lahore in coup
1802	Ranjit Singh becomes Maharaja of the Punjab; Lahore is his capital
1841	The Diwan-i 'Am destroyed in Sikh bombardment
1846	The British conclude the Treaty of Lahore with the Sikhs in the Shish Mahal and occupy the city; reconstruct Diwan-i 'Am
1849	British rule over the Punjab
1856	Minarets of the Badshahi Mosque rebuilt
1864	Lahore Museum is built. University of the Punjab is established
1889	High Court Building is constructed
1908	The Urdu poet Muhammed Iqbal settles in Lahore after his return from Europe; one of the first conceptualise Islamic state for Indian Muslims
1917	Shalimar Gardens repaired and changed in layout
1938	Iqbal's death; he is buried at the steps of the Badshahi Mosque
1947	Independence of Pakistan Lahore remains the capital of the Punjab



خوشا لاهور و فیض آب لاهور
 نہ ساعت میل شیخ و شاب لاهور
 گما عم نیست کاندہفت کشور
 بود شہری بہ آب و تاب لاهور
 سکندر گو کہ عمر خضر یابد
 ز آب ہچو شہر ناب لاهور
 بود لاهور شہری جملہ آرام
 نیابی مضطرب سیماب لاهور
 بہ رسم کاسبان از شام تا صبح
 کتان باقی کند متاب لاهور

Lahore be praised, its waters full of bliss!
 The goal of old and young be praised, Lahore!
 I do not think that in the seven climes
 There's a place with lustre like Lahore.
 Tell Alexander that eternal life
 Is found in the sweet waters of Lahore!
 It is a quiet city — mercury
 would barely tremble in the calm Lahore!
 Like weavers weave from evening to morn
 Soft cotton veils the moonlight of Lahore!

Poetic Visions of Lahore



Poetic Visions of Lahore

The Dara Shikoh Album: A young lady stands beneath a blossoming tree holding a sprig of narcissus; Mughal, attributed to C. Mughal, c.1635.

✓ 'To Agra and Lahore of Great Mughal' extends the view of the newly created Adam when God showed him the great marvels which future generations will produce on earth.

✓ So Milton tells us in 'Paradise Lost'; for him, as for his contemporaries in 17th century Europe, the city of Lahore was one of the most famous places in the East, an embodiment of fabulous wealth and splendour. Milton's near-contemporary in the Indian Subcontinent, Abu'l-Fazl, Emperor Akbar's court chronicler, writes in his *Ayin-i Akbari*: 'Lahore ... is the resort of people of all countries whose manufacturers present an astonishing display and it is beyond measure remarkable in populousness and extent.' And some twenty years later, in 1614, the British traveller Thomas Coryard speaks with unconcealed admiration of 'the goodly city of Lahore in India, one of the largest cities of the whole universe ... (which) exceedeth Constantinople itself in greatness ... Agra is ... in every respect much inferior to Lahore.'

✓ Those were the times when the Mughal rulers adorned Lahore with gardens and palaces, with mosques and shrines, some of which have fortunately survived the vicissitudes of fate. They are now the proud heritage of the teeming, modern Lahore, which is the cultural heart of Pakistan today as it was in the past one of the most important centres of Indo-Muslim culture. The history of Lahore shows that it changed hands frequently and that periods of glory were interrupted time and again by eras of utter distress.

▼▼▼



Indian tradition ascribes the foundation of the city in unknown times to the legendary Loh or Lav, son of Rama, and little is known about its early history. It is uncertain whether or not Alexander the Great reached Lahore before turning south to Uchch and Multan. But its history may go back much earlier than Alexander's days, for it is situated not far from the first known centre of Harappa civilisation, and may have played a role during the third and second millennia B.C. It was probably a trading point, being the gateway to the Punjab Hills and Kashmir, and timber from the dense forests of the mountainous regions was floated by the town down the River Ravi, which, like the other four rivers that gave the Punjab (*panj-ab*, 'five rivers') its name, finally merges into the Indus so that goods could be easily transported to the Arabian Sea.

Several Hindu dynasties followed each other in the Punjab, and they fortified Lahore with a citadel of unbaked bricks. Its history as a Muslim city begins only after the year 1000, although an Arabic geographical work, the *Hudud al-'alam* states in the late tenth century that the city belonged to the realm of the Quraishis of Multan. Yet, it was only after Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna had invaded the Indian Subcontinent several times that Lahore became firmly incorporated into the Muslim empire, in about 1026. The name of Sheikh Muhammad Isma'il al-Bukhari al-Lahori stands out as the first known Muslim scholar to preach Islam and to propagate the study of Prophetic traditions in the northwestern part of the Subcontinent — his original home, the city of Bukhara in Central Asia, was a centre of Islamic learning, from which in the centuries to come scholars and mystics migrated into the Punjab to strengthen Muslim scholarship and piety.

Soon Lahore became the capital of the Indian province of the Ghaznavids and developed into such an important city that it was proudly called 'little Ghazna' because it seemed to vie with, and at times even to surpass, the actual capital of Mahmud and his successors, a place where the first major works of Persian poetry had been composed. Lahore, too, could boast of poets writing in Persian whose works were greatly admired all over the Persian-speaking world. One of them was Abu'l-Faraj Runi (d. 1091), whose simple but elegant verse was imitated by some leading authors of Iran; the other one, of even greater fame, was the somewhat younger Mas'ud ibn Sa'd-i Salman (d. ca. 1131), 'the swift rider in the arena of panegyric poetry'. His fate seems typical of that of many intellectuals in the late eleventh century who became entangled in the complicated political games between the different factions in the government of the Punjab. Mas'ud, a big landlord and owner of sumptuous mansions 'and three baths' in Lahore, was imprisoned for his political activities for many years. From the fortress of Nay, he no longer wrote praise poems on princes or songs of wine and love

but rather poems which express his longing for his beloved home town:

Lahore, my love! Without me — how are you?
Without your radiant sun, oh, how are you?
Your darling child was torn away from you —
With sighs, laments and cries, woe! how are you?

Mas'ud's poems for the first time praise the beauty of the lively city and are, incidentally, the first 'prison poems' written in the Subcontinent. (Eight hundred years later, the leading Urdu poet of our day, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, again would write some of his most moving verses in jail — poems in which his longing for the beloved city of Lahore would be expressed in different language and style, but with the same depth of feeling.)

More important than these two literary figures, Abu'l-Faraj and Mas'ud, was a man whom both may have met. That is 'Umar al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri, a mystical preacher who — for unknown reasons — came to Lahore from eastern Iran after wandering through the Islamic world in pursuit of mystical knowledge. He felt isolated in the busy city of Lahore and complained: '... my books having been left at Ghazna, while I myself had become a captive among uncongenial folk in the district of Lahawar, which is a dependency of Multan.' But the 'uncongenial folk' soon appreciated his greatness as a Sufi leader, and his *Kashf al-mahjub*, 'The Unveiling of the Hidden', may have inspired at least some pious inhabitants of Lahore for it was the first treatise on mystical life in the Persian language, which was then the idiom of literary people (the common folk would talk in Hindwi, or simple Punjabi).

When Hujwiri died around the year 1072, his tomb became a place of pilgrimage and a spiritual centre of the Punjab. Even more, it was considered to be the gateway to India for all those mystics who, coming from Iran and Turkestan, entered the plains of northwestern India to continue their way into farther and farther areas with the aim of spreading the basic, simple teachings of mystically tinged Islam: love of God, love of the Prophet, and love of one's fellow beings. Thus, Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chishti, who arrived in the Subcontinent about one century after Hujwiri's death, first paid a visit to his shrine in Lahore, seeking permission from the saint's spirit to proceed further into Rajasthan, a province just conquered by the Muslims. He settled in Ajmer, and the Chishti order which he organised from there was to become the most successful mystical fraternity in India.

The people of Lahore have always had deep trust in the saint whom they call not Hujwiri but Data Ganj Bakhsh, 'the Giver of Treasures'. His mausoleum was built and enlarged in various stages throughout the centuries. In its present form its white marble panels are inscribed with some of Iqbal's verses, for the poet-philosopher of Pakistan paid homage to

Data Sahib in his first Persian poem, the 'Secrets of the Self' in 1915.
There he sings:

With ease he broke the mountains' strong barriers,
And sowed prostration's seed in India's earth ...
A guardian for the honour of God's word —
Destroyed the house of falsehood by his glance!
The Punjab's dust was quickened by his breath.
And our dawn gained radiance from his sun.
He was a lover, Love's swift messenger:
The mysteries of Love shone from his brow ...

It is further said that Iqbal, who used to frequent Data Sahib's shrine, conceived the idea of an independent Muslim state in the northwestern part of the Subcontinent while mediating there.

Figures like Abu'l-Faraj Runi, Mas'ud ibn Sa'd, and Hujwiri prove that Lahore was a stronghold of Islamic culture in the late eleventh and the twelfth centuries. It is therefore not astonishing that a traditionalist like Saghani grew up in this environment. To be sure, he left his home town early and spent part of his life in Baghdad, but later served the Abbasid caliph as ambassador to his native country where the political situation had changed in the meantime. Saghani's collection of Prophetic traditions, called *Mashariq al-anwar*, has left a mark on Muslim education in the Subcontinent.

During Saghani's lifetime, the Ghorids invaded the Punjab in 1187 after destroying Ghazna, and interrupted these cultural activities in Lahore so that for some time the city of Uchch in the southern Punjab became a more active centre of learning. The Ghorid general Qutbuddin Aibek made Lahore the capital of his expanding empire in 1206; four years later he died in this city. His successors, the dynasty of the so-called Slave Kings, shifted the capital to Delhi. With this change, Lahore lost its leading position; it now assumed the role of a frontier city which was to become the target of invaders who entered the fertile plains of the Punjab from the mountains of Afghanistan and Central Asia. It was pillaged by the Mongol hordes in 1241, and attacks of this kind were repeated decade after decade until Timur destroyed it once more in 1398.



The situation changed for the better with the advent of Timur's descendants, the Great Mughals or, as they themselves were wont to call their dynasty, 'the House of Timur'. Babur, the founder of this dynasty, settled in Lahore in 1524, two years before the decisive battle of Panipat which opened the road to Delhi for him. Lahore remained for some time under the administration of Babur's son Kamran Mirza, notorious for his incessant struggle with his elder brother Humayun, the official ruler since 1530. But Kamran — like his father Babur — was also a rather skillful poet in his Turki mother tongue, and like his father, he was fond of gardens and thought that

gardens were an essential part of human culture. One of the pavilions which he erected on the far bank of the River Ravi is still intact, and even after so many centuries have passed the weary traveller who approaches Lahore still feels as though a large garden were welcoming him.

When Humayun had to flee India and the short-lived interim dynasty of the Suris occupied the northwestern part of India, Lahore fell to Sher Shah Suri, whose presence proved very beneficial for the whole area. For it was this wise, far-sighted ruler who built and enlarged the main road through northern India, which is known as the Grand Trunk Road and, extending from the Khyber Pass through Lahore and Delhi, links the Punjab with Bihar and Bengal. This road was not only strategically important but facilitated Lahore's development into a major trade centre, because it added to its previous north-south river connections the more important east-west connections by land.

|| Humayun reconquered Lahore in 1555, one year before his untimely death, and his son Akbar 'began to honour and adorn the throne of the Sultanate under an auspicious star on Friday, the second of the month Rabi'ul-awwal in the year 963 (1556) in the garden of Kalanor', which is a dependency of Lahore. He then made the city his headquarters between 1584 and 1598 after leaving his newly built capital Fatehpur Sikri, for Lahore offered the ever-active emperor 'fresh challenges, new fortifications, gardens, and palaces. It was also ideally situated as a base of operation from which to reconnoitre new territories', according to historian Stuart Cary Welch. Territories included Sind, that is the Lower Indus Valley, which guaranteed access to the Arabian Sea, and Kashmir, long coveted for its natural beauty. Qandahar, the bone of contention between Mughals and the Persian Safavids because of its role as a relay point for Indian trade to Iran and the Near East, could be kept under control comparatively easily from Lahore.

| It is this 'Lahore of Great Mughal' in which scholars and Sufis, learned men and painters, poets and administrators assembled and which, for about one century, surpassed in glory most other cities of the East.

| In the same year that thirteen-year-old Akbar ascended the throne, a son was born in Lahore to his faithful Turkoman generalissimo Bairam Khan, without whose help Humayun would never have been able to return to his heirloom. The boy, called 'Abdur-Rahim, was brought up by Akbar after his father's assassination in 1561, and became the most successful conqueror of his age, but is noted even more as the most generous Maecenas of poets, painters, and calligraphers. Usually called by his title, Khankhanan (*Khan-i khanan*, the lord of lords), 'Abdur-Rahim was one of the truly great figures in Indo-Muslim history: 'He spent most of his time in the company of perfect and virtuous people, and poets and elegant men were during his government prosperous and without sorrow.' Thus tells his biographer who counts not less than 104 poets who, at different times, lived under his

protection in Gujarat, Lahore, and Burhanpur and wrote odes in his honour. The Khankhanan wrote verse in Persian, Turki and Hindi, many of which have a distinctly mystical flavour; he was also a great builder who adorned many cities, including his birthplace Lahore, with palaces and seraglios.

Many poets were attracted by his munificence from Iran to India. One of them was 'Urfi of Shiraz who, like many of his contemporaries, had left Iran with its heavily orthodox Shia atmosphere which seemed not very conducive to the development of non-religious poetry (and after all, the poets were much better paid by the Mughal grandees ...). 'Urfi, first patronised by Akbar's physician, spent the last two years of his short life in eulogising the Khankhanan. He lived most of the time in Lahore, and there he died in late 1590 at the age of thirty-six. His poetry reflects his pride and haughtiness but also his loneliness, and belongs to the most moving, truly great verse in the Persian language. And despite the admiration he found in Lahore, he sighed:

I went around but in no town or land
They sold good luck — alas! — in the bazaar!

His unhappiness but also his arrogance were probably aggravated by his rivalry with Akbar's favourite court poet Faizi, who died four years after him. Faizi was the brother of the historian Abu'l-Fazl, whose *Akbarnama* describes how the Emperor acted and lived and provides us with valuable information about the administrative, religious, and economic situation in the days of Akbar whom the author venerated deeply, seeing in him the ideal king, the Perfect Man.

Akbar soon began to fortify his capital Lahore; he surrounded it with a city wall, and built parts of the Fort with baked brick; he also enlarged the official buildings in the Fort, such as the Diwan-i 'Am, the public audience hall. His descendants continued this work so that the present layout reflects a development of about one century. Faizi gives a colourful picture of the Emperor's appearance on the Jharoka balcony where people could look at his august appearance for the sake of blessing, and he describes the way he would sit in pomp and circumstance in the midst of the grandees:

The kings that sit on thrones in every place —
They stand before him, as good manners teach.
Here are viziers of high intelligence
From whom First Intellect learns witty points;
There are the legalists of lofty rank,
Who talk of licit and illicit things;
Then the philosophers who know the rules —
The astrolabe of the astrologers;
There secretaries, working miracles
Who know the points of Tablet and of Pen ...

that is, who are aware of the mysteries of divine predestination.

The father of Faizi and Abu'l-Fazl, Shaikh Mubarak, deeply influenced Akbar's religious views and was both praised for this erudition and condemned for his shifting religious allegiances by the historian Badauni. He died in Lahore in 1593 as did one of the masters in poetry, Khwaja Hasan Thana'i, who, though famous in Iran, 'fell into the corner of neglect' after settling in India. Mighty ministers also breathed their last in Lahore — such as the Hindu Raja Todar Mal who was probably the best financial administrator in Akbar's days and belonged to the 'Nine Jewels' who enjoyed particular proximity to the Emperor. Another 'Jewel', the versatile physician Hakim Humam, toward the end of his life served as Akbar's highly admired 'Master of the Kitchen'; he could not be replaced by any equally good supervisor of the sumptuous food prepared at court.

It was in Lahore that a Portuguese Jesuit mission called upon Akbar, whose interest in foreign religions and whose invention of the highly eclectic order of the *Din-i ilahi* led the Jesuits to believe that they might attract him to the Christian faith. But Akbar's interest spanned other projects, such as the translation of Sanskrit texts into Persian. Part of this project (as well as of the official historiography) was carried out in Lahore under the Emperor's aegis. One would like to know more about how the learned Badauni, one of the main translators from the Sanskrit (against which his sternly Muslim conscience constantly rebelled), spent his years in Lahore, where he was called in 1588. His colleague Nizamuddin Ahmad, author of the *Tabaqat-i Akbari* from which Badauni took over large portions into his own historical work, died in Lahore in 1594: Badauni, however, continued — in this very place — to note down in his chronicle numerous poisonous remarks about the un-Islamic behaviour of the Emperor and many of the grandees whom he must have seen every day. He sketched lively pictures of the life at court and loved to tell strange incidents, such as when poets whose verse was known to be ridiculous were gently rebuked by Akbar; he satirised some very credulous members of the Lahore society and made a casual friendly remark about the Mufti of the city who, whenever he completed the perusal of some classical works of Prophetic traditions, used to regale his friends with delicious sweets and so forth. Thus, one feels something of the atmosphere of the imperial city during the last decade of the sixteenth century, which correspond with the arrival of the year 1000 of the Muslim calendar and was therefore a religiously charged period.

Badauni, however, does not speak on one group of people whom we know from his rival Abu'l-Fazl's book: the painters. A goodly number of first-class painters worked in Lahore in Akbar's service and were keenly supervised by him. Besides the established masters of the craft, the Emperor's atelier attracted also Lahore-born artists, such as Ibrahim Lahori and Kalu Lahori. Some of them performed true miracles by painting extremely small but impeccably beautiful miniatures, of which the pocketbook-sized *Divan of Anvari* (dated 1588) is a superb example with its 'unprecedented delicacy and

Princess and Attendants on a
Balcony; *Mughal, Album leaf,*
gouache on paper, c. 18th century.

naturalism', as Stuart Cary Welch calls it. This extensive collection of verses by the twelfth-century Persian poet, whose verse belonged to the favourites of the Mughal rulers, is written here on gold-flaked paper as fragile as butterfly wings, and its illustrations are among the most delightful and lively pictures ever made in Mughal India.

The quality of these miniatures and of the paper in the small volume suggest that other branches of arts and crafts were also flourishing in Mughal Lahore. Indeed, from early days the city was noted for its fine weaving and carpet industry, and when Mas'ud ibn Sa'd around 1100 sings in prison:

I want some velvet from my Lord
which bears the fragrance of Lahore

his verse is echoed, as it were, by the seventeenth-century historian 'Abdul-Hamid of Lahore who speaks of the carpets produced in his native town: 'So soft and delicate are these carpets that compared with them, the carpets made at Kirman in the manufactory of the kings of Iran, look like coarse canvas.'

But there are other aspects to Mughal court life as well. Lahore is connected — at least in legend — with the story of the lovely Anarkali who, as is told, was suspected by Akbar of a liaison with his son and heir presumptive, Salim Jahangir. A single glance between the lovers was enough to arouse Akbar's wrath and he had the girl immured. The story is told as early as 1611 by the British traveller Finch, who describes the 'sumptuous tomb in the midst of a square garden' which the desolate Salim erected over the death cell of his beloved. The veracity of the story has been doubted if not denied by historians, but the moving legend has become part and parcel of the folk tradition, and the unlucky lady's fate has inspired a modern poet, Imtiaz Ali Taj, to publish, in 1942, one of the most successful dramas in Urdu literature. Anarkali's alleged octagonal tomb, lately converted into an archive building, has immortalised her name in the most crowded business district of Lahore, Anarkali Bazaar.

Akbar's son and successor Salim Jahangir, who had stayed in Lahore with his father for some time, and deepened his connoisseurship in the field of painting while watching the painters of Akbar's atelier, visited the city several times to improve its architecture. His first visit, about a year after his accession in 1605, was however caused by the rebellion of his eldest son, who enjoyed the support of Guru Arjun, the fourth Guru of the young Sikh community, at that time a mystically minded, peaceful group of people. Arjun, to whose father Akbar had given Amritsar as a grant, was put to death for his participation in the rebellion. That was a turning point in Indian history, for after that the Sikh community became militant and turned against the Muslims with increasing feelings of hatred, the results of which became visible in the Sikh's conquest of large parts of the Punjab in the following two centuries.





A few years after quelling his son's rebellion, Jahangir committed another unnecessary act of cruelty by flogging to death the Qadi of Lahore, Nurullah Shushtari. He was a Persian Shiite of whom Badauni, despite his usual criticism of everything not Sunnite, remarks: 'Although he is by religion a Shia he is distinguished for his impartiality, justice, virtue, modesty, piety, continence, and such qualities as are possessed by noble men, and is well known for his learning, clemency, quickness of understanding, singleness of heart, clearness of perception and acumen ... In truth he has reduced the insolent Muftis and the crafty and subtle *muhtasibs* (market superintendents) of Lahore, who venture to give lessons to Satan, to order, and has closed to them the avenue of bribery and restrained them without due bound as closely as a nut is enclosed in its shell ...' It was probably on the instigation of the persons mentioned in this report that Jahangir was persuaded to have the erudite scholar and famous author killed.



But to turn to the more pleasant side of life in Mughal Lahore one has to repeat that Jahangir proved a great patron of architecture. At a distance of some 35 kilometres west of Lahore, in Shaikhopura, he built a delightful pavilion in a little artificial lake on whose bank he erected a tower, called Hiran Minar, in memory of a beloved deer. For Jahangir preferred the study of animals and plants to the chores of politics and government, as he candidly tells in his Memoirs, and as the exquisite portraits of birds and rare quadrupeds prove, which were made under his reign by at least two great artists, both surnamed 'Wonder of the Age'. As for the government, his brilliant queen Nur Jahan, a Persian lady whom he had married in 1611, soon took over the reins and was the ruler for all practical purposes, her name even appearing on coins.

Understandably, Jahangir's main interest concerned the restoration and enlargement of Lahore Fort. Some of the new edifices were described by British visitors with amazement. Thus, the British traveller Finch tells that, 'In this gallery, as you enter, on the right hand of the King over the door is the picture of our Saviour, opposite on the left hand, of the Virgin Mary' — clear proof of the influence of European paintings and illustrations of the Bible which the Jesuits had brought with them, and which inspired many miniatures as well. Strange pictures of 'angels and devils' are also mentioned. They point to Jahangir's tendency to have himself painted in a mythological setting, as seen in many of his miniature portraits. A favourite model appears to have been Sulaiman, the prophet-king Solomon as mentioned in the Koran, as Ebba Koch has recently shown in her analysis of the decorations in the ceiling of one of the chambers. The recurrent comparison in inscription and in poetry of Jahangir with Sulaiman underlines his aspiration to be as it were a 'second Solomon'. Were not the wind, demons and fairies all in the service of this most powerful of divinely-guided rulers who was also married to the most radiant woman of his time, the Queen of Sheba?



But not only mythological scenes were painted on the interior walls of the Fort. Thévenot, following some earlier visitors, speaks of 'a great many pictures upon the walls, which represent the actions of the Great Mughals, their forefathers ...' The decoration of the outer walls of the Fort was also begun under Jahangir. Men and angels, elephant fights and running dromedaries, lions and many other creatures were shown in this unique mural in cut, glazed tiles of radiant colours ranging from dark blue to azure, yellow, brown, and green so that the spectator could imagine that the royal activities inside the walls were reflected on their outside, which faced the Ravi River.

Jahangir had also repaired the Diwan-i 'Am, the public audience hall built by Akbar, and on November 20, 1620, he paid a visit to Lahore of which he writes in his Memoirs:

Mounting an elephant of the name of Indra, I went towards the city, scattering coins as I proceeded. After three watches and two gharies of the day had passed, at the selected auspicious hour, having entered the royal residence, I alighted happily and auspiciously at the building recently brought to completion and finished handsomely by the exertion of Ma'mur Khan [the architect].

Without exaggeration, charming residences and soul-exciting sitting places had been erected in great beauty and delicacy, adorned and embellished with paintings by rare artists. Pleasant green gardens with all kinds of flowers and sweet scented herbs delighted the sight.

From head to foot, wherever I look,
A glance plucks at the heart's skirt [saying]: 'This is the place!'

Altogether, there had been expended on these buildings the sum of rupees 700,000 or 23,000 current tomans of Persia.

Lahore remained Jahangir's favourite city, and it was here that he found his last resting place in Shahdara, on the far bank of the Ravi. Muhammad Salih Kamboh tells in his historical account that Jahangir wanted to follow the example of his ancestor Babur, whose modest tomb in Kabul has no dome, and 'had willed that his tomb be erected without the ornamentation of a building, and be entrusted to Divine propitiation in an open space, so that it may always benefit from the countless clouds of Divine Mercy without any obstruction'. This wish, however, was not fulfilled — the roof of the sumptuous mausoleum with its decorative inlay of white marble in red sandstone was enclosed long ago and the small room that enshrines the sarcophagus on which the Ninety-Nine Most Beautiful Names of God are inscribed is very dark while formerly some light must have come from an upper opening. There was probably a raised structure in the centre of the flat roof; perhaps a previously constructed dome was taken off by Aurangzeb to fulfill his grandfather's last wish. (Aurangzeb himself is also buried in a small, open enclosure in the town of Khuldabad in the northern Deccan.)

Queen Nur Jahan, the actual ruler for some fifteen years, survived her husband for almost two decades, and her small but elegant tomb is located quite a distance from Jahangir's mausoleum — a sad place, now completely separated from the gardens of Shahdara by the busy railway line. The Persian Queen remained a stranger in her husband's country, and a Persian verse ascribed to her is a mere sigh of the forgotten wayfarer at whose tomb neither a nightingale sings nor a candle is lit.

When Jahangir died in late 1629 his son Khurram Shah Jahan, who had been rebellious for years and thus deeply hurt his aging father's feelings (as Jahangir had hurt Akbar's feelings!), followed him on the Mughal throne. With him begins 'the age of white marble, inlaid with jewels if not actually the age of gold' (Stuart Cary Welch). Shah Jahan was proclaimed king at Lahore on January 17, 1628, and later did much to embellish the buildings of the Fort, for 'owing to his fastidious and critical disposition, he suggested some changes' in the Fort when he visited Lahore in 1644. But long before that, he had built the tower called Saman Burj (i.e., *muthamman*, octagonal tower) and the Elephants' Staircase, which enabled the nobles to enter the private quarters of the Fort comfortably on their elephants. He once more had enlarged the Diwan-i 'Am so that people were protected by a pillared hall when approaching the ruler. Here he sat daily in State, 'and as he took his seat the musicians stationed in the *naqqarakhana* opposite struck up a martial strain', as a contemporary chronicle tells.

His court poets praised the new edifice as 'equal to the Divine Throne' and as a garden whose pillars resembled cypresses under whose shade everyone might find rest. But the structure of this beautiful hall was destroyed when the Sikhs fired at the Fort in 1841, and the present construction — much more sober than the original — was erected by the British.

The emperor also constructed several private rooms in the new annex to the Fort. Of special fame was the so-called *naulakha* palace whose curved roof recalls the bungalows of Bengal; its name, *naulakha*, discloses that some 900,000 rupees might have been spent on it, but may also be only a metaphorical expression for something extremely precious. Its *pietra dura* work was 'of marble whose mosaics of cornelian, coral and other precious stones excite the envy of the workshop of Mani', that is, seem to surpass the work of the fabled Central Asian painter whose colourful pictures are mentioned time and again in the verse of Persian poets. And in similar images taken from the longstanding poetical imagery the author of the *Padshahnama* continues his description of the imperial bedroom: 'Wonder-working painters and magician-like artists have made it similar to a world-showing goblet (the priceless possession of the legendary Iranian King Jamshid) by means of various ways of colouring and gilding, and figures and pictures, especially of cities and gardens'. The imperial bath with its incrustation in marble was equally beautiful. In 1645 Shah Jahan adorned

the Fort with a delightful small mosque, called Moti Masjid, or 'Pearl Mosque', which indeed looks like white jewel in the strong setting of the Fort. It was the first of three Pearl Mosques of later Mughal times, the other two located in the Forts of Agra and Delhi and built by Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb respectively. Like almost all buildings in the Fort, the Moti Masjid of Lahore had much to suffer in later centuries; in the late eighteenth century it briefly served as a temple for the Sikhs, but was then converted into a treasure house by Maharaja Ranjit Singh after 1800. Thanks to Lord Curzon's intervention in 1900 the elegant building was restored to nearly original beauty in the subsequent years.

Perhaps the greatest attraction for every visitor to the Fort is the Shish Mahal, the 'Mirror Palace', that pleasing, medium-sized building decorated all over with hundreds of small mirrors which are inset in the walls and ceilings. They reflect the light and seem to transport the observer into another sphere. Through the delicate marble grillwork of the windows one sees the River Ravi, now receded into the distance from the Fort. The Shish Mahal played a role in later history — here, the Treaty of Lahore was ratified by Sir Henry (afterwards Lord) Harding in 1846, and three years later the British Government assumed the sovereignty of the Punjab in this building.

Lahore Fort contains gardens of different sizes, and several gardens in the city of Lahore were built or enlarged by Shah Jahan. The most famous among them is Shalimar, named after a large garden near Srinagar in Kashmir. It was completed at a cost of some 600,000 rupees sometime around 1642. A vast area, laid out in three terraces with watercourses and fountains, culminating in the marble pavilions for the Emperor and his ladies, it was designed as a place for recreation. It occupied such a large space that 'Abdul-Hamid Lahori tells: 'There are so many edifices in the Grace-Resembling garden that whenever the Ruler of the time deigns to visit this pleasure ground with the chaste ladies of the fortunate ladies' quarters in the honour-gathering city of Lahore, the necessity of pitching tents is avoided', for there were enough pavilions to accommodate all of them in the lovely garden. A chronogram which gives the date of completion with the words 'Resembling the highest Paradise' (numerical value 1047 hijri = 1636 A.D.) may not be correct, but translates the poet's feelings when they were asked to speak of this garden.

The present garden does not resemble the original 'Paradise' very much, for the modern entrance leads the visitor immediately through the royal pavilions, while formerly one entered through the lowest terrace from where the visitor discovered, full of delight, the water cascades and then slowly ascended to the third and highest terrace. Every ruler into whose hand Lahore fell, used Shalimar for magnificent garden parties. Yet, much of the garden architecture was destroyed under the Sikh rule while the beautiful cypresses and mango trees which were a special feature of the lowest terrace,



A Number of Women
Swimming; *Mughal, Album leaf,*
gouache on paper, c. 18th century.

were cut by the British who transformed the terrace into flower beds. Only from 1917 onward did the government decide to make major repairs, and slowly Shalimar regained some of its old splendour.

In order to secure the water required for ambitious projects like Shalimar, Shah Jahan ordered a canal built, and Ali Mardan Khan, the great architect, developed 'a canal from the place where the water of the Ravi descends from the hills into the plains, to the environs of Lahore to irrigate the fields and the gardens'. The initial costs for this canal amounted to 100,000 rupees, but as the system did not properly work it became at least twice as expensive. The canal was finished in 1648 and still forms the life artery of modern Lahore. Ali Mardan Khan, who died two years after the completion of the masterwork, rests under a beautifully shaped high dome which now has lost all its decorations; bats hang from the dark ceiling, resembling sad ghosts ...

Not only the rulers but also wealthy families adorned Lahore with gardens and mosques. One of these buildings is still intact and gives the visitor a feeling of how Mughal Lahore may have looked. That is the Wazir Khan Mosque in the old city, decorated with exquisite colourful tiles in floral designs as though the royal gardens were transplanted into the heart of the city. Elegant Persian inscriptions adorn the mosque which is one of the few surviving masterpieces of tilework, once so popular in the Punjab. Wazir Khan, a skillful physician, had risen to a high position at court, and he was lucky enough to obtain the blessing of the most venerated Sufi saint of Lahore, Mian Mir, for the construction of the mosque, finished in 1634, one year before the saint's death. One should visit the place in the late afternoon, when the sinking sun changes the yellows and oranges of the tiles into deep gold, and the greens become more lively, when the flower bouquets on the three galleries of the minarets seem to grow into bushes while the live pigeons on the uppermost frieze of tiles appear like part of the decoration ... while the rhythmical recitation of some boys studying the Koran in one of the mosque's rooms screens off the noise of the busy street ...

Mughal ladies loved to build gardens — there is Gulabi Bagh, the garden and mausoleum of Dai Anga (built in 1671), which has some exquisite floral designs and elegant Persian writing at the entrance gate. Better known is Chauburji, a garden founded in 1646 by Princess Jahanara, Shah Jahan's eldest daughter who, after her mother had died in 1631 at the birth of her fourteenth child, was the First Lady of the Mughal Empire. Of her pleasure garden only the entrance gate is left, decorated with slender cypresses and flowers as if to prepare the visitor for the sight that awaited him in the enclosed garden. And only one panel with a fine vase with flowers of cut tilework indicates that here, in a poor quarter off the present Multan Road, the so-called Gardens of Zebunnisa were once located — gardens which the learned daughter of Aurangzeb had built, emulating the example of her aunt Jahanara, with whom she shared the love of poetry and mystical thought.

None of these gardens survived the centuries, and yet, Lady Dufferin described Lahore in 1885 as 'a city of trees and flowers'.



Lahore has many faces: the imperial city, the international marketplace, and the city of scholars, poets and saints. We have mentioned the masters of Persian poetry in earlier times as well as those who were present at Akbar's court. The tradition continued. Jahangir's poet laureate Talib-i Amuli (d. 1612) devoted an ode to the city where his spiritual guide lived, and among the poets of the first half of the seventeenth century the name of Abu'l-Barakat Lahori shines forth. Did he not leave some 100,000 verses and a handbook of poets' biographies when he died, only 36 years old, in 1645? And there is 'Abdul-Hamid Lahori, whose *Padshahnama* gives much information about the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Likewise, Prince Dara Shikoh's Hindu secretary, Chandar Bhan Brahman, enriched Persian literature with several works among which the *Char Chaman-i Brahman*, 'Brahman's four meadows' describes in highly artificial style the life of the nobility in Lahore and Delhi.

In the mystical tradition, Data Ganj Bakhsh's spiritual influence remained alive during the centuries, but other Sufis too settled in Lahore. Some of them came from Iran, some from the neighbouring districts of Uchch and Multan, old centres of mystical teaching, or from the eastern Punjab, while others were natives of the city. Among the latter was one Husain, who belonged to the *Qadiriyya* order, like many of the Sufis in the southern Punjab from the late fifteenth century onward. It was during Akbar's days that Husain, intoxicated with Divine Love, one day fell in love with a handsome young Brahman boy in whom he recognised the radiance of Divine Beauty, and soon the boy became known by his friend's name as Madho Lal Husain. Madho Lal Husain is by all accounts the first major mystical poet to use his native tongue, Punjabi, to sing ecstatic songs about mystical love and intoxication, using, like the folk poets in the popular Indian tradition, the image of the loving and longing woman to express his feelings: the woman-soul is craving for union with the Divine Beloved. And thus he calls out:

All doubt has gone and certainty arrived —
That's why I'm dancing without qualities.
And when I play with my beloved Lord,
I shall remain a happy, happy wife!
The liar's face is blackened now from shame —
The lover's words are true, are ever true!

When Madho Lal Husain died in 1593 he was buried in a modest tomb near the area that became, half a century later, the Shalimar Gardens; some time later, his friend was laid to rest in the same place. The nearby mosque was founded by one of the Muslim wives of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the early



nineteenth century. The small sanctuary becomes the site of a lovely fair once a year, on the last Saturday of March, when the *Chiraghan Mela*, the 'Fair of Candles', is celebrated. Thousands of people throng around the tomb and enjoy all kinds of food and sweets as well as other performances common to fairs all over the world. But how many people are still able to recite the ecstatic songs of Madho Lal Husain, after whose example many poets in the Punjab made use of their mother tongue to interpret the secrets of Divine Unity and Love to the unlettered masses in simple, folkish images, and utilising the old folktales of the plains as bases for a spiritual interpretation of Islam? Sultan Bahu of Jhang and Bullay Shah of Qasur were in later times the outstanding mystical poets of the *Qadiriyya* in whose verse the Punjabi language found its most eloquent expression.

Again a member of the *Qadiriyya*, but much more sophisticated than Husain and the folk poets, was Mir Muhammad, known as Mian Mir, who reached Lahore in about 1575, that is, during Madho Lal's lifetime. Mian Mir came from Sind, and his maternal grandfather was Qadi Qadan, the first noted mystical poet in Sindhi literature. Mian Mir practised hard asceticism, but was fond of music, and his spiritual food was the *dhikr*, the constant repetition of the profession of faith by which 'the jasmine flower "God" grows in the heart to fill it with fragrance', as Sultan Bahu sings. Mian Mir carefully observed the injunctions of the Koran and the example of the Prophet (except that he preferred a celibate life). His spiritual power impressed Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and Prince Dara Shikoh was brought into his presence when he was seriously ailing, and was healed. It is therefore not surprising that the young, sensitive Dara Shikoh, heir apparent of the Mughal Empire, became a disciple of Mian Mir shortly before the master's death in 1635. While the House of Timur in India generally adhered to the Chishti order in Sufism, the crown prince and his sister Jahanara, senior to him by one year, were officially initiated into the *Qadiriyya* in 1639 by Mian Mir's successor, Molla Shah Badakhshi. 'Of all the descendants of Timur, only we two, brother and sister, were fortunate to obtain this felicity. None of our forefathers had tread this path in quest of God and in search for the truth'. Thus wrote Princess Jahanara who advanced so much on the mystical path that her master Molla Shah would have made her his successor if that had been possible — but the *Qadiriyya* allow no female successorship, and women are not even permitted to enter the interior of a saint's tomb.

While Mian Mir had come to Lahore from the old city of Sehwan on the Lower Indus, Molla Shah belonged to the mountains of Badakhshan, the northeastern corner of Afghanistan, long famed for its rubies. When he settled in Lahore in 1614 — the year of Jahanara's birth — he devoted himself to ascetic pursuits even more than Mian Mir. But contrary to this master, who left nothing in writing, Molla Shah was a rather fertile poet in different genres. Miniature paintings sometimes show him, with his clear-cut, ascetic face, in conversation with Mian Mir, who usually keeps his prayer beads in



Portrait of Dara Shikoh; Mughal, attributed to Balchand, opaque watercolour on paper, c. 1630.

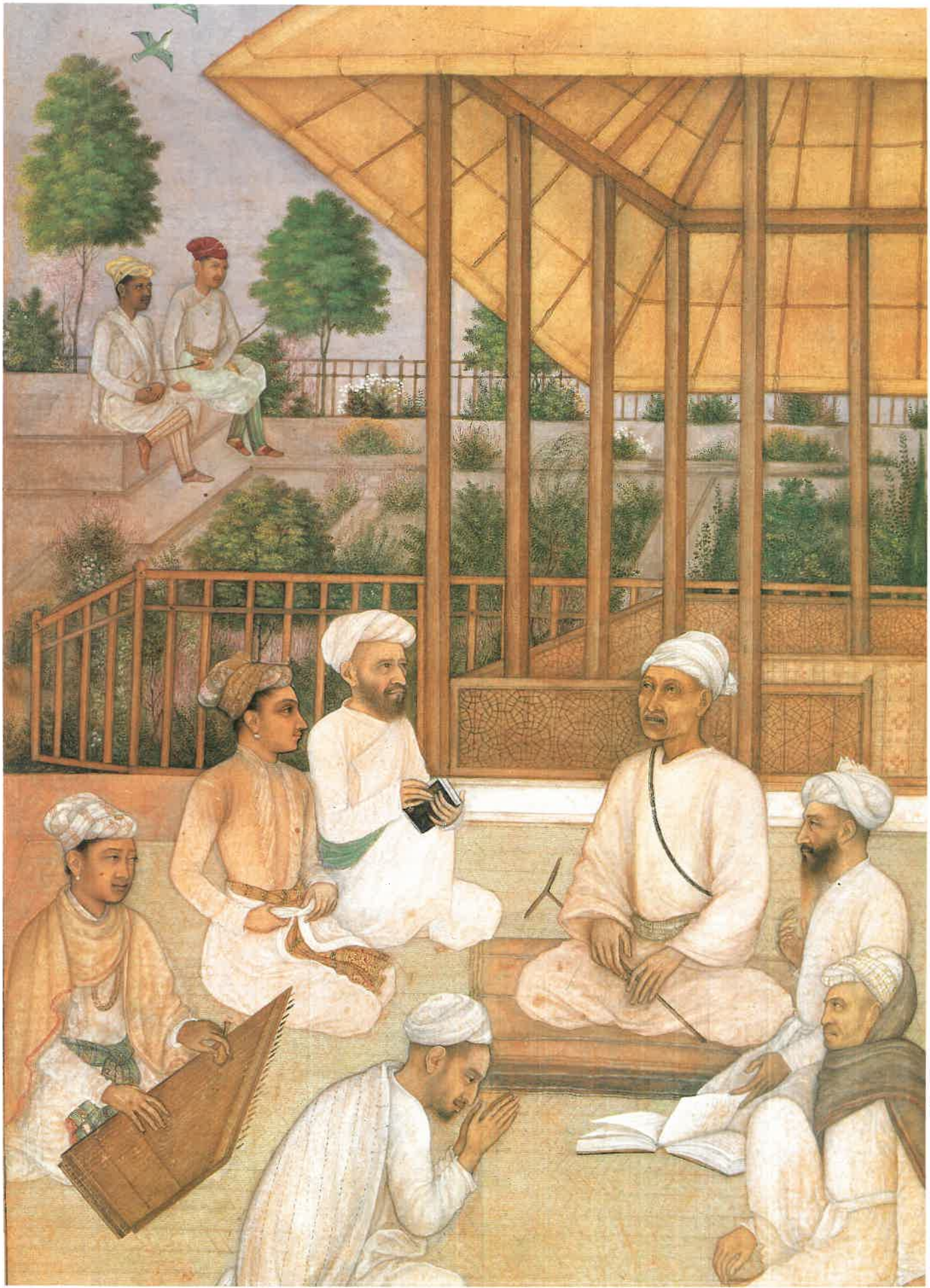
Calligraphy Signed by Dara Shikoh; Mughal, ink on marbled paper, mid 17th century.

Dara Shikoh Conversing with Religious Advisors; Mughal, by Govardhan, opaque watercolour on paper, c. 1630.



his arthritic fingers. For a long time, Molla Shah lived in Kashmir, the summer resort of the Mughal emperors and home of many poets during the seventeenth century, but later he returned to Lahore where he died in poverty in 1661.

In the meantime much had happened, and the spiritual climate of Lahore was changing. Prince Dara Shikoh, the heir apparent, was more interested in cultural and religious pursuits than in the affairs of the state: he was a skillful calligrapher in various styles of writing and, like his father and grandfather, an eager collector of miniatures. His poetry developed the ideas of traditional Sufism and speaks with disgust of the legalistic scholars who were far, far away from the right understanding of Divine Unity, nay, of the Unity of Being. The prince went so far as to translate fifty of the Vedic *Upanishads*,



with the help of some pandits, because he assumed that the Vedas are the 'hidden book' mentioned in the Koran (Sura 56/78); therefore, he concluded, their knowledge was incumbent upon the Muslims. And it seemed to him that the deep gap between Hinduism, the religion of the majority of the Mughal Empire, and Islam, could be bridged by means of mystical, all-inclusive monotheism. He dreamt of creating the *majma' al-bahrain*, 'The Mingling of the Two Oceans', as he called one of his books, with an allusion to the Koran (Sura 18/60): the ocean of Islam and that of Hinduism.

But while Dara Shikoh was busy disputing with mystics of all persuasions and composing poetry and prose works (among them a biography of Mian Mir and his saintly sister Bibi Jamal Khatun), his younger brother Aurangzeb excelled in martial arts and grew up to become a clever politician. The final struggle between the brothers (Prince Murad and Prince Shah Shuja' were also involved) broke out in late 1657, when Shah Jahan fell ill. Dara Shikoh had to flee; his beloved wife Nadira Begum died in Baluchistan. Since she, like her husband, was a devotee of Mian Mir, she wanted to be buried close to him, and the prince sent her body to Lahore, accompanied by a handful of his last soldiers. Soon afterwards he was apprehended.

Portrait of Dara Shikoh; *detail*.

Nadira Begum's tomb looked absolutely desolate still in the early 1960s, when it overlooked, a grey ruin, the quarter of the washermen. But during the last decade its original elegant structure has been repaired, and children play in the small garden that surrounds the charming building close to Mian Mir's tomb. Dara Shikoh, however, is buried far away from his spiritual



guide, namely in the mausoleum of his ancestor Humayun in Delhi, the city where his brother had him executed in 1659. The prince had begun to erect a mausoleum for Mian Mir, which Aurangzeb later completed. The present white, pavilion-like building with its slightly curved roof and superb silver work in the door is one of the most spiritual places in Lahore, and the visitor understands what Iqbal meant when he describes Mian Mir as

The flute of Love's music —
His tomb protects our city from all harm.

And he makes him the spokesman of true monotheism, a man who does not care any more for things created, but only for the One God:

What is the prime condition
You know? — in the path of gnosis?
It is to give up both worlds
and throw them under your feet!

|| Molla Shah's small tomb, however, is barely known to the inhabitants of the city where he once wielded so much spiritual power.



While Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Prince Dara represent the glory of the Mughal Empire to which lustre was added by the presence of great saints, one should not forget that Lahore was also a materially flourishing city in those decades. The British merchant William Finch, who visited Lahore as early as 1611, describes the old city: 'The buildings are faire and high, with bricke and much curiositie of carved window and doores; most of the doores of sixe or seven steps ascent and very troublesome to get up, so built for more security and that passenger should not see into their houses ...'

Thirty years later, Fra Sebastian Manrique tells of his impressions: 'I entered the city — a very difficult undertaking on account of the number of people who filled the streets, some on foot, some on camels, some on elephants and others in small carts, jolting one against the other as they went along'. This could be said even today, when camels are replaced by rikshas, motorcycles, and cars ... but it was worth enduring this bustling life, for, as Manrique continues: 'The abundance of the provisions and cleanliness of the streets surprises me much; also the peace and quietness with which everything was conducted, as well as the justness and rectitude of people towards each other; so that merchant and merchandise remain perfectly secure from thieves'.

The Venetian traveller Manucci, who visited the city another 25 years later, in 1667, praises the orchards of Lahore: 'The air is very good and wholesome, as may be seen by the complexions of the inhabitants, above all from the villagers, men and woman, a very simple folk, well-built and friendly-natured', and he described the houses which are lofty, 'some having eight storeys'. The wealth of the city was a result of its situation on the Grand Trunk Road. Here, the much sought-after spices were brought. One

of the main commodities was indigo, which was carried via Lahore to Qandahar and from there to Isfahan and Aleppo; it was known in Europe as *lauri*, that is, 'Lahori', as a Flemish merchant wrote in 1626. But the same merchant remarked that the overland convoys were more expensive than the sea trade, which became increasingly important with Europe.

To be sure, Lahore too sent goods to the ports at the mouth of the Indus besides its caravan trade to Iran and further west, but it seems that the flourishing city had lost some of its importance already shortly after 1660. One reason may have been the political changes after Aurangzeb's ascension, for this new Emperor's interests lay elsewhere. However, the more immediate reason may have been the destruction of a considerable number of houses in the 1660s due to a series of inundations, and a change in the course of the Ravi, which affected the life of the inhabitants.

Despite other preoccupations, Aurangzeb decided to have a major mosque built in Lahore and to add to the Fort a new gateway, the Alamgiri Gate, which opens straight toward the new mosque. This mosque, now known as the Badshahi Mosque, surpasses by far its model, the Great Mosque in Delhi, built by Shah Jahan some 25 years earlier. The enormous space of the courtyard that extends behind the high rising gateway allows tens of thousands of faithful to assemble for the Friday or the 'Id prayers. One can say that the whole mosque is conceived as one large *mihrab* (prayer niche) to attract the praying Muslims' minds to Mecca and the central sanctuary of Islam, the Kaaba. The combination of the simple-looking red sandstone which is yet delicately moulded and the graceful ornamentation in stucco of the vaulted prayer hall is remarkable, and the repeated contrast between the enormous and the graceful reminds the visitor of the constant interplay of God's Majesty and His Grace, of His Kindness and His Wrath, as expressed in ever so many religious poems in the Islamic world.

Even more impressive seems the combination of Mosque and Fort. Looking from the high museum building in the Fort the two places — though later interrupted by Ranjit Singh's small marble hall — seem to form a unity, and thus represent the ideal of Aurangzeb who, like many Muslim thinkers and rulers, felt that *din u daula*, religion and state, should be inseparably united for the benefit of the Muslims.

The Badshahi Mosque was completed in 1673 under the supervision of Fidai Khan Kokah. But in the following decades Aurangzeb devoted his whole energy to the conquest of the Deccan states of Bijapur and Golconda and the defence of the far overstressed southern borders of the Mughal Empire. He never turned back to the city where his ancestors had lived and were buried, but found his last resting place in the northern Deccan. After his death in 1707, the power of the Muslims in the Subcontinent was severely threatened by internal and external enemies. Aurangzeb's son Bahadur Shah, who had overcome his brothers in long struggles died in 1712 in Lahore, and after his

death the city — gateway to the imperial seat of Delhi — experienced the repeated invasions of conquerors, a fate similar to its history in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

|| Nadir Shah of Iran and Ahmad Shah Abdali Durrani of Qandahar, though Muslims, left the devastating traces of their armies when they passed through. The Sikhs encroached upon the western Punjab and finally became its rulers — a touching monument to the Lahoris' resistance is the small tomb of Sharafunnisa. This young noblewoman from Lahore died in 1745 and is praised by Iqbal in the *Javidnama* (1932) as the one 'who kept the Koran and the sword' to fight the Sikh invaders — but to no avail. Her small tomb with its simple decoration of tiles in cypress motifs is certainly more modest than the paradisiacal mansion which she is granted in Iqbal's poem.

After a very brief interlude of Maratha interference in the Lahore area, the Sikhs became the rulers of the Punjab in 1767, and the Fort as well as the Shalimar Gardens were largely robbed of the precious stones, the *pietra dura* work and of the gold and copper used in their decoration. During the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who established himself in 1802, many of the traditional buildings in the city were destroyed, and the ruler's European military adviser, General Allard, apparently had a hand in the demolition of numerous buildings in the walled city. Seven years after Ranjit Singh had ascended the throne, a casual British visitor describes Lahore as 'a melancholy picture of fallen splendour. Here the lofty dwellings and *masjids*, which, fifty years ago, raised their tops to the skies, and were the pride of a busy and active population, are now crumbling into dust ... In going over these ruins, I saw not a human being — all was silence, solitude and gloom.' Among the 'lofty buildings' that had crumbled were the minarets of the Badshahi Mosque, which were rebuilt in 1856.

By this time the Punjab was under British control, and Lahore became again a somewhat livelier city. The British built a cantonment in the area of Mian Mir, an area in which in 1882 'trees could be grown only with great difficulty', but which is now a very green part of Lahore. In the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries educational and cultural institutions were founded, beginning with the Mayo Hospital. A Civil Service Academy and the prestigious Aitchison College in its beautiful park-like surroundings and, last but not least, the famous University of the Punjab were created — all institutions which produced many men who later became leaders in the freedom movement. The Old Campus of the University is situated on the main axis of the new city, called The Mall, where most of the official buildings are located: the High Court dates back to 1889 while its (almost) neighbour, the Museum, was opened as early as 1864. Rudyard Kipling has immortalised the cannon in front of the Museum — a gun that had been used by Ahmad Shah Durrani to fight the Sikhs. Kipling was familiar with the place since his father was teaching Art in Lahore and he himself worked there for some time as a journalist. Today Lahore is still an

Heavenly Joys Come to Earth;
Mughal, leaf from book, attributed to
Khem Karan, opaque watercolour on
paper, c.1588.

important centre of fine arts, and the Mayo School of Art continues the important tradition of artistic life in Pakistan.

In the late nineteenth century, translations of English works into Urdu were encouraged by the British government, especially in the Government College Lahore under its Austrian director Dr. W.G. Leitner. From 1874, a British officer, Colonel Holroyd, arranged *musha'iras*, or poetry readings. Here were the first occasions for poems in a new style to be recited by men like Hali and Azad, who were in the forefront of literary renewal. Their and their colleagues' poems no longer used the traditional forms and images, inherited from the Persian, but expressed scenes from real life, or spoke of the complaints and miseries, but also of the hopes and duties of the Indian Muslims, using literary forms adapted from the English. Numerous Urdu newspapers and magazines — like Maulana Zafar Ali's *Zamindar* — voiced the increasing search for identity among the Muslims. Justice Shah Din had spoken of the necessity for women's education in touching terms in the late nineteenth century, and a growing circle of enlightened Muslims wrote for papers like Sir Abdul Qadir's *Makhzan*. This was also the paper in which Iqbal published some of his early Urdu poetry. When Dr. Muhammad Iqbal (born in 1877 in Sialkot, but educated in Lahore) took up residence in the city after returning from England and Germany in 1908, Lahore once more became a centre of Islamic spirit. Here, Iqbal published his philosophical prose writing in English and his numerous poems in Urdu and Persian from 1915 until his death in 1938 — poems in which he taught the apparently dormant Muslims self-respect, and called them to remember that they were sent to earth to work here as God's vicegerents to ameliorate this world, inspired by Divine Love, a dynamic force which overcomes all difficulties.

In Lahore, Iqbal is buried in a small mausoleum of red sandstone that leans against the steps of the Badshahi Mosque in which the glory of Islam is so majestically embodied. One of the symbolically decisive actions taken after Pakistan came into existence on August 14, 1947, was the re-opening of the Alamgiri Gate in the Fort on November 18, 1949 — that gate which had been filled in with bricks by the British and which symbolises so perfectly the close relation of *din u daula*, the religious and the practical aspects of Islam.

Since Independence, Lahore has grown into a teeming modern city with millions of inhabitants, extending far beyond the old Mughal quarters as well as beyond the British additions to the nucleus. The old gardens have been renewed and complemented by new ones, and the monuments of the past, the shrines of Data Sahib and Mian Mir are still alive and remind the inhabitants of the city's spiritual glory, like talismans, while Iqbal's modest mausoleum seems to translate this poet's words that, 'The poet is the heart in the breast of a nation.'

— Dr. Annemarie Schimmel

انچه با استمال نصافش
 سال دماه از تو اثر کرش
 معجزی من که خواستگار ش
 کوبیا لا اله الا الله
 اندرین روز مگر کرش
 که ندانی جنبه میاری
 غایت مهر خواجه بران
 طبعم چون بخود آن معجز
 رغبت منس که رتب او
 خواجه را که خازن او است
 کیست آن کس عطار دلفی
 دوش وقت سحر بدان معنی
 ما سوران ز بخت طالع کن
 یعنی را کینه بنیاد است
 کان و دریا از و بفریاد
 نه بپای تو حتم اقامت
 از خواص پامبری زاد
 حاجتم را زبان نمیداد
 که ز بخت چه کار بگفت
 محضر را از پی تو نهناد
 که در خلاق آدمی است
 از و رای خراب دایم است
 معطی کا فاسب از و باد
 که بدو جان آسان نشاد
 که در از این کعبه ام یادت
 بقاضای آن فرستاد

آفرین باد بر چنان معطی
 که دینش نیز دایم است



ای ملک با کلاه ارجیش
 زاد می زاد چون تو بی کرم
 پیش قدرت کلاه نهاده
 مادر و فرکار ناز داده

خواب خوشی را گین ترا
 بنده با چرخ طبع است امرو
 شیر ز هر چه رو به باد
 چون خاندان کلاسیا شده

اچل

L'Empire du Grand Mogol; map,
French, c.1800.





برشگال ای بهارهندستان
 ای نجات از بلای تابستان
 هر سو ازاں لشکری داری
 در امارت مگر سری داری
 باد های تو مینها دارند
 مینهای تو تنینها دارد
 برعد های تو کوسها کوبند
 چرخ گوید همی که بکثوبند
 طبع و حال هوا دگر کردی
 دشتها را همه شمر کردی
 سبزها را طراوتی داری
 عمرها را حلاوتی دادی
 راغ را گل زمردین کردی
 باغ را شاخ بسیدین کردی
 تیر بگذشت ناگهان برما
 منہزم گشت لشکر گرما
 جبذا ابرهای برنم تو
 خرما سبزهای خرم تو
 بسکه خرم شده است لہاودور
 باشد آل کس کہ می خورد معذور

Oh rainy season, oh you lovely Time!
 Oh rescue from the cruel summer's heat!
 You bring a mighty army here of clouds;
 You seem to be the leader of the crowd!
 Your winds and breezes bring the gentle rains,
 And all your rains are swords and silver chains.
 Your thunders beat the heavy kettle drum;
 The sphere commands, "Now open all the knots!"
 You changed the nature of the atmosphere —
 You turned the desert into rivulets;
 You granted freshness to the greenery;
 You granted sweetness to the life of man!
 You made the mountain slopes all emerald;
 You gave the orchards coral-coloured twigs.
 The cruel month, July, is over now,
 And routed is the army of Great Heat.
 How lovely are your humid clouds, how sweet!
 How happy is your blooming greenery!
 So cheerful is the city of Lahore
 That one forgives those who enjoy their wine!



Part One

The Crossroads



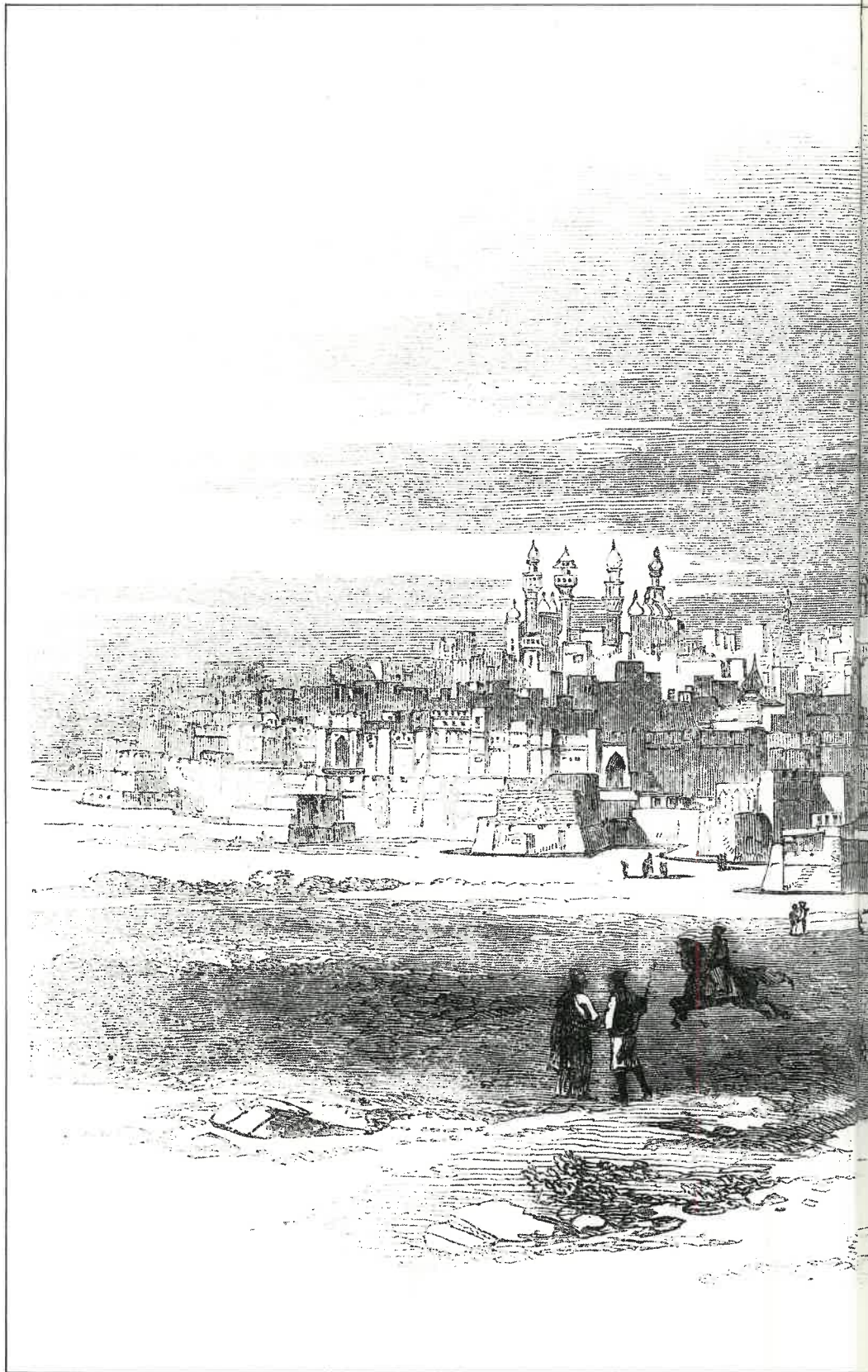
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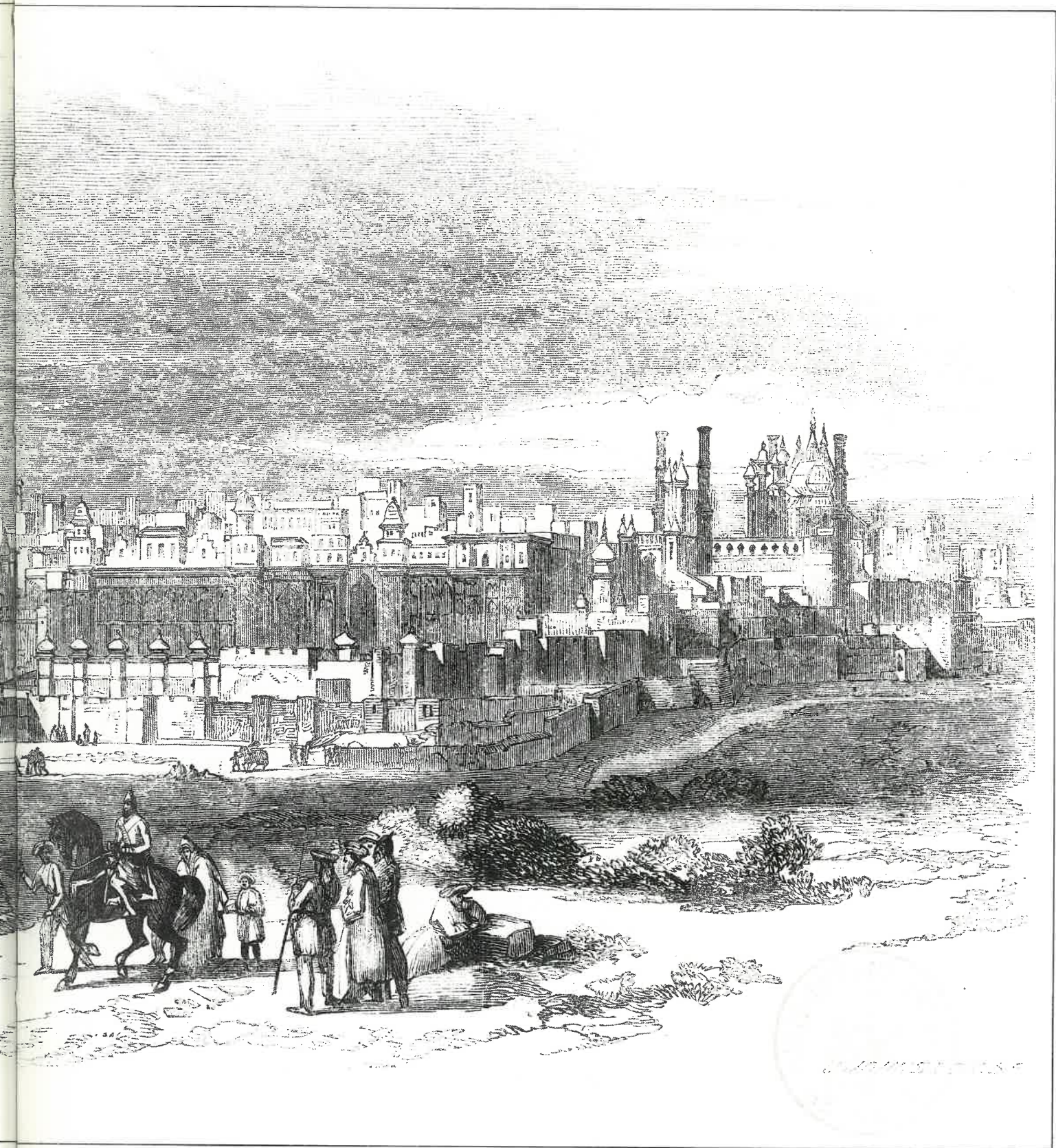
Lahore City by the Delhi Gate,
Alfred Harcourt, watercolour, 1879.
Harcourt served in India from 1855 to
1889 with the Bengal Infantry.
He loved the Punjab and delighted in
the life and people of the old city.

Imagine that it is that magical hour before dawn in Lahore. Stars twinkle in the deep blue-grey sky and a cool breeze, sweeping across the sleeping city, ruffles the dust in the streets: the fine, ancient dust of the Punjab plains. The houses are clustered close together, built around courtyards and alleys, intersected by narrow streets that wind around with no apparent pattern. It is a labyrinth made of shops, mosques, and houses, studded with overhanging balconies, curving, rotund domes, and fragile-looking towers. Here and there a massive, curiously carved wooden door leads into a garden ... all these are encircled by a brick wall thirty feet high, pierced by thirteen gateways and guarded jealously by the great Fort that looms in the distance.

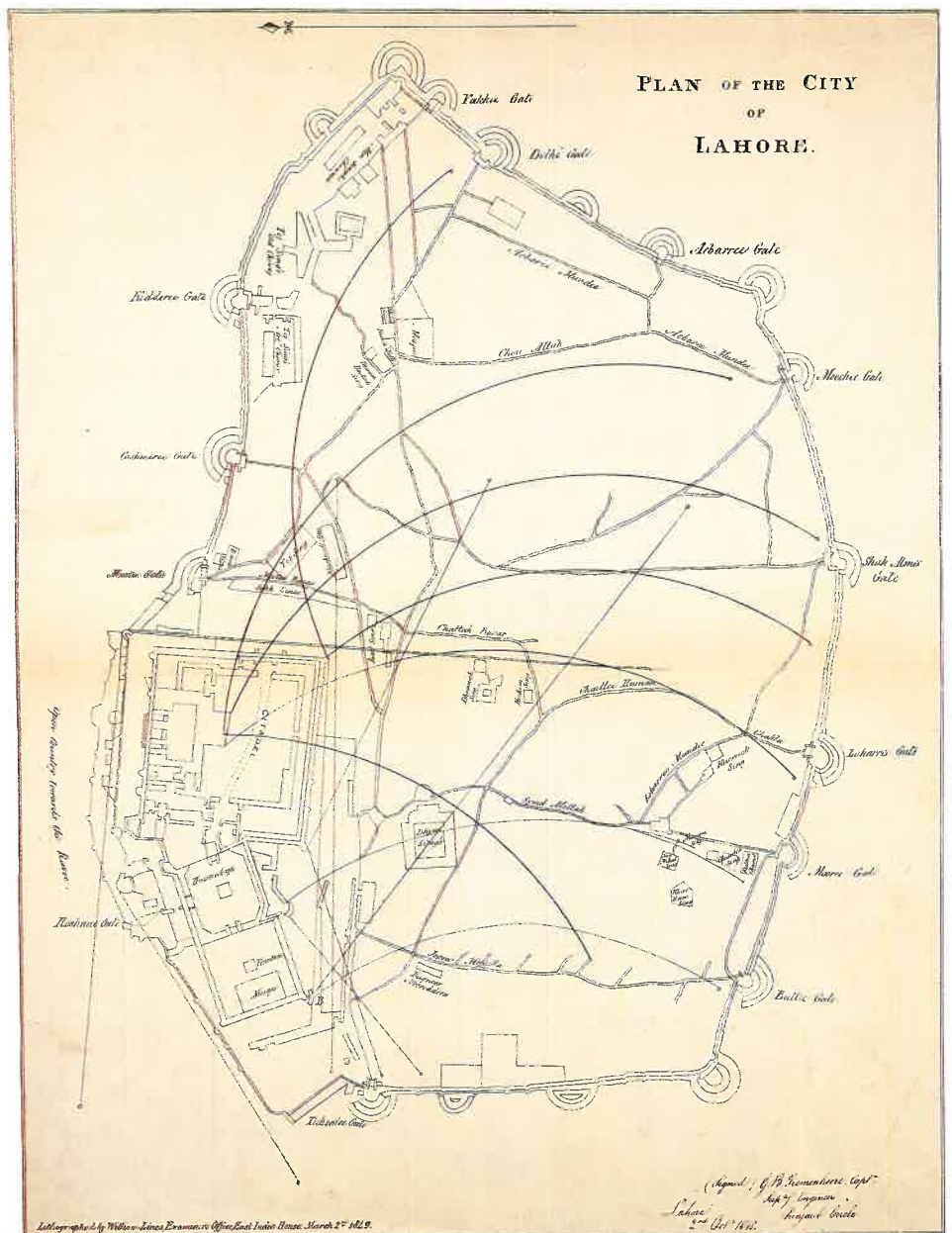
The air is laden with the fragrance of jasmine, the smoky, earthy fumes of cooking fires and, with each waft of the breeze, the haunting smell of the night-blooming bush *rat-ki-rani* (Queen of the Night). The strains of sitar music weaving together the *raga* that welcomes the dawn cast a potent spell over the ruined arch and mouldering tombs, causing the faded and broken tiles to glow afresh and defining the misty outlines of domes and *havelis*. The Hindu rajas, the Mughal emperors, the Sikh invaders and the British Raj have faded as dreams of the night — but as memory stirs in this magic dawn, it awakens the echoes of long ago ... Gardens bloom again in the wilderness and once more fruit trees line the roads all the way from Lahore to Agra, as they did when Akbar was king. *Kos minars* spring up by the roadside, large red brick minarets situated every eight miles to bid the weary traveller to rest. Persian water wheels creak alongside the road, telling of cool clear water to quench the thirst, and the music of dancing bells and singing courtesans tantalises the senses.

View of Lahore; *Jean Baptista
Tavernier, c.1641-68.*





Plan of the City of Lahore
 (Signed) G.B. Tremeneere, Capt.
 Sup of Engineer Punjab Circle
 Lahore 2nd Oct 1848.



The walled city is a mile and a quarter long and three quarters of a mile wide, its shape an irregular trapezium with its longest side to the north. On this northern side sits the citadel, overlooking the breadth of the city. The diameter of the entire old city is just less than three miles, yet each brick has a story to tell — so much history, romance and tragedy has happened here, and is continuing to happen. The stars dim ...

The *muezzins* climb to their minarets and survey the sleeping city while the eastern horizon displays streaks of pink and gold. Each *muezzin* raises his voice, and the calls to prayer resonate among the rooftops of the various quarters of the city, beckoning the faithful to prayer. As the sound of the *aazan* penetrates into the twisting by-lanes and wakes people from their dreams, it brings with it the message of hope and joy. Cocks crow, sparrows

twitter and pigeons fly out of their roosts. The sun floods the sky with light. The city awakens, dispels its dreams, and begins to hum with the activity and work of a new day.



The country of Pakistan, modern-day home to Lahore, sits in a unique position between greatly contrasting and exotic lands, seas and mountain ranges. To the south, the warm Arabian Sea laps its shores, while to the north and east, beyond the Himalayas, stretch the steppes of China. To the west lay the rugged steppes and plateaus of Iran and Afghanistan, and to the east, long-disputed Kashmir and then India stretch down along its border. In the north-central part of this land of contrasts and crossroads lies the ancient fertile plain of the Punjab — a land irresistably attractive to foreign conquerors from time immemorial and, thus, a land destined to play a significant role in the history of the Indian Subcontinent.

The Punjab gains its name from its predominant geographical feature — the five rivers (literally, the Persian *panj ab*) which penetrate and irrigate it. These five life-giving and sustaining rivers, the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej, lace the plain as tributaries to one mighty mother river, the Indus, which itself begins as many plunging white torrents in the five-mile-high mountains of Central Asia, before it pours out of the valleys between the world's highest peaks in Northern Pakistan and wends its way across the Punjabi plain. Its floods have coursed through the aeons, down always at last to the Arabian Sea. Indeed the waters of the Indus have flowed through and nurtured at least fifty centuries of human civilisation in one of the most ancient corners of the globe, where fabled cities which flourished centuries ago remain, in part, today.

Between 3,000 and 2,000 B.C. there existed in the valley of the Indus a literate civilisation comparable to those that flourished in the valleys of the Nile and the Tigris-Euphrates. Harappa and later Mohenjodaro were the ancient capitals of the Indus Valley civilisation; both had citadels and have left evidence of a highly developed agrarian culture, four times as big as Babylonia and twice as big as Egypt.

In the northeast corner of this country, on the left bank of the River Ravi, is another of those fabled cities: Lahore, the crown city of the 'land of five waters' for over 1900 years. And even before the hazy dawn of history, nations clashed or melded here as the first Aryan settlers migrated from the north to settle, while other groups moved onward, westwards, to Europe.

Despite its importance, the origins of Lahore are shrouded in the mists of folklore: according to the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*, Rama, who was the incarnation of Vishnu, sired twin sons, Lava (or Loh) and Kush (Kusa-ba). The people of the region will still tell you that these two sons founded the

He employed local artists to illustrate a number of his treatises. The maps in this atlas are lavishly decorated with illustrations of birds, animals, costumed figures, trades, religious festivals and cultures peculiar to the various parts of the Mughal Empire.

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Souba de Lahor



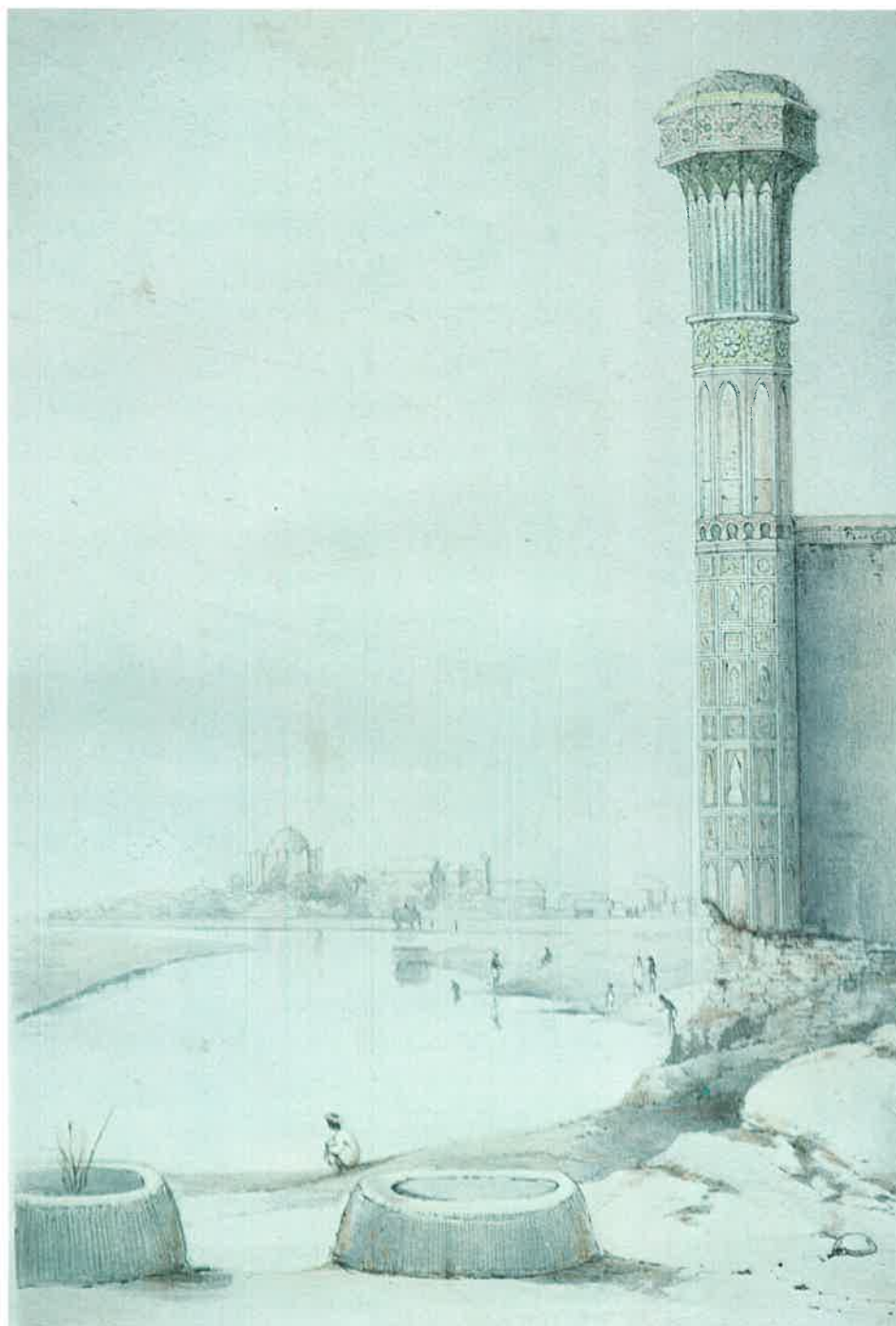
cities of Loh-Awar (the Fort of Loh), or Lahore, and Kasur respectively. Thus, Lahore's ancient designation as the Fort of Loh would imply that it is one of the oldest cities in the world.

Mention also occurs of battles for a city on the banks of the Ravi River in the chronicles of Kanishka, the great Gandharvi ruler of the Kushan dynasty, in the second century A.D. Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the Indian Court of Chandra Gupta Maurya from 306–298 B.C., passed through a city commonly identified with the early Lahore on his journey to the kingdom of Magadha in eastern Hindustan: he spoke of it in glowing terms, as a fortified city of great culture and charm. Hsuan Tsang, the famous Buddhist pilgrim from China recorded his passage through a large city, presumably Lahore, in 630 A.D. on his way to Jalandhar, in the Punjab.

The fact that Lahore lay on this eastward route from Central Asia to Central India reinforces the most important theme in the city's recorded history — its location as an urban centre of defence dividing the northern Indus plains from the Gangetic plains. The earliest known princes of Lahore were Rajputs, and for nearly ten centuries Rajput dynasties accorded importance to the city and its prized Fort as the parent of other colonies and eventually as



Anarkullies Tomb, from the Mooltan Road; by an anonymous artist, lithograph, 1854. Anarkali, a court dancer, was put to death by order of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1599. Today, her tomb houses the Punjab archives, surrounded by the Anarkali Bazaar.



Mosque of Wazir Khan, Charles Stewart Hardinge, tinted lithograph 1846 (detail at left). Sheikh 'Ilm-ud-din Ansari founded this mosque in 1634 AD, during the time that he served the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and received the title of Wazir Khan. In 1641, he bequeathed the income of all the shops and houses around the Masjid to the support of the mosque and its establishment.



the capital of the province itself. Throughout the reign of the Turkish and Pathan kings who followed, Lahore retained its uniquely important status due to its commanding position on the Ravi confronting the invaders from the West, though at times it existed as a 'second city' after Delhi. When the Turkish Amirs of Ghazna and Gaur (in present-day Afghanistan) entered the Subcontinent in the eleventh century, it was to Lahore that they came after their first rounds of battles, and that city naturally became their capital and garrison headquarters for the later conquest of the plains.

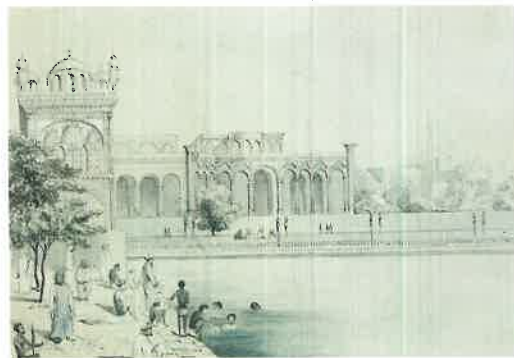
Early in that eleventh century the Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna became the first Muslim invader of the Punjab. It is highly unlikely that the new sultan realised the portentous significance of his actions for the future of the region, but the Muslims would ultimately grow in strength there until the region would become irrevocably theirs. Even in this early time the city began to rise to prominence under Muslim influence, and the Fort and city walls were built up by Mahmud's governor, Malik Ayaz.

One hundred years later, this Ghaznian dynasty was replaced by the Ghaurian dynasty (later to be called the Slave Dynasty) under the Amir Muhammad Ghauri. This Amir had entered into a protracted series of engagements with the famed Rajput chieftain Prithvi Raj Chauhan, who dominated the eastern Punjab and what is now western Uttar Pradesh. At the end of this epic series of battles, whose events are a source of legend and folklore today, Muhammad Ghauri triumphed and crowned himself sultan at Lahore, where he established his imperial capital. Sultan Muhammad Ghauri was succeeded by his former slave, who had conquered the relatively younger city of Delhi 300 miles away and established his capital there. This slave sultan later went on to found and name the Slave Dynasty of Northern India. Under the Ghaurians, Lahore enjoyed prosperity until it was pillaged by the Mongol hordes.

Like many of the peoples from Central Asia to the Mediterranean in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, the inhabitants of Lahore were caught in the wave of Mongol invasions which ebbed and flowed over most of the

A view of the Badshahi Masjid from the river; *drawing, c.1840.*

The Kotwali from the borders of the Tank; *drawing, c.1854.*



The Marble Pavilion Inside the
Lahore Fort; *Charles
Stewart Hardinge, watercolour,
1846. Hardinge accompanied
his father Lord Hardinge to India
when he became Governor
General in 1844. In 1846, he
painted this busy market around
the Hazuri Bagh pavilion.
This vivid scene, with its nuzzling
horses, drowsy elephant and
lazily reclining merchants, shows
the obvious delight he took in
the details of life around him.*

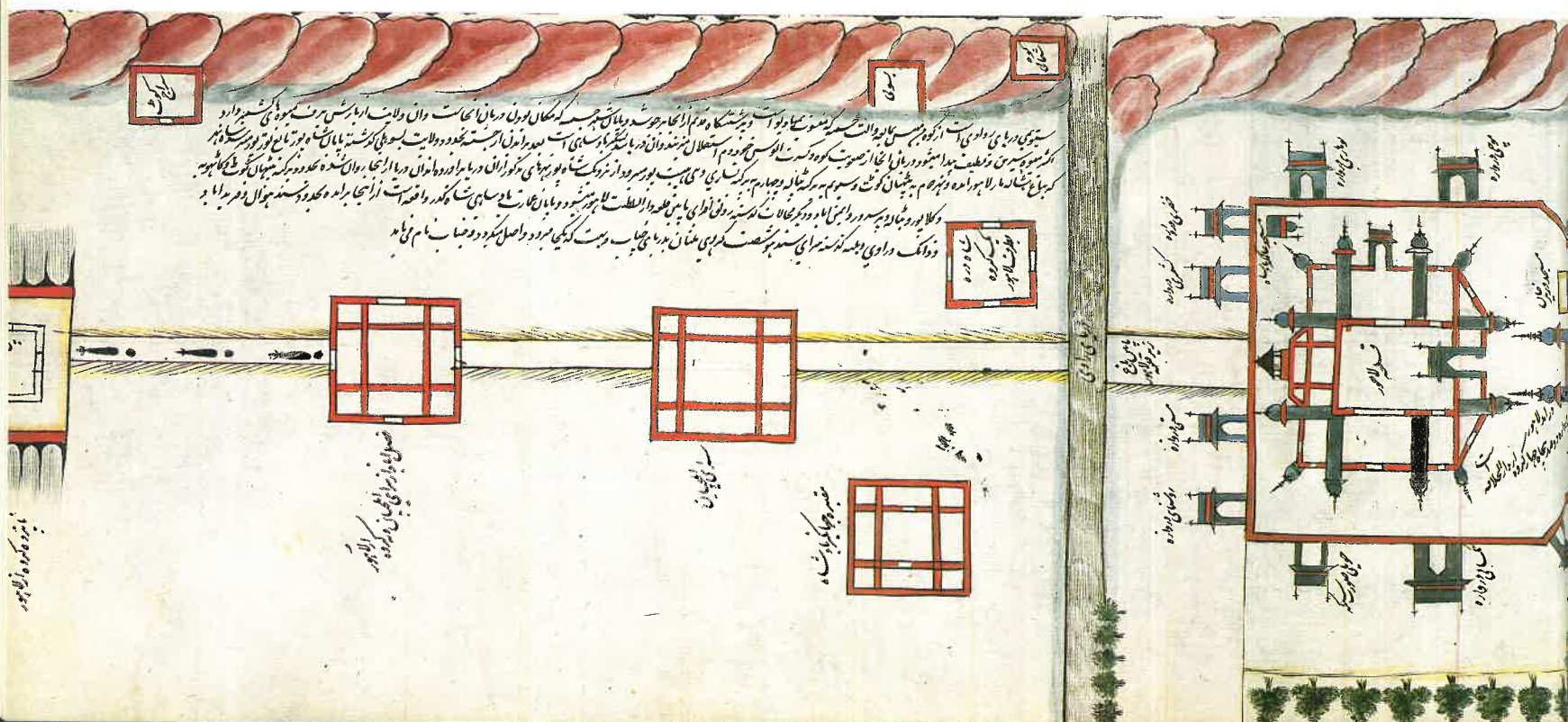


A Mughal Chart of the Road from Delhi to Kandahar; artist unknown, drawing, c.1600. The complete scroll, an ancient 'road-map,' shows rivers, serais, landmarks and cities along the route. Shown here is the section encompassing Lahore and its citadel, including the detailed depiction of each of the thirteen gates in the wall.

known world. In the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, the legendary — and infamous — Chingiz Khan, led the first of his warrior-followers out of Mongolia. These terrible aggressors destroyed their opponents with their military brilliance, uncompromising conquests, and seemingly inexorable progress across the world. In 1217 they reached Lahore. Chingiz Khan plundered it briefly but mercilessly, and then withdrew. However, the next year his army returned and drove out the city's ruler Jalaluddin Sultan for good measure.

Dark storm clouds of Mongol armies reappeared sporadically on the horizon for the next hundred years, bursting suddenly and with fury over the city, and then withdrawing just as quickly with their captured treasure to the northern plains until need or desire would incline them to return again. But the residents of Lahore learned to live with this imminent danger and to carry on with their daily lives in the face of uncertainty. The various kings and governors who ruled it during this time diligently and bravely rebuilt the Fort as often as prosperity allowed. Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban Ulugh Khan later ordered the magnificent reconstruction of the burned and razed Lahore Fort, though it was periodically pillaged and plundered for another ninety years. The Mongol invasions eventually became so commonplace, and almost mundane, that during the fourteenth century under the Tughlak dynasty a prestigious quarter was ultimately added to the city in order to support the growing population of those Mongol intruders who had decided to simply stay and settle there. This quarter was called 'Mughalpura' after them, and today it still contains some of the most beautiful *havelis* and important residences of the city of Lahore.

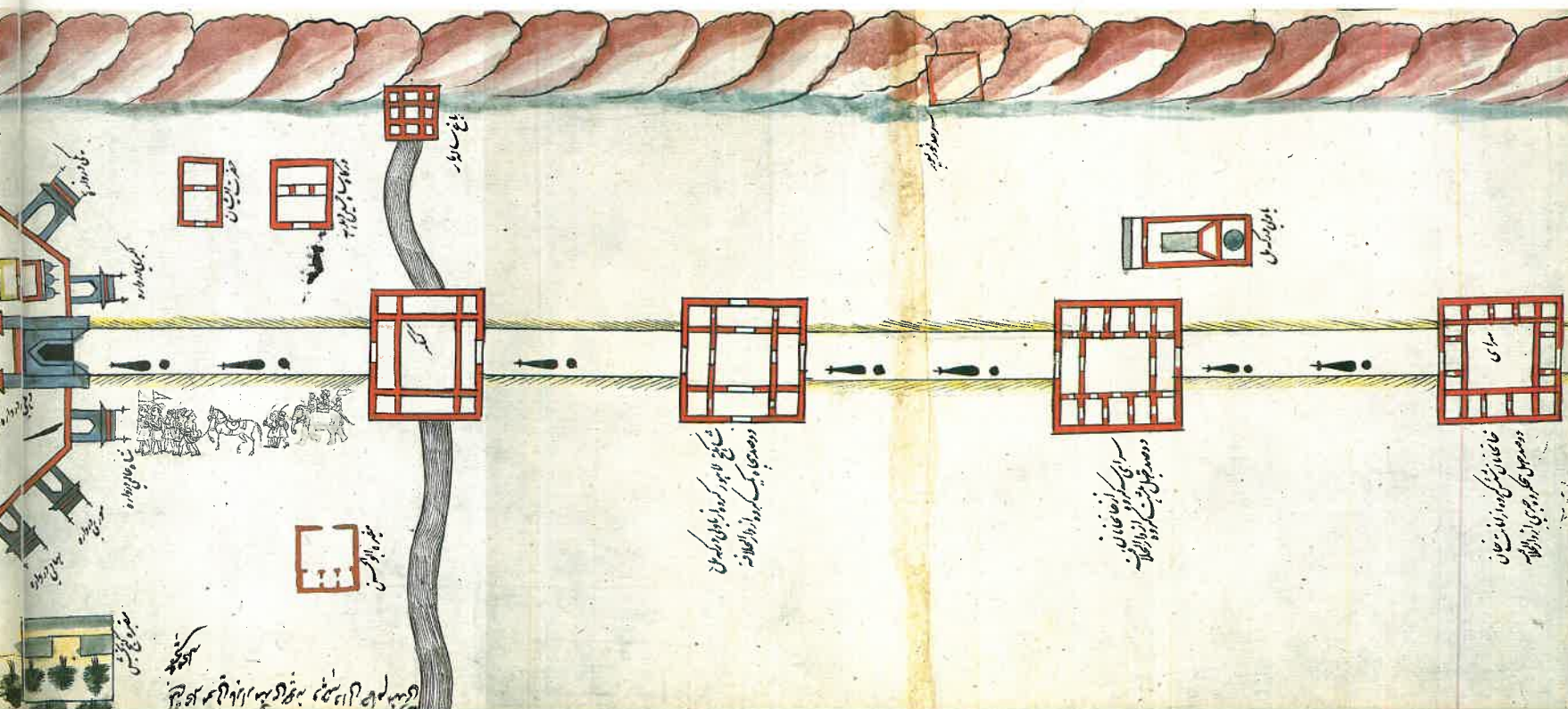
Finally in 1398, the fearsome 'firebrand of the universe' Timur (Timurlane) emerged to lead the Mongol hordes into the heart of India and, en route, to sack Lahore for the last time. One particularly vibrant account of Timur's devastation in the Punjab comes from Ibn Arabshah, a captive of Timur's for twelve years who witnessed the fall of Lahore and Delhi first-hand.



It was September 22, 1398, and the massive Mongolian army along with its swollen bands of captives was perched on the edge of the River Indus, prepared to cross. The bow-legged, lame Turkish Timur (who wanted desperately to be a Mongol, but was in reality a Barlas Turk fortunate enough to wed into the royal Mongol line and to thereby gain the title of 'gurgan', or royal son-in-law) led his troops across the Indus in the course of a leisurely and prolonged looting spree. But as they approached the heavily fortified cities of Lahore and Delhi, even Timur's highest officers became solemn and wide-eyed, and began nervously joking of joining the women's quarters. The entire army proceeded in dread towards the cities which housed the infamous armies of elephants.

Timur's army approached Lahore; and once in view of the city, they at last caught sight of these magnificent beasts of war approaching them. Foot soldiers and cavalry led the way, and following, grouped in a phalanx, were the elephants. They plodded heavily, each clad in massive hand-wrought plates of armour, and armed with long, glinting swords, bound to the ends of their tusks and projecting far beyond their heads. They appeared to be indomitable war machines. Mounted on their backs were armoured turrets impenetrable to arrow or sword, and within the turret walls rode specially trained warriors — from archery marksmen to experts in slinging hot pitch. Surely any ordinary adversary would have turned and fled.

But the fiery Timur was not an ordinary opponent, and he held fast and called on his military brilliance to counter this foe. He surrounded his foot soldiers with a wide bank of earth with deep ditches dug at its borders. In the field beyond he planted stakes which sported long projecting metal barbs, and supplied his cavalymen with 'caltrops' — large obstacles shaped like a child's jack, fashioned from metal spikes, and welded together in such a way that one of the spikes always faced upward. These were to be thrown directly in the path of the charging elephants.





Akbar Visits the Hindu Saint
Jadur; *Mughal painting*,
opaque watercolour, c.1625-30.

*The Emperor Akbar, known
for his liberal acceptance of the
Hindu religion, here graces
the humble abode of a Hindu saint
with his royal presence.*

Finally, he bound large bundles of straw onto the backs of some unfortunate camels and horses, set them ablaze, and sent them shrieking and frantic among the oncoming elephants. Timur's tactics worked; some of the elephants were maimed and the rest fell into panic and fled. The defenders were routed, and Lahore, like Delhi, fell into Timur's hands. Timur's troops committed their characteristic destruction and murder in the streets of the city, in spite of the fact that the terrified inhabitants prostrated themselves before the victor and bestowed their remaining elephants and jewels upon him. When his troops finally withdrew, the devastation was complete. Only the choice artisans and unusual elephants were saved for transport to his magnificent and growing capital in Samarkand.

Timur was the last of the Mongols who had periodically ravaged the Punjab throughout the time of the Ghorian, Khilji and Tughlaq dynasties for almost 200 years. He withdrew from the Punjabi plains in 1398, having Lahore in the possession of the Afghan noble, Sayyid Khizr Khan. The city began to fall alternately into the hands of the wild Ghakkar mountain tribe and the ancestors of what came to be known as the Sayyid dynasty. In 1450, power was seized from the Sayyids by the Afghan chief Bahlul Khan Lodi, who then eventually went on to become emperor.

By 1483, the somewhat shrunken Mongolian Empire was dotted with numerous small rival 'Timurid' kingdoms, all headed by princely descendants of Timur, and all sharing equal claim to any overriding or dominant form of kingship. However, on February 14 of this year, unbeknownst to the other Timurid claimants, an emperor was born to them

The Outer Wall of the Badshahi
Mosque; *Charles Stewart
Hardinge, watercolour*, 1846. Built
by the Emperor Aurangzeb
Alamgir in 1674 A.D. The minarets
are shown here without their
marble cupolas, which were
damaged in 1840 by an earthquake.
In the foreground is the procession
of the last Sikh ruler Maharaja
Dalip Singh (1843-49) on its way
past the Mosque to the Fort.



شوند و عموم خلق را با دشت و خان کردند آن زمان شاد و بسیار قوام قراجه امین متحق شود که حال من چگونه بوده چون آن قوایین موجب تفریح
 و از سر گرفته نو و از سر بهشت او ایشان را تفریح بخشید و بدو تعلیق نشدند و فراموش شدند و دانستند که سخن با صدق گفتار او راست
 و از آن قواسم سپرد و وجود آمدند نام همین ایشان بود قوی که نامست قوام ققین از نسل وی اند نام میانین بوسیستی ساجی که صد قوام
 ساجیوت است و نام کمین بوز بخر ققین که خلاصه ثمرات این شجر بود و بسیاری قوام خالک من بعد شرح تفصیل شعب ایشان باید از
 او پیدا آمدند و نسب **چنگیز خان** با او میرود و صورت مالان قواسم سپردند که برین میات است که مثبت می شود



قسم دوم در تقریر احوال شعب این سه فرزند **الان قواید** که شعب و قبایل بسیار که ازین سه سر برباد آمده اند جلد رانیر و ن کوید یعنی
 طاس طاس شده اند اشارت بصلب و بطن پاک لان قوایین قوام را اختاری تمام نماده اند و از میان سایر قبایل چون در آن از صدف و غلار شجر
 و آنچه غیر از نیر و ن باشد از قوام خول جهانکه مفصل در مقدمه یاد کرده شد همه را در یکس گویند و قوم بولکونوت و بولکونوت هر چند هم از ان اصل او در وجود
 آمده اند اما چون پیرایشان و بون نیان بوده ایشان را در یکس گویند و قومی از خول که درین وقت ایشان را اوکو بوغول می گویند و در عهد **چنگیز خان** این اسم
 برایشان اطلاق رفته و معنی اوکو بوغول است که ایشان تیده و بند زاده آبا و اجداد **چنگیز خان** اند و بعضی آنکه در زمان **چنگیز خان** کوچاپ
 بسندیده داده اند و حقوق ثابت گردانیده بدین سبب ایشان را اوکو بوغول میگویند و آنان که راه اوکو بوغول نداشت دارند که مرکب بخاچی



Alanquva and her Three Sons,
from the *Chingiznama*, Mughal
painting with calligraphy, c. 1596.

in the province of Ferghana. This boy was Babur, the father and founder of the Mughal dynasty.

In the imperial reign of the third Lodi Sultan Ibrahim, the Afghan governor of Lahore Daulat Khan Lodi revolted against his own grandson, and invited the great Chaghtai Timurid Prince Babur to come to his aid. Babur gladly accepted this call and crossed the Indus to defeat Sultan Ibrahim's army in the vicinity of Lahore. Thus in 1524 Lahore was taken by a new invader from Central Asia — the ruler of Ferghana and Samarkand, Zahiruddin Babur.

This is the blood link between the wild, nomadic Mongol invaders, and the great 'Mughal' dynasty which ruled most of Hindustan from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The famous first six Mughal rulers, Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, were all directly descended from the legendary Chingiz Khan and Timurlane. Indeed, Akbar went so far as to enshrine this prized lineage — albeit with some exaggeration — in his *Akbarnama* (written by his court historian Abu'l Fazl). Here the reader may delve into the mysteries of Akbar's descent from the semi-mythical Mongol Queen, Alanquva:

One night Queen Alanquva was reclining in her tent, as the royals of nomadic tribes are wont to do, when she found herself gazing wistfully up at the full moon above in the bright night sky. Her heart was filled with heaviness and the quietly devouring pain of separation and loss, for though she was the young royal queen of the Mongolian people, she was now a widow. And worse, the grieving maiden had lost her royal mate before their marriage had been consummated, and thus was yet a virgin, with no hope of a royal heir. She sighed a hopeless sigh of resignation and raised her sorrowful dark eyes once more to the opening in the roof of her brocaded tent, up to the luminous orb in the sky which seemed, oddly, to have its attention solidly fixed upon her.

Silently she lay, watching the silvery light stream down into her tent. Abruptly, she started, and then leaned forward in amazement. At first almost indiscernable, a golden-white ray of light, increasing in brilliance, descended from the sphere to the earth, to her tent. She drew herself up in amazement and wonder but was not afraid, for she recognised that the pure ray which shimmered before her at the entrance of her tent was a peaceful visitation, a celestial guest. Now the light transformed itself, and what stood before her was a perfect man, a man wholly composed of the light of the heavens, who was drawing near to her. Instinctively knowing what was desired of her, she waited, eyes closed in modesty. Even through her closed lids, she felt the light wash over her. That night, the Mongol Queen conceived a royal heir.

This heir, however he was conceived, was to be the first male child of a ruling line whose descendants would include no less than Chingiz Khan,

Pictorial Carpet; *Mughal*, c.1580-90.

An unusual example of weaving which approximates the Mughal painting style. This complex arrangement of vignettes portrays hunting, mystical beasts and a sense of contemporary Mughal life.

Timurlane and, through them, the royal Mughal dynasty. Mughal emperors were fiercely proud of their heritage, although they preferred their relation to the Turkish Timur rather than to the Mongol Chingiz Khan. They frequently minimised this branch of their genealogy, being somewhat embarrassed by the 'Mongol' blood, which by their time had come to denote primarily those nomadic uncultured barbarians who still roamed to the north. Thus, Babur, who considered himself a 'Timurid', would have been horrified to hear his descendants referred to as 'Mughals' — simply the Persian word for Mongols. Yet after the dynasty's first hundred years of establishment, it had once again become fashionable to be a Mongol, and there was no longer any shame attached to the great Mughal name.

In 1526 the first battle of Panipat established Babur as the new conqueror of Hindustan, and thus with the Mughal dynasty there began the most illustrious and elegant chapter of history in the Subcontinent. Lahore became the favoured place of royal residence, and often the capital. Gardens, mosques and pavilions sprang up, and the city grew and prospered.







Zahir Ad-Din Muhammad Babur
(1483-1530), *copy of a Mughal
painting, from the Punjab Archives.*

*Exotic Flowers; Mughal, gouache,
c.1635. This dazzling image
of exotic flowers, lovingly rendered
with insects alighting on them
and gold clouds drifting above,
is a testament to the culture of
beauty and opulence that became
the mark of the Mughal Empire.*

Fresh from a lovely and picturesque country, crossed by beautiful streams and blanketed in luxurious vegetation, the followers of Babur contemplated with dismay the prospect of a prolonged stay in the inhospitable region of India. The happy recollections of Ferghana and its neighbouring mountains made them anxious to return home, but Babur in an eloquent speech dissuaded them, impressing upon them the incalculable advantages of founding a new empire in India after the brilliant victories they had gained. His words had the desired effect, and the empire so founded was destined to become one of the greatest ever to rule an Asian country.

The first place of importance to benefit from the establishment of the Mughal monarchy in the Punjab was naturally Lahore. It served as the crown city for many years; and later, when the royal court shifted to Agra and Delhi, Lahore remained a favoured and influential place.

The first 'Mughal', Babur, died in the Charbagh at Agra on December 26, 1530. His son and successor Humayun ascended the throne after him and designated the city of Lahore for rule by his brother Kamran. Delighted with his prestigious acquisition, the prince began extensive building operations there, erecting a beautiful palace with gardens extending to the north side of the Ravi. In 1540, however, Humayun was defeated and driven out of India by the able and determined Afghan chief Sher Shah Suri in collaboration with the ungrateful and ambitious governor of Lahore, his brother Prince Kamran. Sher Shah was succeeded by a son and grandson while Humayun took refuge with Shah Tahmasp of Persia. The descendants of Sher Shah maintained power for fourteen years.

The story of Humayun's flight was recorded by his faithful ewer-bearer Jauhar. In October of 1542, a small caravan of seven horsemen and a few



Nasir ad-Din Muhammad
Humayun (1508-1556),
*copy of a Mughal painting,
from the Punjab Archives.*

camels were wearily traversing the sandy wastes of Sind. The party was small, the sorry end of a once-royal entourage: Jauhar, an officer named Raushan Beg, a few faithful retainers of the prince, Prince Humayun and his young wife Hamida. Hamida was then fifteen years old, pregnant, a few days away from confinement, and thinking longingly of her home in Khurasan, in Persia. Discomfort and thirst had destroyed the spirits of the group. They were famished and worn out with fatigue.

Then Raushan's horse faltered and fell. Apparently, the looming spectre of death overcame the rules of royal privilege, and Raushan insisted on taking back the horse he had lent the young queen. Her husband sacrificed his own horse for his wife and walked for some distance; then the Mughal prince mounted a baggage camel. Journeying further into the desert, they eventually came to Umarkot in Sind, a lonely fort surrounded by sand hills. Here, under the shade of an arka tree, Hamida gave birth to a prince who would grow up to be the most enlightened thinker and ablest administrator of his age. Thus was born Prince Akbar under a tree, on the 14th of October in 1542.

Humayun then ordered Jauhar to bring him a pod of musk. Breaking it and distributing it to his followers, the fugitive king said, 'This is all the present I can afford to make you on this day of the birth of my son, whose fame, I trust, will one day be spread over all the world as the perfume of this musk now fills the air ...'

The fugitives later made their way up the Bolan Pass, taking refuge in Persia, while the baby Akbar was sent to live with his uncles in Kandahar and Kabul. Then the wheel of fortune turned. Humayun fought his way back, assisted by the gifted general Bairam Khan. Finally in 1551, after an exile of fourteen years, Humayun returned in triumph to Lahore in 1555 (which had by this time been abandoned by its Afghan ruler). He enjoyed the throne for just six months before he died in Delhi, and the dynamic, intense fourteen-year-old Prince Akbar ascended to the throne.

Akbar was very different from his father. Humayun had been regarded as intellectually gifted, but somewhat inept and overly superstitious — he died, fittingly, by tripping on the hem of his gown and falling down the stairs of his library after astrologically determining the auspicious alignment of the planet Mars. Akbar, on the other hand, was intelligent, strong-willed, and determined, and it is he who can properly be called the founder of the Mughal Empire. He not only expanded his holdings, but also imposed a well-ordered bureaucratic structure over them and ruled with an imperial policy of equality and tolerance. Although he inherited a fragmented and unstable state, by the age of 29 he had subdued most of the Subcontinent and secured a safe empire. Only eighteen months after Akbar took the throne, he and Bairam Khan managed to rid themselves of their three most serious enemies. Unlike his ancestors, Akbar was born in India and regarded his



Hamida Bano Begum, copy of a Mughal painting, from the Punjab Archives. Daughter of Shaikh Ali Akbar and mother of Akbar the Great.

empire as in no way inferior to those of Iran or Central Asia, but rather as their equal. Born at a time when the court language of Chaghtai Turkish was being replaced by Persian, he also self-consciously viewed himself as the restorer of the Chaghtai Timurid line.

Lahore was a place of great importance in Akbar's time. Abu'l-Fazl, speaking of Lahore in the *Akbarnama*, wrote 'It is a very populous city, the resort of people of all nations and a centre of extensive commerce'. The Emperor had a love of gardening, and brought skillful gardeners from Persia to cultivate grapes and melons in Lahore. For fourteen years, from 1584 to 1598, Akbar made Lahore his headquarters, and from it conducted military operations against Kashmir, planned wars against the Afghans, and undertook the conquests of Sind and Kandahar.

Akbar was an avid hunter and often indulged in elaborate hunting parties called *qamargahs*. Once he organised such a *qamargah* in Lahore which covered an area of forty square *kos* (about 90 square miles) around the city. His army formed a circle many miles in circumference around the designated area, and then gradually moved in, tightening the circle and preventing any of the animals from escaping their human net. The event lasted several days and necessitated their camping at night in the spot where the day's movement had left off. In the morning the party resumed its march, and the privileged Akbar spent his days enjoying a lavish hunt, as the area in the centre became increasingly crowded with a wide variety of animals. Cheetahs, lions, birds and hoofed creatures of all kinds fell easily and in great numbers. Eventually, the circle reached the walls of the city and was sufficiently small to allow some of the nobles, and then the soldiers, to enter and join the hunt. On the last day, even the commoners of the city were allowed to enter the circle and try their luck. They say that on that day no one went home empty-handed.

Akbar also enjoyed hunting with trained cheetahs who would track and kill for him when released, and then return to him at his command, much as a trained falcon or dog might. These prized cheetahs were treated with lavish care. They were adorned with coats and collars studded with jewels, and were brought to the hunt blind-folded and seated upon beautiful carpets. Once, when one splendid cheetah jumped a deep and dangerous ravine in his determination to catch a deer, the animal was honoured upon his return to the city by being paraded through the streets with accompanying drums.

As a child Akbar was known to ride wild camels and even to straddle battling male elephants for entertainment. The adolescent Akbar once took the dangerous opportunity to kill a charging tigress on foot, with only a sword in hand. As an older man of 54, he seized a stag by the antlers and attempted to wrestle it to the ground. He lost a testicle in the process, but recovered to live and hunt for nine more years.



Akbar Watches a Fight Between a
Lion and a Bullock; *Mughal*
painting, by Miskin, c.1600. Such
combats were one of Akbar's
favourite pastimes. In the whirling,
fluid lines of this painting
the artist has captured the violence
and force of the animals'
entwined bodies, and the intensity
of the Emperor's attention.

During his reign, Akbar had a passionate fondness for arts of all kinds and was one of their best patrons. His father, the Emperor Humayun, had been impressed by the Safavid artists at the Shah's court during his exile in Persia. He had subsequently invited many of them to return with him to India, laying the foundation of the famous style of Mughal miniature painting. During Akbar's reign, artists came from all corners of the empire seeking royal patronage, and the arts flourished. Among numerous other achievements, he built a library which housed over 24,000 volumes of literature in many different languages, many of which he had had translated. Yet it is probable that this virile warrior-emperor was also illiterate, or at least barely literate.

At least one aspect of his tutor Mir Abdul Latif's teaching highly impressed him — that of the principle of *sulh-i kull*, or religious toleration. One of Akbar's most memorable attitudes was his commitment to fostering religious understanding and even debate. Other Muslim rulers had taken Hindu wives in the past, but Akbar allowed his wives to practise their rites within the walls of the royal harem. He brought Hindus and Muslims into a strong and lasting union at court, employing more Hindus in the civil service than ever before and enforcing this cooperation as a policy of state. He built a special chamber at Fatehpur-Sikri called the *ibadat khana*, or house of worship, which was devoted to religious discussion — much to the chagrin of the more orthodox population — where he initially enjoyed listening to Shias and Sunnis argue their cases against each other. Although hostilities were sometimes only barely contained, the circle gradually widened to include Hindus, Zoroastrians, Jews, Jains, and at one time, three very hopeful Portuguese Jesuits.

Eventually Akbar even went so far as to declare himself infallible on matters of Koranic interpretation where there was disagreement. In 1582, he outraged the *mullahs* by founding his own religion which he called the *din-i ilahi*, or divine religion. Although this personal religion was not propagandised, since only a chosen few were admitted to his spiritual circle, its mystical pantheistic syncretism was intolerable to the orthodox *ulama*. Unmoved by their criticism, he ultimately went on to discard the calendar based on the *hijra*, or Prophet's emigration from Mecca, and instituted in its place a new calendar which dated from his own life.

Why did Akbar take what seemed to be such a striking deviation from the orthodox Muslim path? Why did he grant equality for all citizens, honour Hindu festivals at court, wear his hair long in the Hindu fashion, dress in a Rajput-style turban and even occasionally wear the *tilak* or Hindu ornamental mark on his forehead? The orthodox Muslims were convinced that he was mad or, worse, that he had irrevocably strayed from the path. But Akbar the statesman probably recognised that any stable dynasty in Northern India would necessarily need the consent of both major religious parties in order to rule securely.

This is not to obscure the very real and natural inclination which Akbar held for such reforms. It should be remembered that his father was a Sunni, his mother was a Shia born in Hindustan, and that he himself had been born in the land of the Hindus. He seemed to have a kind of innate mystical streak as well, and to long for some expansion of the formal religious beliefs of his people. Even at the age of twenty, he harboured a sense of 'internal bitterness' and 'exceeding sorrow' which frequently drove him to ride alone far into the desert; there, in its solitude, he would set his horse free, and return alone, on foot. Once, at the climax of an elaborate *qamargah* hunting party in 1579, when he was thirty-seven years of age, he suddenly developed a great loathing for the kill and refrained from consummating the hunt.

The first half of Akbar's reign was characterised by stunning successes: he steadily expanded his holdings through conquest, treaty and marriage, securing alliances with the most important northern Hindu provinces, such as Rajputana (now Rajasthan), by marrying the daughter of the Raja of Amber. He took numerous other wives as well; eventually the number of partners in his harem, including concubines, came to hundreds of women. He changed Hindustan from a military dictatorship to a state administered by an extensive civil service. He also revolutionised the arts and the field of intellectual religious debate with his freethinking, liberal ideas.

The Emperor was at this time prosperous, rich, powerful and celebrated — and discontented. No male heir had yet survived infancy. Before long, reports of the supernatural powers of the Chishti saint Shaykh Salim reached the Emperor Akbar.

Shaykh Salim Chishti had wandered to the little village of Sikri, some twenty-three miles southwest of Agra, one day and made his home there in a cave in the midst of the sandstone and wilderness. He was a mystic belonging to the *tariqa*, or way, of the Chishti order, started by Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer. The untiring work, simple preaching, love of God and one's neighbours, and belief in non-discrimination attracted many devotees, and the prayers of these inspired *pirs*, or spiritual masters, are said to have cured the sick, answered needs and fulfilled many a thwarted desire.

Impressed by tales of the saintly Salim, Akbar went to Sikri to seek him out. According to local legend, the entire royal entourage was encamped near the saint's cave. It was a small city of brilliantly coloured and embroidered tents, silken fringe and gold and silver tassels fluttering, flags, banners, and royal standards flying in the breezes, surrounded by a sea of carts, fires, servants, porters, elephants, camels, mules, and horses. And from the midst of this splendour, the imperial summons was sent to the saint, who declined politely, explaining that he was at that time occupied in deep meditation and reflections on the Infinite. No matter. Akbar the Great, never a man to allow protocol to interfere with his wishes, proceeded to the cave himself, and there implored the saint to pray for him, so that he might be granted a son.

With great regret, Shaykh Salim Chishti refused.

The legend describes it thus: Akbar looked in silence at the saint for a long moment; then the Mughal Emperor turned away to leave, his shoulders bowed in defeat and sorrow. As he stepped to the mouth of the cave, one of Salim's children (sent off to a corner and ordered into silence by his father for this royal meeting) could stand the tension no longer. 'Father,' the little boy cried out, 'why do you send the conqueror of the world away in such despair?' 'Because,' replied the saint, 'no son is destined for him unless someone will give the life of a child.' 'I will', exclaimed the boy and promptly died. The legend does not tell us how the saint felt about this particular act of sacrifice, but he did then proclaim to the Emperor that Akbar would father not one but three sons, and that he should send his queen to reside at the royal abode in Sikri. So began several decades of Sufi mystic influence on the Mughal dynasty.

One year later, a prince was born to the Rajput princess Maryam-uz-Zamani, at Sikri, whom the grateful parents named Salim after the saint. Akbar's gratitude for the divine favour also prompted him to found a city on the spot where his prayers were answered. This city, an endeavour which totally engrossed the great Akbar's energies, later became the primary royal residence. When completed, his palace would be called Fatehpur-Sikri.

Prince Salim was surrounded by the saint's family — in fact his nurse and foster mother was one of Sheikh Salim Chishti's daughters. Her son, Shaykh Khubu, grew up as the boy's foster brother, a confidant of the prince who would later become a general when Salim ascended the throne. Being the child of a miracle, Prince Salim was regarded with superstitious reverence by most of the court. He was spoiled, indulged and, as he grew up, truculent and undisciplined. His character lacked balance, and he was whimsical and inconsistent in his actions. As heir apparent he caused Akbar much grief, quarrelling frequently with his royal father, as well as with one of his half-brothers.

But Prince Salim was destined to know his own grief. One spring, as legend has it, the Emperor Akbar and his court were in Lahore when Prince Salim noticed a very beautiful girl standing by a tree. Even a Mughal Prince sometimes needs an excuse to start a conversation, so he asked if she would hold the two prized pigeons he had brought with him. He left her for a few moments to watch a wrestling match; when he returned, he was surprised to see that the girl held only one pigeon. 'What happened to the other pigeon?' demanded the angry Prince. 'It flew away', she responded. 'And how did it fly away?' asked the Prince. 'Like this,' said the girl and, opening her hand, released the second bird. The Prince was amazed that anyone could be so impertinent with royalty, and so careless with royally bred birds. But he did not know whether to be annoyed or impressed.

The Birth of Jahangir; *Mughal*, 1615-1620. This miniature provides an intimate glimpse of the royal birth, complete with many of the necessary elements for such an occasion: charting of the horoscope, bearing of gifts and playing of music. The newborn emperor is symbolically depicted wearing a diadem and the glow of a halo around his head.

Much later, on another visit to Lahore, he was being entertained by a troupe of dancing girls when among them he recognised his girl of the pigeons. In the days that followed, the Prince spent all his time with the beautiful dancer, whose name he learned was Anarkali, or Pomegranate Blossom. One night, in the myrtle-scented pavilion of his apartments in the Lahore Fort, he declared his love to Anarkali and asked her to marry him. The declaration and proposal were overheard by Jodhabai, Salim's stepmother, who immediately wrote of the affair to Salim's father Akbar.

The great Mughal's rage shook the empire. His son — the Prince — marry a dancing girl? Never! Salim was bewildered. He did not wish to lose his father's favour once again, and yet he cherished his Anarkali. Simultaneously defiant and confused, he held to his resolve. Dissident chieftains and nobles, learning of the quarrel in the royal family, encouraged Salim to revolt against his father and to cut the Punjab away from the empire. Akbar journeyed to Lahore, ostensibly to try and resolve matters. In reality, he had already conspired with Jodhabai. That evening, the great Mughal asked for Anarkali to entertain him. Salim, thinking this to be the first sign of paternal interest, readily agreed. As planned, Jodhabai had filled Anarkali's cup with pure alcohol a little prior to the scheduled performance. The girl was drunk and oblivious to her surroundings; only her training permitted her to perform her dance without reeling and stumbling. But in her drunken state, the only man of whose presence she was conscious was the man who filled her thoughts — her lover, the Prince Salim. At the end of her dance, at the customary bow of allegiance, she fell to her knees at Salim's feet. To declare allegiance to anyone else, even the Emperor's son, in the presence of the Emperor constituted a conscious demonstration of disloyalty and an insult to rank. 'Treason!' thundered Akbar. Anarkali was arrested on the spot and summarily sentenced to death. 'But I am a loyal subject of the Emperor', she protested. 'Then prove your loyalty by doing what the Emperor commands', she was told, 'renounce your feelings for the Prince Salim'. This she was not prepared to do. She was bricked into a cell, there to suffocate to death. Even as the last bricks were being laid, she was offered her life if she recanted. She refused. The executioners could hear her singing as they slid the last brick into place. Eventually, the singing ceased.

Salim was grief-stricken, and went into a decline from which it seemed he would never recover. But recover he did, and upon Akbar's death in 1605 he became the Emperor, renaming himself Jahangir in order to convey his role as 'World Seizer'. As Emperor, he eventually placed Anarkali to rest in a proper monument which now houses the Punjab Archives. Anarkali is now also the name of a bazaar in Lahore, a bustling market which extends from one of the gates of the walled city towards Anarkali's tomb.

The memoirs of Emperor Jahangir make known to us his world, documenting as they do his acts, his passions and his sins. When in residence at Lahore the Emperor's day began at dawn when he stepped out on to a



projecting balcony of the Fort's palace. This was the *darshan* or 'showing his exalted presence' ceremony. The court and nobles gathered in the vast hall, and beyond them waited the crowds who assembled regularly to pay homage to their sovereign. At noon, Jahangir would seat himself on a golden throne in the Diwan-i 'Am (Hall of Public Audience). He was surrounded by princes of the blood, gorgeously attired nobles, his scribes and advisers. Here he listened to petitions, dispensed judgements and determined the course of events. At eight in the evening he held his court in the Diwan-i Khas (Hall of Private Audience) where none but the nobles of the highest rank were permitted to attend. Musicians seated on marble platforms played the evening *ragas*, wine flowed freely and the debate grew lively. The festivities ended when the attendants snuffed out the torches and candles and carried his intoxicated highness to the Khwab Gah, or Chamber of Dreams, there to be ministered to by Nur Jahan, his powerful queen.

Jahangir's romantic marriage was one of the most important events of his reign. While he was still a child playing in the gardens of Fatehpur-Sikri, a young merchant named Mirza Ghiyasuddin in far-away Persia had received a letter from a relative at the Mughal court of Akbar. This letter described the relative's rise to fame and fortune, and urged the poor and struggling Ghiyasuddin to try his luck under Akbar as well. As the tale goes, after some deliberation, Mirza Ghiyasuddin set off for India with his pregnant wife and small children. Midway across the deserts of Sind, the family ran out of food and water; in the midst of this desperate situation, the wife gave birth to a daughter. Believing that starvation and death awaited the baby in any case, they resolved to abandon her and struggle on.

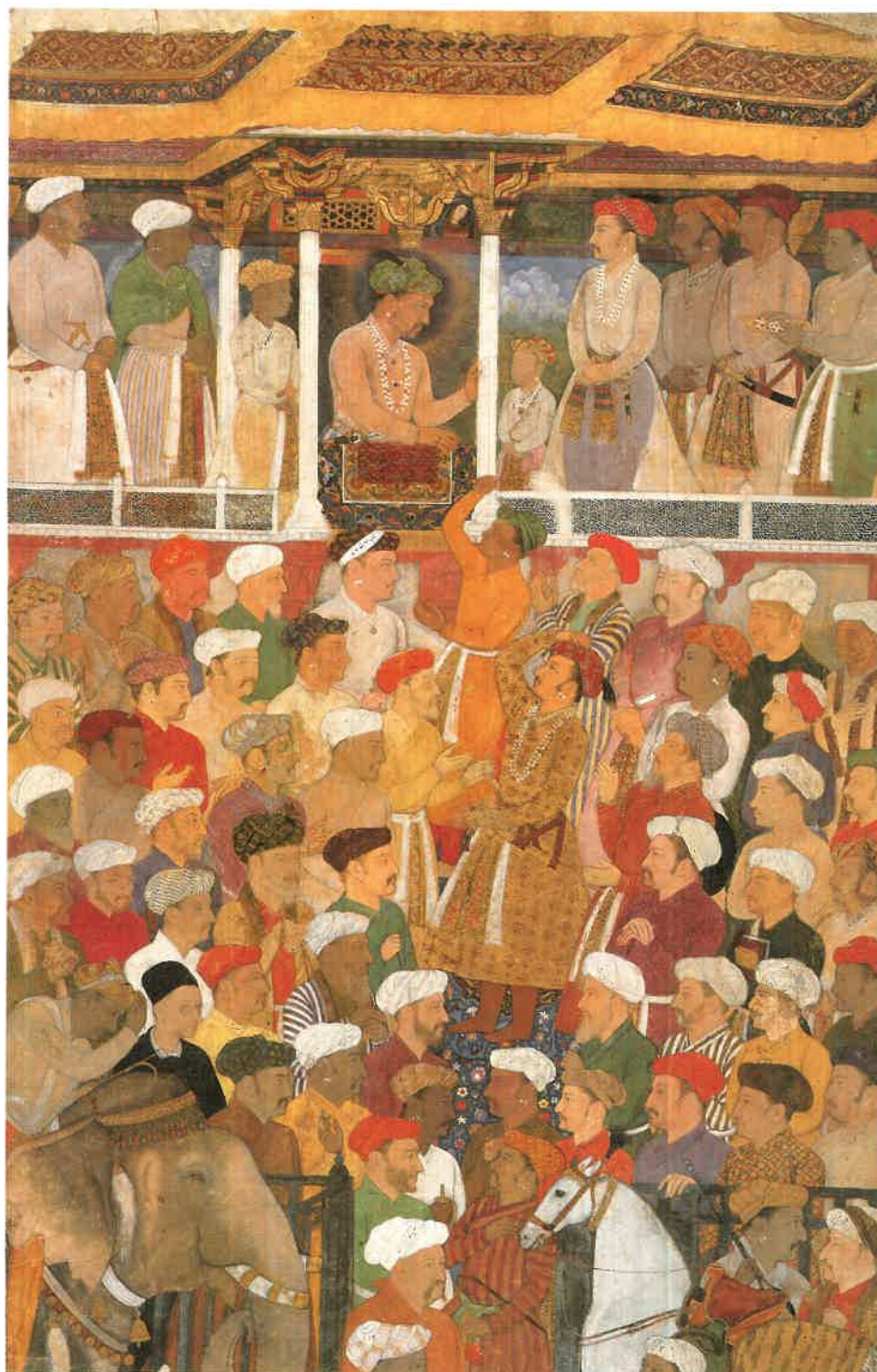
Yet each step they took away from the infant increased their grief and terror. His wife implored Ghiyasuddin to return and fetch the baby. He retraced his weary steps. Finally reaching the spot where he had left the baby, he rushed to retrieve her just as a snake was slithering over to the tree where she lay. As he returned her at last to her relieved mother, they sighted a caravan in the distance, and were rescued from the desert. They eventually made their way to the Mughal court, and through hard work, persistence, and ability, the young Persian merchant advanced through the ranks of the courtiers. From Akbar he received the title of Itimad-ud-Daulah, and as he and his family prospered, the baby born in the desert grew into a fair and accomplished maiden. Her name was Mehr-un-Nisa, or 'Sun of Womankind'.

The poetry and beautiful voice of Mehr-un-Nisa made her a favourite with the ladies of the imperial harem. One day Prince Salim himself, happening to see her on one of her walks through the garden, immediately fell in love with her. The Prince beseeched his father to let him meet with her, but Akbar refused, and arranged for her to marry a young and ambitious Turkoman general named Sher Aghan. He then dispatched both of them to distant Bengal. There Mehr-un-Nisa bore a daughter and passed her days, perhaps

Darbar of Jahangir; page from an illustrated manuscript of the *Jahangir-nama*, attributed to Manohar, c.1620. Here sits the 'World-Seizer' himself, during the darbar, or official audience to handle affairs of state. This miniature is a fascinating record of the Mughal royal family; pearl necklaces — reserved for the adornment of royalty alone — identify members of the imperial family. Jahangir is on his throne; to the right is his son Prince Khurram, who would succeed him as the Emperor Shah Jahan. Between them stands Shah Jahan's son, the young prince Shah Shuja, who would one day own the Koh-i-noor diamond. In the centre of the court in his gold robes is Prince Parwiz, shown symbolically below Shah Jahan, who carefully manipulated the throne away from his older brother.

wondering what her position might have been had she become Prince Salim's queen rather than a provincial governor's wife. Apparently, the future Emperor never forgot her.

When Akbar at last died, Jahangir was 37. He at once sent word to Sher Aghan instructing him to divorce his wife and return her to the imperial capital. This the angry general refused to do. One year later Jahangir ordered his foster brother Shaykh Khulun to replace Sher Aghan in Bengal. In the



A Girl Holding Betel Leaf;
Mughal, c.1635. Most court ladies,
and especially dancers, clothed
themselves in the most transparent
fabrics and revealing garments,
designed to emphasise rather than
conceal their beauty and
heighten their flashing sensuality.
This beautiful lady is holding
pan, a leaf favoured by Mughal
ladies for its aromatic properties
and its tendency to dye their
lips a deep red.

ensuing struggle both died and the widow and her daughters were brought to live at the Mughal court. Mehr-un-Nisa dressed only in white, the colour of mourning, and conducted herself modestly. She painted beautiful miniatures and wrote poetry to supplement her meagre income. Four years passed this way.

Then the New Year's festival, or *Nauroz*, arrived. The imperial court was decorated with the finest silks, rich textiles and flower garlands. A 'Meera bazaar' was held, where the ladies, attired in brocades and diaphanous tissues, played at being shopkeepers. Mehr-un-Nisa was the only one in the simplest robes of white. In that vibrant tapestry she alone stood out. The Emperor saw her standing pensively and approached her. He demanded to know why her attendants were more gorgeously attired than she was. The Sun of Womankind replied with a couplet of poetry alluding to her widowed state, and the Emperor's love was immediately rekindled. He ordered a splendid wedding ceremony and married Mehr-un-Nisa. She was given the title Nur Mahal, or 'Light of the Palace'; later, as his affection and respect for her increased, he changed the title to Nur Jahan, or 'Light of the World'.

By now Jahangir was 43 and Nur Jahan 35. He was indolent, pleasure-loving and capricious. She was energetic, clever and quick-witted. Many of the affairs of state began passing through her jewel-laden hands. (Despite her wit and ability, however, the country became disordered under Nur Jahan. The government was corrupt and rebellions were constantly springing up between Jahangir's sons.) Towards the close of his twenty-four-year reign the Emperor exhibited a preference for Lahore, and spent the cold weather there before leaving for Kashmir in the hot season. He had even expressed a final desire to be buried in Dilkusha, 'The Garden of Heart's Delight', in Lahore, which he had given as a present to Nur Jahan. And thus it was, that when he died at the age of 59 in Kashmir, the Empress sorrowfully brought his body back to Lahore.

After Jahangir's death in 1627, Nur Jahan attempted to maintain her silent power through her son-in-law Shahriyar. Jahangir had already bestowed the new name of Shah Jahan, or 'King of the World', on his beloved son Sultan Khurram twelve years before in 1616, and indicated him as his successor, but Nur Jahan was secretly displeased by this move. The new heir was not her son, but rather that of one of Jahangir's other wives. So Nur Jahan cautiously contrived to install her choice on the throne — a man who could offer her continued security and influence. This man was Shahriyar, the husband of the daughter she had borne to her first husband, Sher Aghan.

When Jahangir was finally laid to rest, a hasty and unscrupulous scramble for power ensued in Lahore between the various factions. The rightful claimant, Shah Jahan, had been charged with the duty of leading the Mughal military campaign in the Deccan, and he was there when the news of his father's death reached him. Meanwhile, however, the opportunistic Shahriyar —



Shah Jahan in Durbar; *Mughal*,
c. 1650. Here, in all his
Mughal splendour is the emperor
Shah Jahan in the midst of
an audience with grandees, nobles
and governors of the provinces.
His officers stand in a group on
the right, and on the left is
Prince Aurangzeb, who salutes his
father, with no trace yet of the
hatred they will share in the future.

otherwise known as Nashudni, or 'Good for Nothing', at the royal court — was residing in Lahore; and, urged by his imposing mother-in-law and ambitious wife, he declared himself Emperor there.

It was one thing to declare oneself Emperor, however, and quite another to maintain control. Shahriyar knew that Shah Jahan was quickly speeding to the seat of government, and that he had fewer than three days to prepare himself and to fortify the city. Unable to raise an army or any form of allegiance on the basis of charisma or rightful claim, he seized all the trappings of government of Lahore and then raided the royal treasury. Freely scattering his newly acquired wealth among the many men whose loyalty was for sale, he thereby collected a sizeable army.

But Shahriyar's hastily assembled army was equally quickly defeated. When a band of men loyal to the absent Shah Jahan challenged his mercenaries just outside of the city, a panic ensued, and Shahriyar fled ignominiously in secret to the safety of the harem, the secluded women's quarters in the Lahore Fort. However, within 24 hours an indignant guardian eunuch had cast him out of the forbidden confines, to be held under arrest until the rightful heir should arrive. Two days later, Shah Jahan entered the city; he ordered the unfortunate Shahriyar blinded, and put the cunning Nur Jahan into an early retirement with a sizeable annual salary of rupees. This she accepted, and busied herself for her remaining eighteen years with more harmless projects — such as the erection of a magnificent mausoleum and garden for her beloved Jahangir in Lahore.

Shah Jahan was not yet satisfied with Shahriyar's punishment, and further saw to it that he and all of his followers were put to death. Thus he became the first Mughal emperor to spill the blood of the royal family on his way to the throne, a theme which was to manifest itself even more horribly in the next Mughal struggle for power. This terrible future, however, which would end in more fratricide, could not have seemed more improbable than on the joyous occasion of Shah Jahan's accession to the throne. His three young sons, thirteen-year-old Prince Dara Shikoh, eleven-year-old Shah Shuja' and nine-year-old Prince Aurangzeb, were received with elation by the new ruler, after their release from Nur Jahan's custody. The children had been held hostage by her as insurance that Shah Jahan would be content with his duties in the Deccan and not rise up to challenge his father. But the ecstatic Shah Jahan, favouring his beautiful and mystically oriented older son Dara Shikoh on that day as he would in the future, had already unwittingly thrown into motion the terrible drama which would ultimately spell his own doom. For while trying to win his son Dara Shikoh's undying allegiance and love — and thereby avoiding the rebellion that he himself had exercised as a young prince — Shah Jahan was surely and perhaps unconsciously antagonising the less charismatic but sensitive Aurangzeb. This triangle of misunderstanding between the father and his sons would eventually lead to



the defeat and destruction of two of them and the mental anguish of the third for the rest of his life.

In the intervening years, however, Shah Jahan enjoyed one of the most opulent reigns that any monarch — East or West — has ever known. It was the time of bountiful and lavish gifts and celebrations; of the Peacock Throne, whose twelve supporting columns were composed entirely of emeralds; the famed Taj Mahal, a white marbled monument encrusted with silver, gold, and jewels; the Shalimar Gardens of Lahore; and the many palatial residences in his three favoured cities of Lahore, Delhi, and Agra — all three linked by a 400-mile-long road bordered from beginning to end by shade-giving fruit trees. The Emperor travelled this road often during his twenty-six-year reign, and divided his time among trips to the mountains of Kashmir and these three favourite cities — each of which he would make the capital of his empire at different times.

Yet of these three cities, it was Lahore that Shah Jahan especially loved. It was the place of his birth, and always evoked warm memories from his childhood spent there in the secluded and protective women's quarters of the Lahore Fort. When Shah Jahan finally succeeded to the throne, he maintained his seat of government in Lahore and kept the royal harem there for the first four years of his reign. When he did eventually move the capital to Agra in 1632 and then to Delhi in 1648, he made many journeys back to Lahore for pleasure and several times held court there.

Portrait of Nur Jahan; *Mughal*,
opaque watercolour on paper, c.1620.



Dancing Girl Applying Kohl;
Mughal, *opaque watercolour on*
paper, c.1600.



In his first session of court in Lahore in 1628, the Emperor's life was still filled with happiness. He entered the city with his beautiful and supportive queen, Mumtaz Mahal, in the first week of *Ramadan*, and received gifts and tribute from his welcoming minister Wazir Khan. During his stay, he shared his wealth by distributing cascades of gold and silver coins from the back of an elephant to the needy and poor of the city. He visited and paid homage to his father's tomb and then to the town's *fakirs* — the devout and revered Mian Mir and the holy man Shaykh Bilawal.

Three years later Shah Jahan returned once again to hold court in Lahore in 1631, unaware that due to the tragedy that would soon befall him, this would be his last festive occasion for several years. Still, during these weeks, it seemed that his stay in Lahore could only bring him luck: the governor of Qandahar, Ali Mardan Khan, had surrendered to him and Shah Jahan welcomed him warmly and entertained him in grand style, awarding him the viceroyship of Kashmir and Lahore and installing him in the grand *haveli* or mansion that had belonged to Itimad-ud-Daulah. The Diwan-i Khas and Diwan-i 'Am were illuminated with hundreds of coloured lanterns to celebrate the occasion, and the sky was filled with the showering lights of a brilliant fireworks display.

Lahore was at her peak during this time. Not only did Shah Jahan dazzle the city with picturesque pomp and circumstance during his visits there, but even in his absence the city glittered with the magnificent *havelis* and public structures which the Emperor's rich courtiers had erected. Many royal foreign visitors also frequented the city at this time, and the combination of their rich and strange robes with those of the local noblemen gave the city an elegant and cultured air. And on certain festive occasions, such as the Prophet's or the Emperor's birthday, the night of the *Mi'raj* — the Prophet's heavenly journey — or the festival of the New Year, one could always expect to see generous demonstrations of piety in the form of the Emperor showering buckets of coins into the hands of the populace. It was also at this time that the favoured viceroy of Lahore, Ali Mardan Khan, suggested that a canal be built on the banks of the Ravi just outside of the city. It was through his engineering genius that the future Shalimar Gardens would come to life.

However, just when Lahore and the rest of the Mughal Empire seemed to be at their peak, their decline had really already begun. Significant conquests were at an end, and with them ended the influx of wealth that had built the empire. Income now had to be extracted from the populace through taxation — simply to meet Shah Jahan's lavish expenditures.

Furthermore, Shah Jahan's family suffered the first of its tragedies: in 1631, accompanying him on a campaign as she customarily did, his chief adviser and closest friend — his wife, Mumtaz Mahal — died in Burhanpur, in the Deccan, while giving birth to her fourteenth child. He spent the next several years in mourning, abandoning his public functions, and thereafter left the

Shish Mahal (Palace of Mirrors),
detail of wall, Mughal, c. 1650.

military campaigns largely to his two eldest sons.

During this period of depression and grief, Shah Jahan directed almost all of his time and energy toward building a monument to his wife. As an expression of tenderness, he gave the exquisite white building his wife's affectionate nickname — Taj Mahal — and in doing so, created an enduring monument to love and sorrow. Also, in his melancholy state the Emperor became, briefly, a religious conservative, destroying many Hindu temples and banning any new ones from being built. This was odd, considering that Shah Jahan was in fact three-quarters Hindu, both his mother and grandmother being Rajput princesses. But this period did not last very long, much to the chagrin of the orthodox *ulama*. Gradually he fell more and more under the influence of his mystical and religiously eclectic son, Dara Shikoh.

The Emperor had hoped that he would be able to keep his much loved eldest son near him, staving off any rebellious urges he might have, and thus far he had achieved his dream. The two kept close company at home; Dara Shikoh was quite content to stay by the Emperor's side, reading as much as he could of mysticism, and leaving the military campaigns to his three younger brothers, Shah Shuja', Aurangzeb, and Murad Bakhsh. However, while Dara Shikoh was enjoying a life of popularity with Shah Jahan and the people of Lahore, who especially loved him there because of his beauty and his tempering influence on the Emperor's judgments, Aurangzeb was performing his tasks faultlessly, keeping all of the would-be rebellious rajas tightly in hand.

Aurangzeb's efforts did not go unnoticed by the Emperor, who soon rewarded him with a viceroyship in the Deccan in 1635. At home, however, Aurangzeb's successes were being received with increasing wariness and even outright antagonism. Why was he so ambitious? wondered Shah Jahan; and worse, was his beloved Dara Shikoh under the impression that Shah Jahan's praise for Aurangzeb threatened Dara Shikoh's position in any way? The Emperor alleviated his worries by openly speaking unflatteringly of Aurangzeb's 'war lust' at court, and by eagerly echoing Dara Shikoh's complaints and insults. Aurangzeb had proven that he could take care of himself, but Dara Shikoh was delicate and sensitive, and Shah Jahan continued to pamper him lest he feel the least bit unsure of his support.

The situation worsened, and soon the opportunity arose for tensions to expose themselves. The occasion was a terrible one in itself: the Princess Jahanara, the Emperor's favourite daughter and constant companion since the death of her mother, had caught the folds of her fine, billowy muslin robe in a carelessly placed candle and had been enveloped in tongues of fire. Her two handmaidens had flung themselves upon her in their selfless efforts to smother the flames, and had indeed died from their injuries. It seemed for weeks and then even months that the princess also would not survive. Shah Jahan once again abandoned his remaining public functions and sat at her





Shah Jahan Visting Mian Mir;
*Mughal, c.1700. This tinted
drawing shows Shah Jahan kneel-
ing before Mian Mir, who sits
outside a rather quaint leaf
hut. Behind him are his son Dara
Shikoh and an attendant,
and the other three sons are with
Asaf Khan on the left.*

side for the length of her sickness, telling her stories to cheer and revive her, and watching her progress. He prayed for her when she slept.

The three younger princes returned home from their various posts to be present at their sister's bedside. Aurangzeb took the brunt of Shah Jahan's frustration and pain. He was rebuked for his anti-Hindu stance, and then peremptorily relieved of his post in the Deccan and humiliated for no apparent reason. The truly irrational nature of the Emperor's behaviour was revealed four months later when, after Jahanara had fully recovered, Aurangzeb's post was returned to him. The Emperor's incredible hostility to his son, as well as his collusion with Dara Shikoh, had shown itself full well, and it marked a turning point in Shah Jahan's reign.

Even if the two brothers had not been contenders for the throne, their characters would have inevitably led them to clash. Both were bright and gifted, and ambitious. Yet Dara Shikoh was the freethinking, pantheistic poet who would probably have condoned most lifestyles if they made the individual happy and did no one any harm. He was beautiful, and the people loved him. He was a royal heir to the throne, but as yet, it was not he who had to mete out royal justice and punishment — he only tempered the Emperor's hand. He was in charge of a vast and still slightly expanding empire, but he rarely soiled himself with the awkward tasks of leading battle or, God forbid, killing another human being. Instead he lost himself in the raptures of ecstatic music and used his intellect for composing poetry.

And then there was Aurangzeb. The prince was well aware that, could he have conquered all of China singlehandedly, his father would not have revelled in it as he did in the slightest of Dara Shikoh's smiles. He was not as eloquent or confident as his graceful older brother; words came hard to him. He could never explain convincingly to his father or the court the revulsion he felt, not for other religions in themselves, but for the liberalism and lack of morality that he saw in them, and the threat that they posed to his society, his world. Aurangzeb became, and remained, a strict and orthodox man, and his opposition to the liberal and unrestrained ways of his brother became another bone of contention between them.

Then, in September of 1658, the smouldering fires of hatred between his sons, which Shah Jahan had tended so carefully over the years, exploded into a conflagration that would become the funeral pyre of everyone around it. Shah Jahan fell ill, and everyone expected him to die. In fact, with his glaring absences from his daily public audience, it was whispered that the worst had already taken place. The impending death of their father launched his four sons into mortal combat to claim the throne. In the course of the fighting one son, Shah Shuja', was defeated, fleeing for his life down the Ganges; Murad Bakhsh, sensing his own defeat, threw his support behind the master soldier Aurangzeb. In the meantime Shah Jahan, who had not died and was in fact recovering, handed over the reins of the empire to the one son whom

*Sufis in Ecstasy; attributed to
Mohammad Nadir-al-Samarqandi,
Mughal, c. 1650. The Sufis
are dancing and collapsing before
six shaikhs, who sit pensively
on a floral carpet before the gate to
a garden. Behind the wall, the
top of a pavilion can be seen, as
well as the tops of cypress
trees, which were used — in gardens
and art — to evoke the spirit of
the Garden of Paradise.*

he had always intended for the throne. The inevitable and terrible conflict for the throne of Hindustan had begun.

Dara Shikoh's armies were defeated, and for the first time in his life he found himself powerless and mortally vulnerable. He also fled, collecting his family at Agra and setting out, with the ragged remnants of an army, for the next nearest fortified city across the burning sands of the desert. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb had long since reached the Agra Fort, where he had received a friendly communiqué from his father, who was still behind the safety of barred walls. Shah Jahan sent out the treasured Alamgir sword — the 'Universe Seizer' — as a peace offering, but refused to let his son into the locked compartments of the Fort. Aurangzeb forced open the gates and made his way in to see his father, resolving in his heart to let bygones be bygones, and still faintly hoping for a kind of rapprochement with his father. However, Shah Jahan was still scheming against his third son, and before Aurangzeb reached him in the harem, he learned that his father's concubines were planning to murder him, and that a note had been intercepted pledging the Emperor's undying support to Dara Shikoh.

There, within the walls of the Fort which he had just wrenched from his father, Aurangzeb must have realised at last that there would never be peace between them. The fury and hurt pride that he carried within him were enough to fuel the savage actions that he would effect over the next days and weeks. He abandoned efforts to visit his father; there was no longer any reason. And the enraged prince had more important tasks to attend to. Before he departed, he gave orders for his father to be left where he was, in the marble quarters of his harem — as Aurangzeb's prisoner; and he began a cold-blooded hunt for the brother who had occupied so much of his thoughts for most of his life.

The hunt ended when Aurangzeb took custody of his brother and his brother's son in Delhi, where they had been brought as prisoners. He had planned to subdue the inhabitants of the city with this display of power; but at the sight of their beloved Dara Shikoh paraded and humiliated through the city like a criminal, the crowd exploded with emotion. Unable to rise up against Aurangzeb's formidable guards, the citizens broke out into mass, uncontrollable weeping. Aurangzeb sensed his control slipping away. He ordered his brother taken from their sight; then, maddened by this final humiliation by his brother, Aurangzeb ordered Dara Shikoh to be beheaded. The long bloody conflict, and Dara Shikoh's life, ended there in the streets of Delhi; but Aurangzeb's rage that day foreshadowed the anguish that would be his constant companion for the rest of his life.

Aurangzeb's bitterness toward his father also continued unabated for the rest of his life. Tales of Shah Jahan's confined life in the Agra Fort abound in folk tradition. One of the stories recalls how, when forced by Aurangzeb to choose one building in which he would remain for the rest of his life, he

chose the one which offered the best view of his monument to Mumtaz Mahal, and then spent hours in seclusion gazing out at it. The tales also tell of another choice the coldly calculating Aurangzeb put to him, but this time with the hopes that it would mean his father's death. Aurangzeb wanted the gloomy reminder of his sins removed, but could not bring himself to perform the heinous job of killing his father outright. He therefore chose an indirect means to gain his end: knowing that his father had a delicately nurtured and sophisticated palate, Aurangzeb ordered that Shah Jahan be given the choice of any one food, after which that food would be the only one he would receive until the end of his days. If he chose eggs, then he would be fed only dishes made with eggs, and if rice, then only rice.

Shah Jahan summoned his chef and listlessly described this new and subtle cruelty. The cook, undeterred, spoke softly to his master. 'Your exalted highness, if I may be so bold as to suggest a food, you would do your servant a great honour ...' Shah Jahan bade him speak. The cook continued, 'Choose lentils, your majesty, for I can prepare lentils in a thousand and one ways and you will never know the same dish twice. You would not believe that this humble grain is so versatile, so full of life, and so sustaining.' The cook bowed and backed out of the old emperor's quarters.

Aurangzeb was amused to hear of his father's choice, for the humble lentil, or *daal*, is the staple of the poor in India. He thought that his father would indeed fast to death rather than be forced to eat this boring meal day in and day out. Meanwhile, however, the gifted *khansama*, or cook, retired to his kitchen and busied himself with preparing meals that transformed lentils into heavenly delights. His greatest triumph, and one that is still immensely popular in the Punjab today, was to first soak the lentils in milk and dry them in the sun. Then the swollen grains were ground into bread. This was cooked with milk and honey and nuts, and the entire concoction coated with finely pounded silver. Shah Jahan loved this dessert; today it is still served under its nickname, *Shahi Tukra*, or Royal Pieces.

Aurangzeb never enjoyed the power for which he had fought so violently. Although he had his father locked up by his side, he certainly had not gained his father's respect in the end; and there was no place even to speak of love. He became more and more morose, and sought, by following the letter of the Muslim law, to recapture its simple spirit that he had known as a young man. He engaged almost frantically in building project after project, a mosque here, a donation there. As soon as one was completed, he would hurry off to another.

Yet some of the monuments that he left are exquisite. The Badshahi Mosque, for example, still stands as a crown jewel opposite the Lahore Fort today, with its swelling onion domes and red sandstone walls inlaid with white marble arabesque. The Prophet has said that 'The whole earth has



Battle of Samugarh; Mughal, c.1658. Detail (above) and overleaf. The last combat between Prince Dara Shikoh and Prince Aurangzeb, eight miles from Agra. The painting captures a crucial moment in history: as Aurangzeb charges into the imperial troops on the plains of Samugarh, Dara Shikoh steps down from his wounded elephant to seek a new mount. His soldiers, misinterpreting this action as meaning surrender and defeat, fell into confusion and fled. Dara Shikoh escaped, but only temporarily.

been made a mosque for me,' and thus the believer may pray anywhere. But the Badshahi Mosque of Aurangzeb represents the climax in mosque building. It became a prototype for other mosques in Pakistan; and in Lahore especially, most later mosques, such as the Sonchri Masjid, are modelled after it.

But Aurangzeb's tormented soul was never relieved, and in his later portraits, even the artist's rendition captures his drooping mouth and bent back. The court was held at Lahore in 1668, and here the Emperor himself composed the following lines as a gift to his friend Khalilullah Khan, Viceroy of Lahore:

What should I say of the distress of the heart, it is boiling with fervour;
What should I write of the heart's desire, for through restlessness the
paper in my hand trembles like mercury;
In a night of separation, the recollection of thee made my heart bleed,
And a stream of tears flowed from my eyes, which have become red like
the jujube:
How should I describe the state of my heart, since patience has altogether
forsaken it;
The recollection of the splendour of thy countenance acts on it as the
moonlight does upon linen;
In this ocean we sit in a boat awaiting the will of God, a drop of water
being to us like a whirlpool;
The desire of my heart has not remained concealed, Izzat,
For my very eyes reflect the image of restlessness.

Whose splendid countenance does Aurangzeb remember and weep for until his eyes become red like the jujube? His brother Dara Shikoh's? His father's? His own? It must be all of these. At the end of his days, this last of the truly great Mughals tried to make amends for his past deeds that now caused ghosts to dance before his eyes, by performing a strange wedding. After fourteen years of imprisonment, Aurangzeb suddenly released the son of Dara Shikoh, the one who came with him on that fateful day in Delhi, and married him off to one of his own daughters. At the same time, Aurangzeb arranged another match — the son of his other brother Murad and another of his own daughters. The two couples were sumptuously married off — only to be housed in a gilded cage of a fortress on an island for the rest of their lives. With these perverse arranged weddings of cousins, Aurangzeb tried to buy himself some solace, although the 'liberty' was artificial and the 'home' an elaborate prison.

In addition to physical monuments like the Badshahi Mosque which the Emperor Aurangzeb left behind, he also left many children. One presumed daughter of his, Lalla Rookh, even found her way into the title role of an imaginative oriental romance or epic, which was written in the early nineteenth century by a long-forgotten rival and contemporary of Lord Byron, Thomas Moore. This interesting, though probably exaggerated, tale





Portrait of Mian Mir; *Mughal*,
c.1679. *Dara Shikoh's*
mentor stands in a flowery field
holding an orange volume.

Mian Mir or Shah Mir, whose real
name was Mir Muhammed,
was a Faruqi born at Siwistan
(Sehwan, in Sind) in the
mid-sixteenth century. He settled
in Lahore and lived there for
more than sixty years before his
death in 1635. His tomb is
to the east of Lahore at the place
called Mian Mir, close to
the military cantonment.

of the princess's journey from Delhi to Kashmir, where she is to wed a king whom she has never seen, evolves as she gradually and dangerously falls in love with the young rebel poet, Feramorz, who has been permitted to join her train in order to relieve her boredom during the journey. It is during their encampment in Lahore that the young princess realises painfully that she has fallen in love with a man whom she can never have. Moore writes:

They had now arrived at the splendid city of Lahore, whose mausoleums and shrines, magnificent and numberless, where Death appeared to share equal honours with Heaven, would have powerfully affected the heart and imagination of Lalla Rookh, if feelings more of this earth had not taken entire possession of her already. She was here met by messengers, despatched from Cashmere, who informed her that the King had arrived in the Valley, and was himself superintending the sumptuous preparations that were then making in the Saloons of the Shalimar for her reception. The chill she felt on receiving this intelligence — which to a bride whose heart was free would have brought only images of affection and pleasure — convinced her that her peace was gone for ever, and that she was in love, irretrievably in love, with young Feramorz ... The arrival of the young Bride at Lahore was celebrated in the most enthusiastic manner. The Rajas and Omras in her train, who had kept at a certain distance during the journey, and never encamped nearer to the Princess than was strictly necessary for her safeguard, here rode in splendid cavalcade through the city, and distributed the most costly presents to the crowd. Engines were erected in all the squares, which cast forth showers of confectionary among the people: while the artisans, in chariots, adorned with tinsel and flying streamers, exhibited the badges of their respective trades through the streets. Such brilliant displays of life and pageantry among the palaces, and domes, and gilded minarets of Lahore, made the city altogether like a place of enchantment — particularly on the day when Lalla Rookh set out again upon her journey, when she was accompanied to the gate by all the fairest and richest of the nobility, and rode along between ranks of beautiful boys and girls, who kept waving over their heads plates of gold and silver flowers, and then threw them around to be gathered by the populace ...

The saddened and lovelorn Lalla Rookh, though increasingly torn by her love for the lowly poet Feramorz, resolved to maintain her virtue and fulfill her promise to marry the unseen King of Bucharia. The epic closes as the beautiful bride is ferried across a lake to the domes of the King's gardens and her waiting groom, tears streaming down her face as she searches the crowd for one last look at her beloved Feramorz — only to discover that her young king is none other than the poet Feramorz himself, who had accompanied her on her journey so that he might win her love.

Unfortunately, none of the other descendants of Aurangzeb achieved such a happy ending in either myth or history. The Mughal dynasty would last another century, but as the legacy of violence which Aurangzeb bequeathed was re-enacted by his sons and grandsons with only small variations, the once great power regressed into a titular body with less and less control

دارم کنه قطره باران شیش



وز شرم کنه فکند ام پیردش



نسیب سلطان جهانگیر قزوینی

Young Prince; Mughal,
c. 1620. The Persian inscription
reads 'a likeness of the
emperor Jahangir at the time of his
youth,' but the verity of that
identification is doubted by many
experts, as it was not uncommon
for later owners to add their
own inscriptions. Whoever he may
be, this young ruler certainly
seems to represent the height of
Mughal princely beauty, holding a
pink rose and gloriously arrayed
in floating white robes, with
a mauve turban and a gold patka,
or cummerbund.

over its increasingly autonomous provinces. Two of Aurangzeb's own sons and three of his grandsons were killed, effectively ending the father-to-son line which had previously characterised the Mughal house. And of the next eight contenders (whose total reign was only fifty-two years), four were murdered on the throne and one was forcibly ousted. This lack of order and cohesion perhaps opened the door for the two great conquerors who would now overrun what had been Mughal soil for over two centuries. The first was the Persian ruler and legendary Asian conqueror Nadir Shah, who stands in history with such infamous names as Timurlane and Chingiz Khan. Nadir Shah and later his Afghan successor Ahmad Shah Durrani Abdali would bring years of bloody war and savage onslaughts to the walls of the old city. In one thirty-year period they would invade and capture Lahore no less than nine times.

With the death of Aurangzeb, the brilliant period of Lahore came to an end. No longer the residence of the Emperor and the members of the Imperial family, it also ceased to be a stopping-place on the occasions of the royal visits to Kashmir and Kabul. The tottering Mughal empire at Lahore was a tempting target for invaders, and the walled city of Lahore in particular entered a phase of terrible battles, barricaded streets, and sieges lasting months on end. In the course of the fifth invasion by Ahmad Shah, 300,000 soldiers were slain outside Lahore. Ahmad Shah and later the Afghan ruler Shah Zaman would fight for years against the furious phantom troops of the Sikh warriors, attacking them only to watch them fade back up into the hills of their homeland, before the Sikhs finally established their rule of Lahore. The old city survived the cannonfire biting into the massive wall, the fires, the mass executions in the bloody courtyards, the bulletholes spattered across the tile mosaics. Another era had begun.



سواران خاص
Lahore Life Guards 1838

3

Bodyguards of Ranjit Singh;
watercolour and pencil,
c.1838-39. Two horsemen on richly
caparisoned mounts.

Even before the Mughals had consolidated their position in India, various religious leaders were attempting a reconciliation of Islam with Hinduism. Among them was a man by the name of Nanak. He was born in 1469 about 55 miles outside of Lahore, into the clan of the Bedis. This man too would go on to be a great founder — but not of an empire. Rather he was destined to be the father of the Sikh religion, and the first of its ten gurus.

The genealogy of this native Punjabi-born religion can be traced, like the Lahore Fort, to the sons of the god Rama: Loh and Kusa-ba. For according to tradition, Loh and Kusa-ba each bore a son — Kalrai and Kalket respectively — and raised them in the area of Lahore. When the two cousins reached maturity, they quarrelled and fought until, ultimately, a defeated Kalrai was forced to flee Lahore for Delhi, while his victorious brother Kalket stayed on to found a kingdom in Lahore and establish his family there. But Kalrai was not to be deposed so easily, and many years later he rallied his forces again. This time he and his son retook Lahore, and Kalket's family was forced to take refuge in Kashi, where they became peaceful reciters and expounders of the Vedas, to be known henceforward as the 'Vedis' or 'Bedis'. It is from this line of the Bedis that Guru Nanak's birth was prophesied; and the prophecy was fulfilled in the second half of the fifteenth century.

The Bedis lived as farmers on their lands surrounding Lahore. It was here, in the village of Talawandi (today known as Nankana Sahib, in honour of him), that the father of the Sikhs entered the world. This Sikh guru, like Prince Gautama the Buddha and Mahavira the Jain, was also of the Kshatriya caste. This had an important ramification for the Sikh religion, for, like the other two figures mentioned above, Guru Nanak not only rejected caste

distinction, but also actually founded a religion dedicated to its abolition. It is most probable that all of these men opposed caste discrimination so vehemently because they, as Kshatriyas, had experienced a prolonged and fruitless struggle for supremacy with the Brahmin priestly caste. This egalitarian emphasis of the Kshatriya caste strongly affected both the ideals and the character of Sikhism.

The religion that Nanak and the next nine gurus founded was developed partially as a response to the Hindu-Muslim strife that characterised Northern India at that time. Nanak, believing that he could find a way to weave these two great traditions together, is quoted as saying, 'There is no Hindu, and no Mussalman'. The product was an ethical monotheism with mystical influences that bordered on pantheism. Many links existed between the Muslim Sufi mystics and the founders of the Sikh religion. It is even possible that Nanak was a spiritual disciple of the Muslim Kabir. Both certainly represent the *bhakti*, or devotional, tradition, and both pointed out the similarity of ideas in Hinduism and Islam. In any event, Kabir is known to have contributed over a thousand verses of poetic scripture to the Sikhs' holy scripture, the *Adi Granth*. Further evidence of the mingling of early Sikhism with Islam is the Sikh belief that Mian Mir, the Pir of Lahore and a Sufi of the Qadiriyya order, was a close friend of the fifth guru Arjun. Guru Arjun compiled the *Adi Granth* and built a temple at Amritsar, and he even laid the foundation stone of the Golden Temple itself. He was executed by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1606, for rebelling against him. The death of Guru Arjun was the catalyst that changed a gentle mystical sect into a more military one.

During the next hundred years, there were five more gurus. The last one, Guru Gobind Singh, emerged as a spiritual and political leader whose aim was an end to oppression, and the rejuvenation of Guru Nanak's teachings. So far as religion was concerned, he directed that the tradition of Gurus must end with him and that the holy *Granth* should be worshipped. He further decreed the worship of the One Invisible God and reverence for the memory of Nanak and the other gurus. To create an identity he devised the idea of a militant brotherhood, which would fight oppression. Those baptised into this brotherhood — the *Khalsa*, or the Pure — would observe the five K's: their hair, or *kesh*, would remain unshorn; they would wear a wooden comb, or *kanga*; they would wear shorts, or *kach*; carry a dagger, or *kirpan*; and wear an iron bangle, or *kara*. They would also take the name of *Singh*, or lion. These observances continue to the present day.

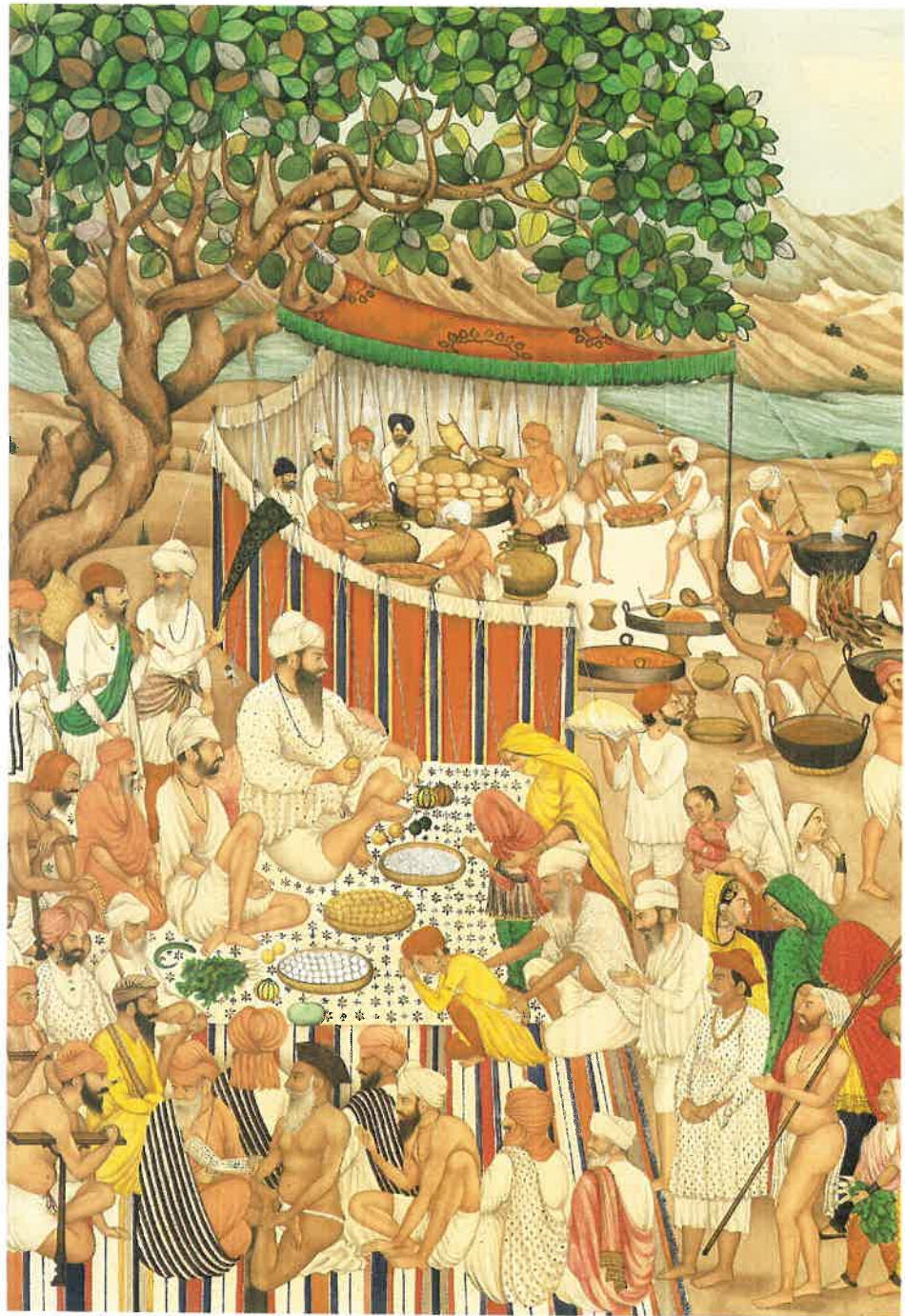
Guru Gobind Singh died in 1708, his death coinciding with the decline and last days of the Mughal Empire. However as Mughal power lapsed, twelve Sikh confederacies, or *misals*, each organised under a local ruler, rose in strength and influence. Eventually, however, the confederacies began to quarrel and to strive for domination among themselves, and by the late 1780s a triumvirate of Sikh rulers had risen to rule Lahore: Lahna Singh, Sobha

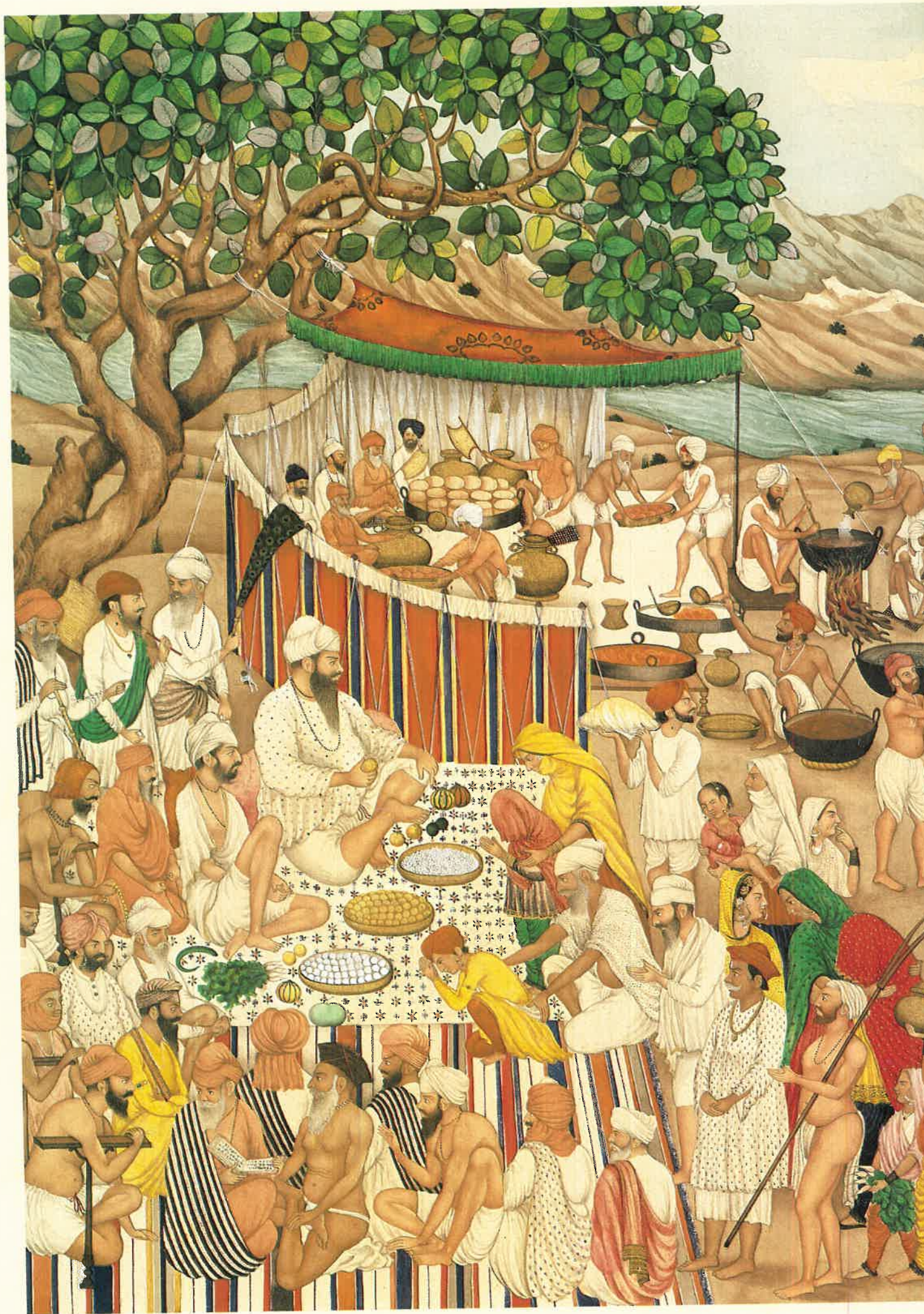
Singh and Gujar Singh. Their three sons, Chet, Muhr and Sahib respectively, took over the triumvirate in turn. For nearly 30 years the three Sikh chiefs and their heirs ruled from Lahore without interruption.

In 1797, however, the Afghan Shah Zaman moved from his kingdom in Kabul to take Lahore, and the Sikh triumvirate fled to the hills for safety. Shah Zaman easily overpowered the city in the Sikhs' absence, but during the manoeuvre, one Sikh especially stood out — Ranjit Singh.

Ranjit Singh, quite simply, wanted Lahore — and he held no special affection for the old triumvirate. Thus, when Shah Zaman bargained for his

Bhai Veer Singh, c.1850-60.
Detail (right) and overleaf. The full inscription on this picture reads: "Bhai Veer Singh a highly renowned and charitable man in the time of Raja Heera Singh and afterwards was killed in the civil war of Sikhs." This Sikh holy man was indeed a highly regarded and beloved religious leader; he was also known for his intense military tendencies and talents, to the extent that Hira Singh and the Emperor Dalip Singh became increasingly nervous about his presence. Eventually Hira Singh went to war with him and Bhai Veer Singh was killed; but his influence was such that upon Hira Singh's return to the city he was greeted with taunts and cries of 'Gurumas' — Guru murderer.









Tomb of Ranjit Singh,
photograph, c.1890.

cooperation, Ranjit readily agreed. In exchange for retrieving eight of Shah Zaman's heavy guns which had sunk in the Jhelum, Ranjit received the titular chieftainship of Lahore. Then, in an action which established his rule beyond question, the *zamindars*, or landholders, of the city called upon Ranjit to help them overthrow the returned triumvirate, a presence they had found to be increasingly oppressive.

Ranjit's siege of the city, although exercised with the support and backing of its inhabitants, was not without costly and tragic blunders. At the opportune time, the Lahore *zamindars* sent word to Ranjit in Rasulnagar to launch his attack. They informed him specifically that they would keep the Lahori Gate open for him, to allow him the easiest access. At the last minute, however, the *zamindars* were forced to change their plans; hurriedly, they dispatched a messenger to Ranjit. As fate would have it, Ranjit had already set out from Rasulnagar, and the message never reached him. When Ranjit reached the Lahori Gate, he was met with a bombardment both from there and from the Shah 'Alami Gate. He sustained great losses among his troops, unaware that his frustrated reception committee waited at a break in the wall further along. Ranjit was forced to withdraw.

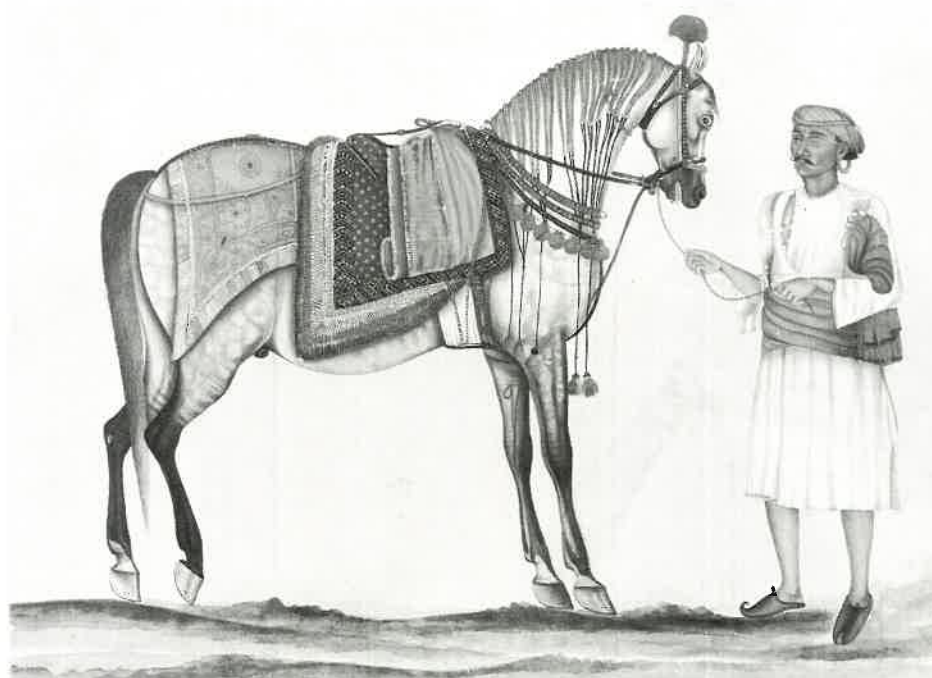
The next night word was sent that this time the Lahori Gate would be kept

open for certain. Ranjit besieged the gate again and this time met with success. As the future Maharaja entered the city, the last of the triumvirs fled — Muhr Singh from his residence in Lala Lakhpat Rae Haveli, and Chet Singh from the Lahore Fort. The chief of the *zamindars*, Mahr Muhkam, was rewarded with the post of chief administrator of Lahore.

Throughout Ranjit's reign, he never took the traditional string of titles granted to a Maharaja, or even stamped his name on the coins that he issued. However, he did issue currency with another person's name — that of his favourite mistress Moran. Her *arsi*, or small thumb-ring with mirror, often appeared symbolically on his coinage. She must have had a great influence on the Maharaja, for he even moved from his residence at the Lahore Fort to live with her in her *haveli*, and ultimately came to entrust the care of the government wholly to her — over and above Mahr Muhkam and the other *zamindars* who had originally helped to put him into power. Yet Ranjit's authority was not diminished by this transfer of trust; in fact, his power only grew and increased in strength.

In 1801, Ranjit summoned a *darbar*, or a kind of summit conference, where he met with all the chiefs of the surrounding regions. Here he assumed the title of *Sarkar*, which signified 'state'. And by 1808, the new kingdom of Lahore was swelling with Ranjit's recent acquisitions. It was about this time that Thomas Metcalfe was sent by the British to make a strategic alliance with the Sikhs. Ranjit apparently had a somewhat inflated conception of his strength at this time, and after representing himself rather flamboyantly as the

Ranjit Singh's Horse, with a One-eyed Syce, c.1840. Inscribed on the back, "The famous Lahore horse of Maharaja Ranjit Singh," this portrayal was produced on English paper and watermarked 1839. The fact that Ranjit Singh's groom had one eye may well have been intentional, as Ranjit Singh himself had only one eye and is rumoured to have preferred servants with the same affliction.



471-
Mudine 1



Maharajah Ranjit Singh Seated;
*Emily Eden, c. 1850. Miss Eden also
wrote strange and charming
reports of life with Ranjit Singh and
his court.*

representative of all the Sikh people, he abruptly broke off negotiations and attacked the British south of the Sutlej. In response, the British governor-general of Calcutta moved four platoons, under General David Ochterlony, across the Jumna, where the native Sirhindi chiefs welcomed them. Ranjit, chastened but composed, graciously acceded to the British demands to leave the country east of the Sutlej alone. In return, Ranjit was left free to expand his boundaries to the north and west. For the rest of his life Ranjit honoured the bargain.

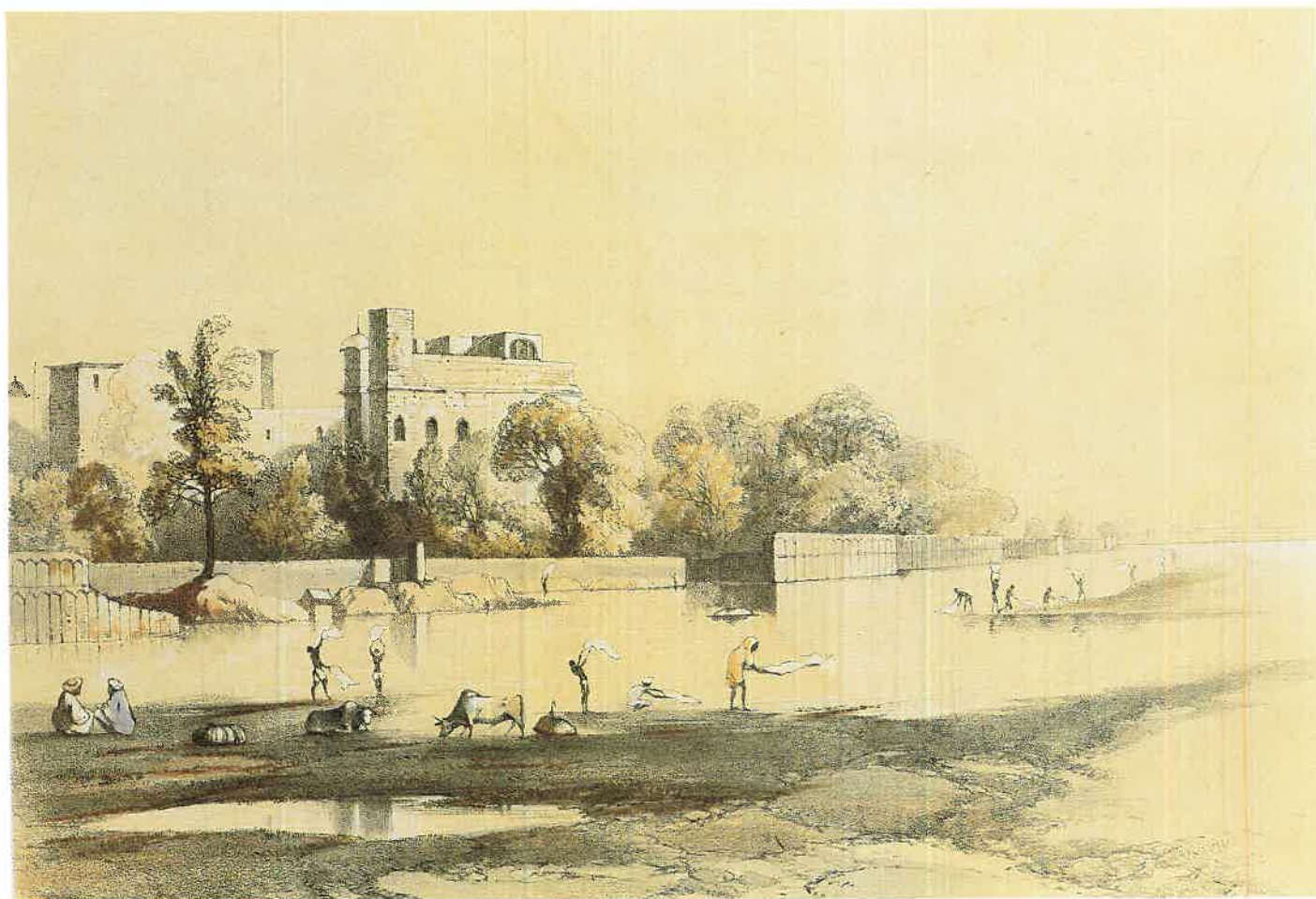
In other ventures, however, Ranjit was not quite so faultlessly trustworthy. When the wandering and exiled Shah Shuja', descendant of the former ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali, found his way to Lahore from Kabul in 1810, he found what he thought was a friendly alliance and a safe harbour with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who warmly welcomed him and immediately settled him in a beautiful *haveli* in the city. Very quickly, however, he realised that Ranjit's real interest lay in what Shah Shuja' carried with him: the legendary Koh-i-Nur diamond, the magnificent 'Mountain of Light' itself. Abruptly, Shah Shuja' found himself under house arrest, unable to leave his elegant prison, and bluntly denied access to his entourage and soldiers. When Ranjit, through a courier, forthrightly asked for the diamond, Shah Shuja' replied that he had sold it. Ranjit responded by withholding both food and tobacco from his guest. After a short period of this deprivation, Ranjit sent his courier to again demand the diamond. Shah Shuja' replied that the Maharaja should come and take the jewel himself.

Unperturbed, Ranjit Singh cheerfully mounted his horse, armed himself with 1000 rupees in cash, and, flanked by his troops, departed at once for Mubarak Haveli to see the Shah. The two greeted one another with great politeness and both men were seated, after which a slight pause ensued, which lasted a solid hour. Eventually, Ranjit Singh's patience was — understandably — exhausted, and he instructed his attendant to remind Shah Shuja' that the diamond had yet to make its appearance. Legends abound about the methods of Ranjit Singh employed to obtain the jewel, including one wherein Ranjit had the Shah placed under a chair on which Ranjit then sat, until the Shah (rather breathlessly, one would think) agreed to surrender the diamond. Whatever the methods, ultimately Shah Shuja' produced a small roll of cloth, which was placed exactly half-way between the two men. After a mutual declaration of peace, the fine cloth was unrolled; and there, blazing in the centre, was the Mountain of Light. After a moment, Ranjit asked what price Shah Shuja' set on the jewel. Shah Shuja', in his bitterest voice, replied, 'Its price is *lathi* (heavy stick). My forefathers obtained it by this means; you have obtained it from me for this price; after you a stronger power will appear and deprive you of it the same way.' Apparently, Ranjit was not upset by this statement; in fact, he promised to recompense him with 150,000 rupees and the two *jagirs* (land grants) of Jhang and Kot Kamalia. Ranjit Singh finally got the great diamond, although Shah Shuja'

A Portion of Ranjit's Palace;
lithograph printed and published by
Dickinson Brothers, London.

never received the rupees or the grants; but perhaps it would have been some satisfaction to him to know that his prophecy about the Koh-i-Nur's curse of violence would in fact come true. Ranjit Singh would live to pass the diamond on to his heirs; but ultimately, a stronger power appeared to deprive the Subcontinent of the diamond. It resides now where it has for years: in the Tower of London, with the rest of the Crown Jewels of England.

In 1839, Ranjit died in Lahore at the age of 57. He left behind him an empire which had grown to include Multan, Peshawar, Kashmir, Kabul and Dejarat, a disciplined army of over 80,000 troops, and the achievement of uniting the various proud regional chieftains into a cooperative whole. He also left behind an heir and successor, Kharrak Singh. But the son of the great empire builder was an imbecile, and ruled for only one year and four months. The tragedy did not end there, for Kharrak, though an imbecile, had left a capable son and heir — Naunihal Singh. However, on the very day of the coronation of this most unlucky maharaja, upon returning from his father's funeral, an archway at the entrance to the Badshahi Mosque crashed down upon Naunihal and killed him. A power struggle ensued between Chand Kaur — the widow of Kharrak and mother of Naunihal — and the





Ranjit Singh Seated with Dhian Singh Standing Before Him; gouache, c.1850. Ranjit Singh, never a vain man, refused to try to hide his blind eye either from his people or from the merciless brush of the court artists and almost every picture of him shows his less than handsome visage in all of its true glory, without the benefit of any cosmetic help from his artists. The image is inscribed in English, "Maharaja Runjeet Singh; his Rajpoot Minister Rajah Dhian Singh/murdered."



reputed but dubious son of Ranjit, Sher Singh. In 1841, Sher Singh took power and Chand Kaur received an honourable compromise. Only three years later, however, conspirators Lahna and Ajit Singh Sandhawalia treacherously killed Sher Singh by shooting him with a gun which they were ostensibly offering him as a gift. They then proceeded to the Fort and killed Sher Singh's son, the young Prince Partap, as well as Dhian Singh, an avid supporter of Sher Singh.

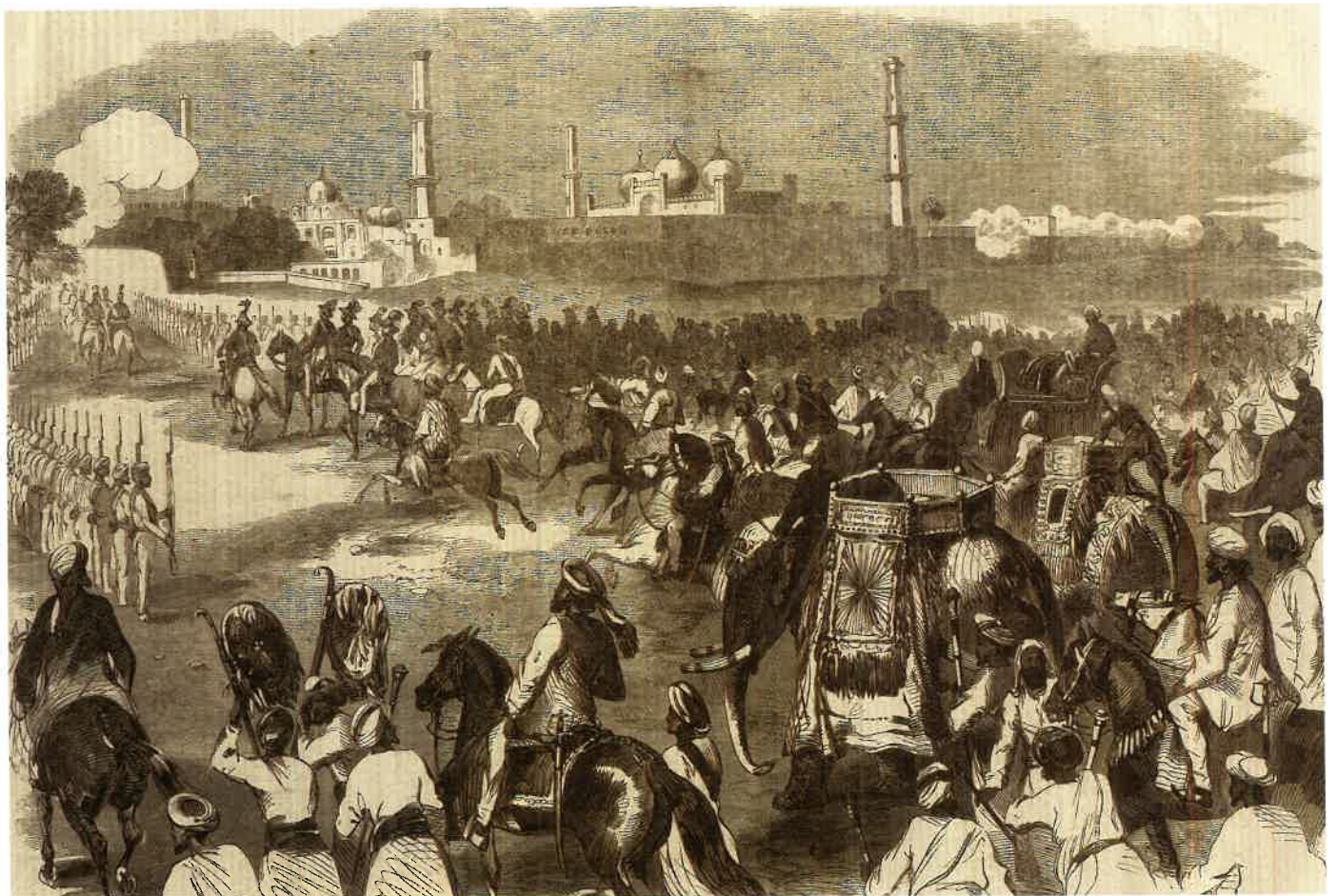
This intrigue was followed in quick succession by the revenge of Dhian's son Hira. As Lahna and Ajit Singh attempted to flee the city, both were slain. Hira became the *wazir*, and ruled largely under the influence of his boyhood tutor, Jalla. Dalip Singh, another reputed son of Ranjit, took the throne, unaware that he was destined to be the last Sikh ruler that Lahore would know. For the moment, however, court intrigue flourished, and it wasn't long before Dalip's mother, Rani Jindan, found fault with Jalla's impudence. Jalla and his protégé Hira fled for their lives, but they never made it to safety. They too were assassinated.

Eventually it was another intrigue of Rani Jindan — not satisfied with her son on the throne as Maharaja — that significantly helped to speed the decline of the Sikhs and the ascendancy of the British, out of her desire to

Procession of Sikh Chiefs
and Others at Lahore;
engraving from the *Illustrated
London News*, April 7, 1860.

avenge the murder of a brother of hers. In 1845, the Sikh army had turned against her brother Jawahir Singh, the *wazir*, and killed him. Seeking vengeance, the Rani concocted an ingenious plan: she riled the Sikh army, exhorting them to march on the British, and simultaneously wrote to the British informing them that she was willing to give them certain territories in exchange for peace — her only reservation being that she could not control the Sikh army. The result was that the British proceeded to the territories she had named, thinking to occupy them peacefully and gratuitously, while the Sikhs proceeded from the other direction, ready to make war on the British with the slightest provocation. Rani Jindan's plan worked perfectly. The Sikh army was routed and almost completely destroyed by the British, while the British entertained no hostility towards the queen mother and were even, to the contrary, thankful to her for her warning them about the Sikh army. At the last minute the Sikhs realised that they had been betrayed,, but it was too late.

But the Rani's plan eventually led to her own destruction. The British were so pleased with the acquisition of the Sikh territory that in 1846 they occupied Lahore, intending to maintain Dalip as their nominal ruler and ceremonial figurehead. However, by 1848 Dalip had been formally deposed from the throne and was quietly whisked away to the English countryside.



There he lived out his days as an English gentleman on the handsome pension of £50,000 per year. He never saw his homeland again, and the British stayed on to rule in his country for more than a century.

Perhaps the most illuminating glimpse into the life and times of Ranjit Singh and the other great Sikh rulers of Lahore is found in the journal of a British woman, who not only journeyed in their country in their time, but who was also personally entertained and guided there by the Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself. This woman is Emily Eden and her journal, kept during her travels, entitled *Up the Country*, is filled with fresh, personal insights which no historian's account could ever deliver. In the excerpt which follows, for example, the intense immediacy of her writing allows the reader to attend, with her, a dinner party with Ranjit Singh in the Shalimar Gardens. With startling liveliness, famous figures who would later battle with one another to create history (Kharrak Singh, Sher Singh and his son Partab, Hira Singh, Dhian Singh, and, of course, Ranjit Singh) come to life as real people:

Yesterday evening Runjeet gave us a party in the Shalimar Gardens, which were illuminated in every direction. The party was like all the others, except that it was less crowded, and there was an introduction of Afghans. The brother of our enemy Dost Mahomed, who is not fettered by foolish feelings of family affection, has come over to us. He and his sons and followers were rather picturesque, with their enormous coarse turbans and cloth gaberdines, and great jack-boots, amongst all those jewelled Sikhs. Runjeet was extremely civil to them. I thought one of the amusing incidents of the evening would be, that I should topple over backwards, chair and all, into the garden below the sort of open summer house in which we were sitting. Runjeet is particular in the arrangement of his circle — and also rather peculiar. He and G. [her brother George, the Governor-General] were seated just in a corner of the open arch, so as to have a side view of the fireworks, and my chair was put next to Runjeet's in the middle of the arch with no ledge to the floor and my back to the garden. I moved off, on pretence that I could see nothing, but he sent for me back again, and I think he must have been disappointed at the precision with which I sat bolt upright. I always try to flirt a little with Kurruck Singh, the heir-apparent, who is supposed to be a goose but 'a great *parti*,' as C. would say; but I think the Maharajah sees through me, for he always says to C. 'What's that?' and then answers for his son. I wish he would not — I think my Kurruck would be pleasant, if they ever let him open his lips. I asked him if he had ever tasted any English wine, and he said he never drank any wine at all, upon which Runjeet immediately gave him his own little glass full of spirits, and laughed with the greatest delight at his son's taking it. F. and I came away very early.

Most of the camp came in procession with G. and the Maharajah through the town [Lahore], which F. says was very dirty and not oderiferous. Runjeet led them in and out, and round about for two hours. I cannot stand much elephant, so I came across the country in the tonjaun [open sedan-chair] with Captain E. and Mr. A., who rode. The Sikh guards led

General Jean Francois Allard and His Family, 1838. General Allard served Ranjit Singh when the Emperor hired the Frenchman to train two regiments of dragoons and lancers for him, and he spent most of his adult life in the Punjab. Pictured here with his Kashmiri wife and children in their native dress, General Allard wears two medals: The Bright Star of the Punjab, from Ranjit Singh, above the French Legion of Honour, from Napoleon Bonaparte.



Lahore from the Old Race
Course; lithograph, c.1850.
*On this plain, Ranjit Singh used
to review his troops.*



us right through the fields where there was no shade, but it was rather nice and gave one a reminiscence of Shottesbrooke and partridge shooting. We saw in the distance the dust of our moving camp, and blessed ourselves. It was only four miles by this route from one camp to the other.

Of course, Shere Singh and Pertab came to dinner. The little boy is quite set on learning English, and he says, in such a droll voice, 'Chance [the dog], sit up', 'plate', 'glass', and a few other words he has picked up. To fill up the evenings, we have taught him that game of soldiers by making round dots on a piece of paper, which he and W. play at, and before dessert was over, he asked whether it was not time to go into the next room. He wanted to kill Dost Mahomed with his pencil.

Heera Singh, Runjeet's favourite, came to my tent to sit for his picture, but there was some difficulty about his coming, so he arrived late, and it was too dark to draw him well. Runjeet sent word that he considered him 'his best-beloved son,' and hoped somebody of consideration would be sent to fetch him. Dhian Singh, the prime minister, and the ruler of one-third of the Punjab, was coming at the same time to see G. in a private manner. He is Heera Singh's father, but Runjeet sent the 'best-beloved son,' with quantities of elephants, and two regiments, to take care of him, while Dhian Singh came on horseback, with only four soldiers riding behind him. He is a very striking-looking man and his manners are much more pleasing than his son's ...

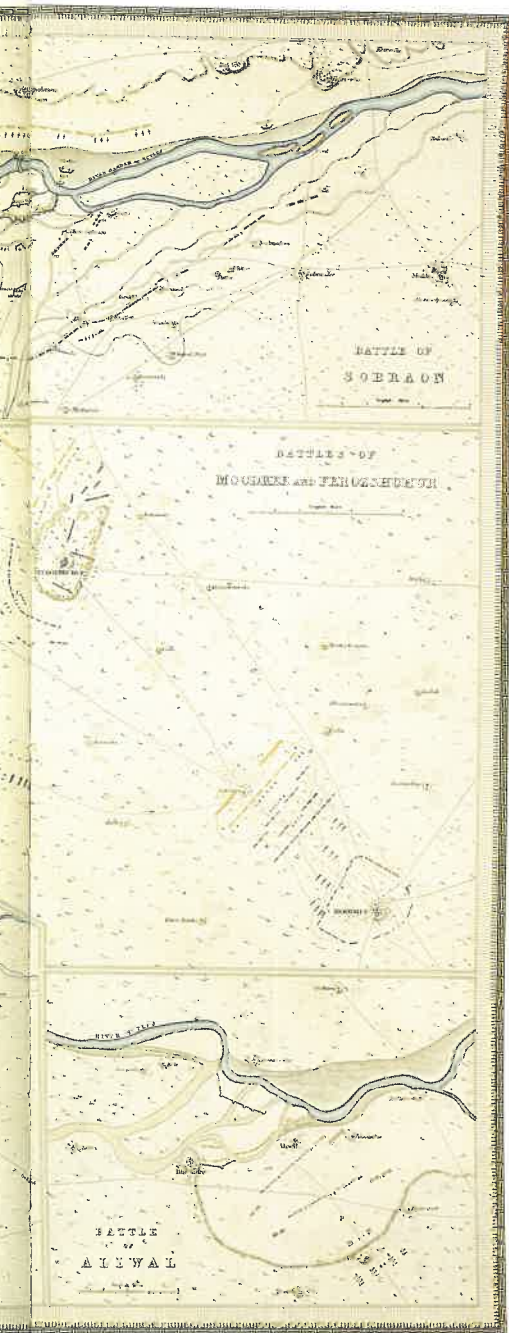
But the days of the Shalimar dinner parties were quickly coming to a close, or at least with an English guest as an observer. The British stopped writing journals about India and started to rule it. As Dalip Singh found himself sent quietly far away from his homeland, the British began to persistently replace the world he had known.

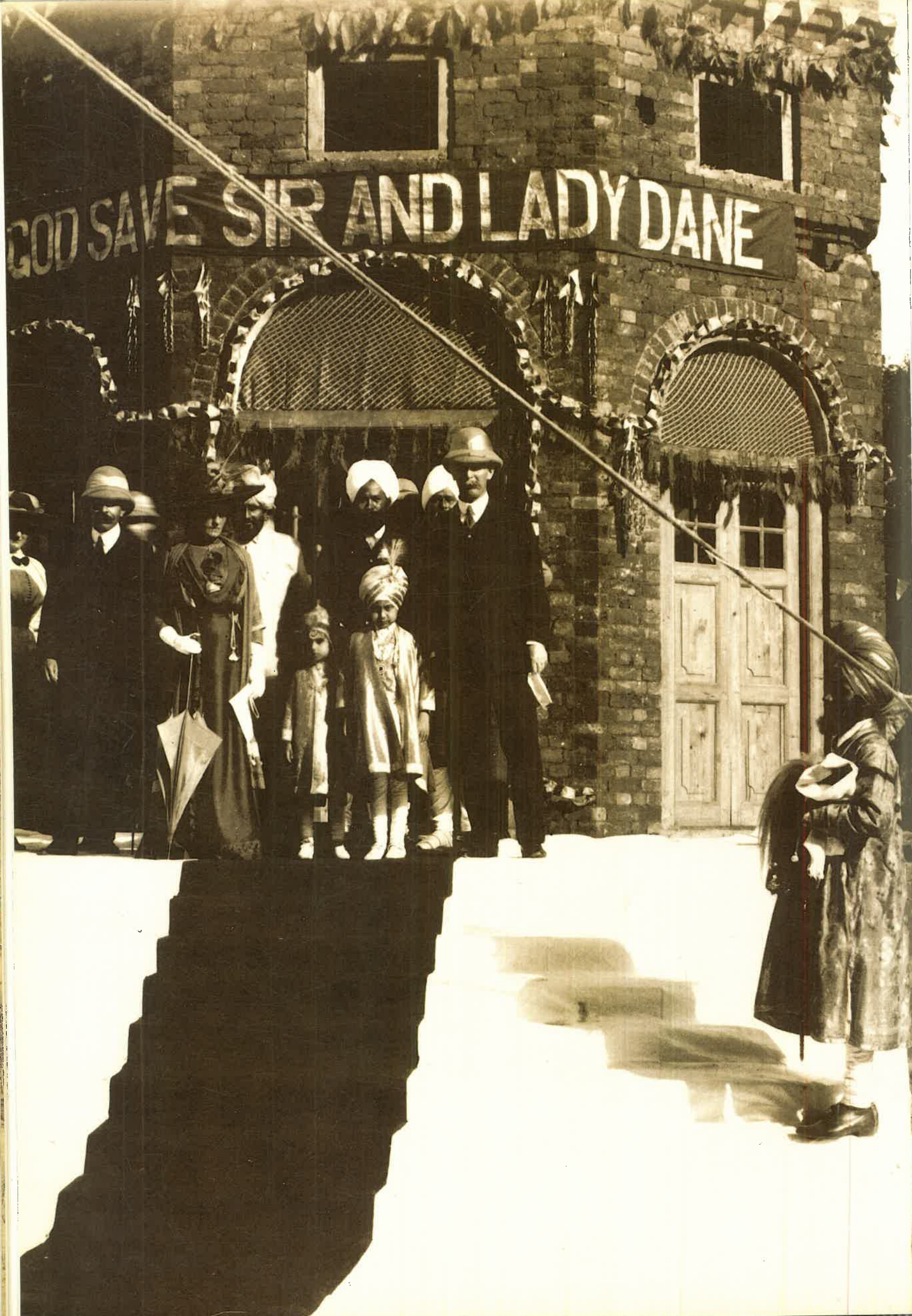
A British party including Henry Lawrence met with the Sikh dignitaries. This is an account of the darbar, written by Mary Amelia, wife of Lawrence's assistant.



The morning of the 26th of December 1846 dawned cold and frosty. The Governor General's camp was pitched on the Beas (river) opposite to Byrowal Ghat where shone the red and yellow silk tents of the boy King Dhulip Singh. In the north rose the snow-capped hills of the Himalayas and to the east the dismantled towers of Kapurtallah, the residence of the once powerful Aloowala Chief. Lord Hardinge had determined to reenact the scene performed at Ferozepoor in 1841, to have a personal interview with the Maharaja of the Punjab. The scene is the same, divested of its pomp and circumstance ... The troops have formed down the long line of white canvas tents when a royal salute of twenty-nine guns announces the auspicious moment of the departure of the Maharaja Dhulip Singh. He had crossed the bridge of boats, throwing

a largesse of 150 rupees among the boatmen, the scramble for the money is over, the now treasonable cry of "May the Raj of the Khalsah far be extended" has died away, and an A.D.C. on his flea-bitten arab has galloped down the line announcing the approach of the cavalcade. A train of elephants trapped in red cloth and glittering with gold are looming in the distance, the bands have struck up "God Save the Queen," the elephant of the Lord Sahib is kneeling. But another A.D.C. gallops down the line. Lord Hardinge and his staff have clambered up the elephants, again the bands play, and as the first gun of salute is fired, the boy Dhulip Singh is lifted into the Howdah of the Governor General. A frightened child of eight years dressed in yellow silk with a falcon's feather, a clasp of jewels in his turban, is seated by the side of the soldier and successful statesman ...





4

THE BRITISH RAJ

*The British colonists in the Punjab
shared one prominent feature
with their counterparts across the
Subcontinent: their appetite
for ceremony, no matter how
ridiculous, was almost limitless.
One can only wonder what
their native servants thought about
this English 'God' which they
so carefully painted on
this welcoming banner.*

But how did the British, who came to India as foreign traders and not as invaders, ever come to rule the country? Many factors combined to make this unlikely colonisation a reality. It was in the year 1739 that the ruler of Khurasan, Nadir Shah, finally led the Persian invasion that the Mughals had dreaded from the time Shah Jahan lost Qandahar to the Persian Shah Abbas. Like the Mongolian invaders who plundered the country so savagely over three hundred years earlier, Nadir Shah's incursion was also brief but thorough, leaving ghastly massacres and wholesale destruction in the streets of the Mughal cities.

When Nadir Shah withdrew, he took with him the Peacock Throne — the symbol of Mughal power — and left behind a bewildered and pillaged populace and a vulnerable empire. Never again would the Mughal Empire be able to regain comprehensive control over the shattered autonomous states and principalities that comprised its territory. This irrevocable loss of central authority in turn allowed, and even encouraged, the British traders gradually to turn their mercantile interests into a formally annexed colony.

When the British first set foot on India's shores, their motivations were limited to exploiting trade opportunities, and to besting their rivals, the Portuguese and Dutch, in this pursuit. By the eighteenth century, however, the French had become a powerful contending presence, and the East India (or 'John') Company found it necessary to confront them. While the British were establishing supremacy over the French, they were also solving the local administrative problems of John Company by the simple method of minting their own currency — not to mention setting up local 'governorships', taxing the Indians who worked for them, and in general building up their own independent bureaucratic systems in miniature.

The Company's first political intervention in Indian affairs occurred in Bengal in 1757. There the young nawab had marched on the British garrison and locked up one hundred and forty-five of its residents overnight in the 'Black Hole' of Fort William. Many died from the suffocating heat and painfully close quarters before they were released. Robert Clive, a soldier and employee of the company, marched to Plassey and defeated this hapless, guilty prince, avenged the imprisonment of the garrison, and put his own choice on the semi-independent Bengali throne. He received a lavish reward from the grateful new nawab for this action, and was granted large tracts of land. Very quickly this became a pattern all over India. The British would intervene, place their own choice on the throne, and receive great wealth and political power in return.

Eventually, in 1803, the blind Mughal Emperor Shah Alam (as well as his successor Alamgir II) was taken under the protection of the British. He ruled the Empire in name, but the British Resident 'guided' his every move. The last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar, succeeded Alamgir II, and quietly assumed the puppet-like status of his predecessor. He is remembered as a gentle scholar and a talented poet.

Thus in 1849, while Bahadur Shah sat impotently in Delhi and the deposed Sikh Dalip Singh was entertained as an exotic curiosity at Queen Victoria's court thousands of miles away, the British East India Company was able to establish a new over-riding ruling body in India called euphemistically the 'Board of Administration'. The company appointed three men to rule the board and quickly invested them with the appropriate titles necessary for the amount of power they wielded. The two officers and one civilian were hastily transformed into 'Sirs' Henry Lawrence and Robert Montgomery and 'Lord' John Lawrence.

So began the century of British imperial rule over India. But this period of transformation — from the British as traders and lavishly entertained guests to imperial policemen — bears a moment's digression. Once again, we turn to Emily Eden and her journal, seeking her intimate insider's view. James Morris, in *Heaven's Command*, beautifully summarises the records of this vivacious forty-one-year-old woman:

They [Miss Eden, the Governor-General, Ranjit Singh, and the rest of the entourage] travelled sometimes by steamer up the rivers which were the principal highways of India, sometimes on camel-back, in palanquins or in elephant howdahs, and they did it with theatrical display. The gubernatorial caravan numbered some 12,000 souls, with hundreds of animals and wagons, and when they stopped for the night a city of tents sprang up, bustling and teeming about Lord Auckland's quarters, with its own bazaars and workshops and stables, its farriers and its wheelwrights, its redcoat sentries, its aides and commissaries, its delegations of local magistrates or doctors or commanding officers, its gaudy emissaries from maharajahs of the country, its rituals of

A Reception in Lahore c.1923.
The arrival of dignitaries in Lahore was a reason to host elaborate receptions and balls. 'Shamianas' or tents were de rigueur at these receptions, to provide extra space for hundreds of guests and to shield everyone from the unrelenting sun. Most of the photographs from this era have come down to us with little, if any, identifying information, but this imposing building with its tower appears to be the High Court of Lahore.

presentation or official entertainment, its camp fires, its hurrying orderlies, its myriad ragged camp followers, its bugle calls at dusk, its smells of spice and woodsmoke and leather and sweat, all under the Union Jack on its great flagstaff beneath the terrific Indian sky. Sometimes it took three days for the cortege to cross a river ... When the King of Oudh kindly sent his own cook along to accompany the progress, and Lord Auckland was served a succession of highly spiced pilafs and curries, St. Cloup the Governor-General's own chef, who had once been cook to the Prince of Orange, was predictably affronted.

This was the manner of British in India, where the East India Company had been active for nearly 200 years, first as a trading organisation, then as an instrument of supremacy. It was a half-oriental manner, inherited from the Mughals, intended to overawe the indigenes and perhaps give the Company's officials a proper sense of their own authority. Miss Eden, who had been in India for two years, and was accustomed to different styles of consequence, found it faintly comic. Her letters show no awareness of majesty. The Governor-General is, after all, only her diffident brother George, pining for a decent inn. His grand officials, advisers and aides are only upper middle class Englishmen, accompanied



by gossiping wives, squirmy children and ludicrously cosseted pets. Miss Eden is not moved by the power, or the responsibility, or even the historical continuity represented by their progress. She does not see that vast brown Indian landscape, those half-naked multitudes around them, as a charge upon the English conscience, or a field for high adventure. She sees it all rather as a pageant ... she sees it, in fact, with the eyes of the eighteenth century. She was born in the old century, and her attitudes are Augustan — elegant, fastidious, entertained, urbane ...

But on October 30, 1837, she learnt beside the Ganges that the age was ended ... They looked at some convenient ruins in the evening — ‘very picturesque,’ Emily thought — gave the spaniel Chance a run, did a little sketching, and received letters from England ... Emily read them with delight ... and noted ... the accession to the throne of England of Princess Alexandrina Victoria of Kent, ‘Drina’ to her childhood intimates, 18 years old and rather plump.

So she discovered, beside the holy river [that] ... the world would never be the same again, and in particular Great Britain ... would acquire a new character. Before Victoria died a very different kind of empire would acknowledge her sovereignty — a brazen, plumed, arrogant and self-righteous empire, ruling its immense possessions not merely by display of force, but with an obsessive conviction of destiny and duty. Out of Victoria’s Britain would come a new breed of imperialists, unrecognisable in George Auckland and his leisurely assistants, and so constant would be the flow of British capital abroad, the movement of British migrants, the activities of British merchants, the campaigning of British armies, that by the time Queen Victoria died she would be the mistress of a quarter of the world’s inhabitants and nearly a quarter of its land surface.

Miss Eden had no vision of these powers to come. On the contrary, she thought the idea of the little Queen rather touching. It brought a lump to her throat. ‘I think,’ she wrote back to her sister that evening, after telling her about the ruins and the sketching [and] Chance — ‘I think the young Queen a charming invention ...’

The Indians, however, failed to find Victoria and her government, which was, strangely, simultaneously both benevolent and oppressive, a ‘charming invention’. And in 1857, the Indian population revolted against their newly established Victorian overlords and the alien government they represented. They used the powerless and effete Bahadur Shah as the reluctant symbol of their uprising, calling it their ‘War for Independence’. The British, however, branded it as the Indian Mutiny, or more commonly, as the Sepoy Revolt. The following extract from the British ‘Punjab Mutiny Report’ offers some interesting insights on two levels — both in terms of the British perception of the event and also in terms of the vital military significance that the city of Lahore still held in that time:

The Lahore Division is the chief Division of the Punjab. In it there lie the two largest commercial cities of this province of which one is also the

capital. The countryside is studded with the seats of native nobility ... [and] the population of the Division amounts to one-third of the population of the whole Punjab ... Its value as regards the preservation of British rule in India could not be overrated ...

The important move which gave us a foothold in North India when the empire seemed well nigh overwhelmed by the flood of mutiny which had burst forth so uncontrollably in the North-Western Provinces, was the disarming of the troops at Mian Mir ... It must be borne in mind that the Fort commands the city of Lahore; that it contains the treasury and the arsenal; that at Ferozepore, 50 miles distant, there is another arsenal; the largest in this part of India; and had these two fallen the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab must have been, for the time, irrevocably lost, the lives of all Europeans in these regions sacrificed, Delhi could not have been taken and India must have been *ab initio*, re-conquered. The designs of the conspirators were frustrated. By 5 A.M. of the 13th three companies of Her Majesty's 81st Foot marched into the fort and relieved the Native Infantry guard; while the ringing of the ramrods, as the remaining companies of that regiment on the parade ground at Mian Mir obeyed the order to load, sounded the knell of sepoy power in the Punjab. The three regiments of Native Infantry and one of light cavalry were cowed by that stirring sound and by the sight of twelve Horse Artillery guns charged with destruction to them should they resist. The infantry piled arms and marched off with silent and angry astonishment. The cavalry unbuckled their swords and threw them on the ground and the capital of the Punjab was saved ... The stalwart Sikhs who form the population of the Majha were wholly on our side throughout. Many villages have been almost decimated by the number of recruits who have flocked to form our new regiments in memory of the bygone days when they bravely fought against us under the banners of the Khalsa ...

"Turk Sahib". The inscription on this photograph, with its whimsical quotation marks, seems a small reminder of the rather off-hand and sometimes flippant attitude which many British colonists took toward their position in India. This was, obviously, a very English little dog.



"Turk Sahib"

*Officers of the Northwest Railway
Volunteer Rifles, c.1893, Lahore.*

The 'Punjab Mutiny Report' also illustrates in graphic terms the very human toll of the failed rebellion in Lahore:

On June 9th two men of the 35th Native Infantry, which was one of the regiments composing the column, were blown from guns on the Anarkali parade ground, by sentence of a drum-head court-martial, for sedition and intended mutiny ... Various petty events occurred showing the excited state of men's minds: a trooper of the disarmed 10th Irregulars, on his way down with his regiment, seized a sword, and made a feint of attacking several persons, but gave up his weapon quietly at last. He was punished with five years imprisonment. A man armed with a sword rushed out from one of the city gates, cut down the sentry and was eventually shot by a mounted policeman while making for the bridge of boats ...

Needless to say, the British protective measures were successful this time, and the rebellion was put down. In the following year of 1858, the Indian provinces were taken under a tighter rein when the British Parliament, galvanised by the Mutiny, transferred them from the British East India Company's hands into those of the Crown. And so Bahadur Shah was exiled to Burma to die on alien soil, forgotten and unsung. India was now officially a British colony.

Though now under the yoke of the Queen, the administration of the provinces remained much the same. Most of the changes were only nominal, such as the governor-general's becoming a 'viceroy'. In 1859, further titular changes were made when the familiar 'Sir' John Lawrence, the old head of the Board and then 'Chief Commissioner' of the Punjab, went on to become the 'Lieutenant-Governor' of the Punjab and its dependencies — which had



been newly christened a 'Lieutenant-Governorship'. His headquarters were again established in Lahore.

However, even if the structure of the country's administration remained the same on paper, subtle changes were entering the lifestyles of ruler and ruled alike, as East and West each began to experiment with the novelties of the other, and to slowly and cautiously taste of each other. The British tycoons who had acquired fabulous wealth from their trade shot almost overnight from being commoners in their native England to being Eastern land barons in an Indian paradise. Like the native noblemen whom they were slowly replacing, they indulged in the comforting narcotic smoke of jewelled hookahs, commanded vast retinues of servants, and enjoyed the highly skilled and erotic company of local dancing girls and courtesans. They held elaborate *durbars* until all hours in grand Mughal fashion, sipped cool drinks at their local club — whose immaculately manicured green lawns were the hub of the restricted and elitist British social life in India — or travelled with elephant caravans to the cool green hills of Simla and Murree. They mastered Indian polo, went hunting for tigers and even learned the art of pig-sticking. But they also transformed the great public halls of their *havelis* into grand English ballrooms that reminded them of their home so far away. Here they enjoyed the best of both worlds, entertaining in their elegant native British tradition in the company of the exotic Indian nobility. Their local guests learned to wear shining pointed shoes with small bows and to dance the waltz, and the hosts enjoyed the touch of perfumed jasmine breezes which settled lightly over their party and then moved on.

It was not just the British who were discovering a new and fascinating world; the Indians were simultaneously viewing and absorbing the strange mannerisms and customs of the light-skinned newcomers. The Indian princes experimented with new modes of tailoring and unusual fabrics — like velvets and wools — and soon outdid the British in the elegance of their part-time western dressing. The Indian women, however, tended for the most part to maintain traditional dress; yet small striking changes could be witnessed here and there, such as the substitution of a dangling cigarette holder for an intricately hennaed palm, or Victorian lace added to a brilliant silk sari.

Both worlds were fascinated with the relatively new western art of photography. Astonished by the exact replicas which this new toy could deliver, those Indians who could afford this pleasure commissioned portrait after portrait to be taken of their numerous wives, concubines and children, and some quickly became superlative photographers in their own right. The photographs left to us of the declining Indian nobility at this unusual time in history are as interesting and revealing as they are now invaluable. Soon rich Indian Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus — whose ancestors had never travelled farther east than the Arabic-speaking lands, nor farther north than the upper

British Regiment Enters the Old City. *These ceremonial marches were held often to impress the local populace with the awesome pomp and authority of the Raj. Here, Lord Minto leads his regiment through the streets of Lahore.*

reaches of Afghanistan or perhaps China — were suddenly able to visit London, Paris and Rome. Rather than being intimidated by these strange surroundings, their highly sophisticated and cultured backgrounds allowed them to easily acquire the mannerisms and tastes of Europe's elite, and usually even to outdo them.

Meanwhile, the India and the Lahore that these Indian travellers had temporarily left behind them were gradually being reshaped under the influence of the Raj. New buildings sprang up on almost every corner, and old monuments were refashioned to serve some new purpose. Sometimes tanks were filled in and transformed into tennis courts or flower beds, and neatly clipped bushes in geometrical shapes dotted spacious Mughal courtyards and ancient lanes. Perhaps one of the most erudite testimonies of this old-new, changing world of Lahore under the British Raj is from an insider who lived and wrote there, and later wrote voluminously about his experiences during that historical time for many years — Rudyard Kipling.

The following passage from Kipling's short story, 'In the House of Suddhoo', which is set in the old city of Lahore, vividly conjures up at least



one aspect of the life of a colourful resident within the walls. Kipling's narrative persona, a young English officer, tells the story:

The house of Suddhoo, near the Taksali Gate, is two-storeyed, with four carved windows of old brown wood, and a flat roof. You may recognise it by five red hand-prints arranged like the Five of Diamonds on the whitewash between the upper windows. Bhagwan Dass the grocer and a man who says he gets his living by seal-cutting live in the lower storey with a troop of wives, servants, friends, and retainers. The two upper rooms used to be occupied by Janoo and Azizun and a little black-and-tan terrier that was stolen from an Englishman's house and given to Janoo by a soldier. Today, only Janoo lives in the upper rooms. Suddhoo sleeps on the roof generally, except when he sleeps in the street. He used to go to Peshawar in the cold weather to visit his son who sells curiosities near the Edwardes' Gate, and then he slept under a real mud roof. Suddhoo is a great friend of mine, because his cousin had a son who secured, thanks to my recommendation, the post of head-messenger to a big firm in the Station. Suddhoo says that God will make me a Lieutenant-Governor one of these days ...

Suddhoo's cousin's son told me, one evening, that Suddhoo wanted to see me; that he was too old and feeble to come personally, and that I should be conferring an everlasting honour on the House of Suddhoo if I went to him. I went; but I think, seeing how well off Suddhoo was then, that he might have sent something better than an *ekka*, which jolted fearfully, to haul out a future Lieutenant-Governor to the City on a muggy April evening. The *ekka* did not run quickly. It was full dark

Garden Party at Government
House, Lahore c.1890.



The word 'bungalow,' first used to describe the homes built for British colonists, is actually an anglicised reference to the Bengali homes they resembled. A deep, shaded verandah surrounded the house, and within, a spacious central living room led to the bedrooms; all of the rooms opened onto the porch. By the 1870s, the humble bungalow had evolved into a much larger establishment and grandiose porticos were frequently added, serving as both 'porte cocheres' and extensions of the verandahs. Innumerable pots of geraniums and chrysanthemums flourished, no doubt to remind the residents of England, so far away.





Lord Canning Enters Lahore;
William Simpson, c.1859.



when we pulled up opposite the door of Ranjit Singh's Tomb near the main gate of the Fort. Here was Suddhoo, and he said that, by reason of my condescension, it was absolutely certain that I should become a Lieutenant-Governor while my hair was yet black. Then we talked about the weather and the state of my health, and the wheat crops, for fifteen minutes, in the Huzuri Bagh under the stars ...

Kipling's endless impressions of Lahore and India, almost mythological in their proportions now, have never failed to enchant the modern reader. But what if Rudyard Kipling were to return to Lahore today? How would it compare with the Lahore he knew — the city of the legendary Raj and the urchin Kim? For one thing, he would find the *ekka* (a simple horse-drawn chariot) replaced by the *tonga* — a high, well-sprung, canopied wooden carriage pulled by a horse and driver called the *tonga-wallah*, who knows the city like the back of his hand. The *tonga* can negotiate the tiniest alleys and yet bowl along the Mall at a smart pace. And as the *tonga* for him might be an oddity, so would the cars, the imposing modern buildings, hotels, restaurants and shops of the new city. However, all the old landmarks are still there, and Kipling would have no trouble finding his way ...

The old city, where he lived and worked from 1882–1887 as assistant editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, is relatively unchanged. The walled city still bears many stamps, made magnificent by the Mughals, made powerful by the Sikhs. The walls are still there, walls which were unable to contain the sprawling city in the heyday of its caravan trade, when the city had spilled out and spread beyond. But when the British came to Lahore in about 1849, this great wall was in various stages of disrepair, and the great Fort surrounded by a gaping ditch. Once the British had established their sovereignty, however, they filled in the ditch and sculpted it into a massive circular flower bed. This began the century of British renovation, which would transform Lahore from the ragged blocks of stone and embers that it had become since the Persian invasion and the subsequent loss of centralised authority. Sometimes the new buildings and landscaping were carried out without sensitivity to indigenous design, but mostly the repairs, flowers, trees, lawns and new architecture were thirstily welcomed, as Lahore gradually re-emerged into the fairy-tale like city that she had been of old.

From the southern side of the old city, the new rulers laid a long spacious boulevard which they called the Mall. This wide, well-manicured thoroughfare connected old Lahore with the new military cantonment on the east, and around its axis the British built their civil lines. New Lahore once again had an important crossroads, and the homesick British affectionately nicknamed it 'Charing Cross'. By the early twentieth century, it was in its prime. Cloaked in spacious green lawns and luxuriant shade trees, the official buildings gave the city a presence of order and harmony, and the old citadel loomed always in the background.



The Sonehri Masjid. Its name means 'Gold Mosque,' after its blazing gold flower domes. This mosque still stands at the intersection where the East-West road from Delhi to Taxila crosses the North-South road from the Fort to the Anarkali Bazaar



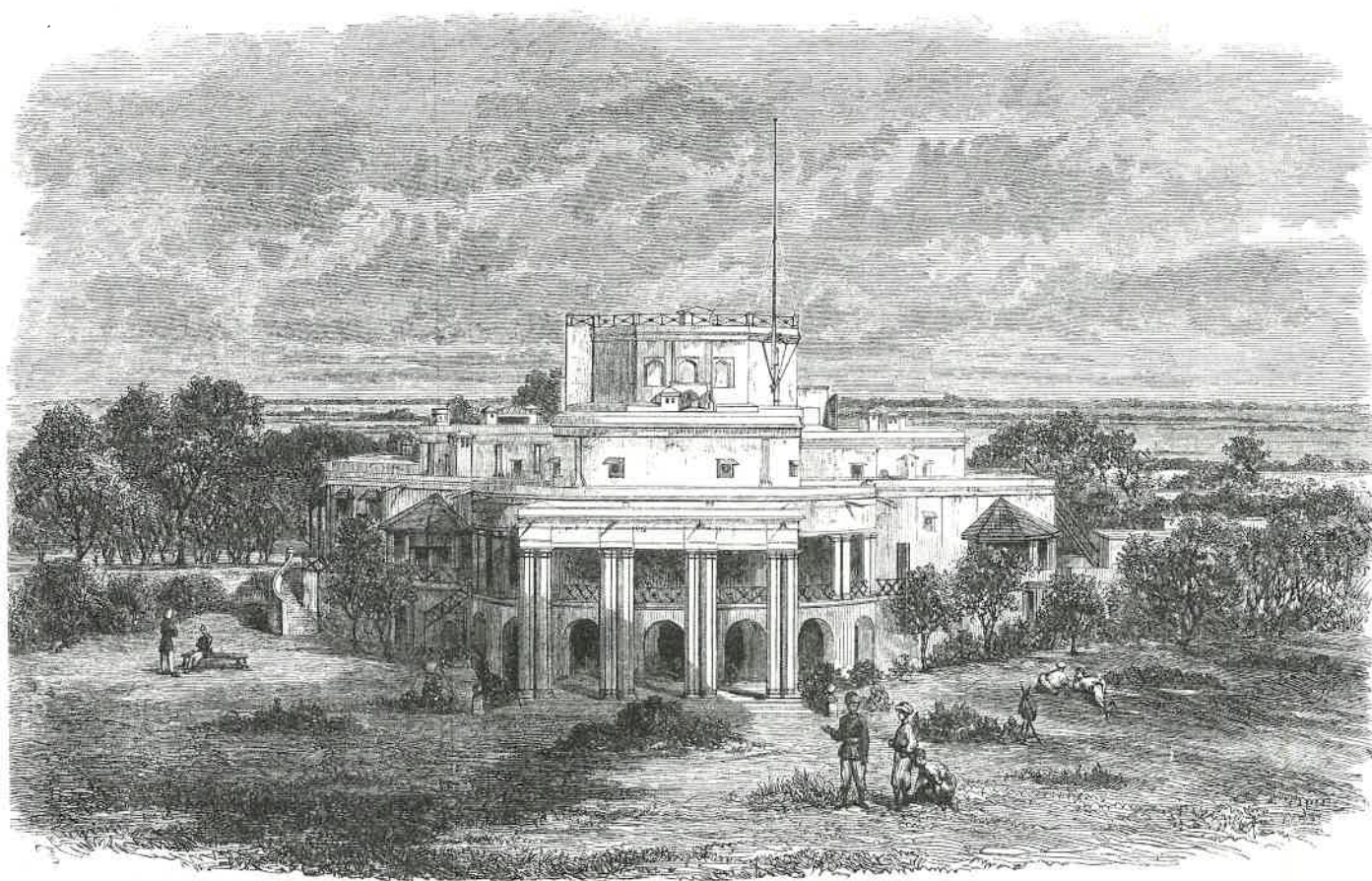


As one travels east up the Mall today, one by one the structures of the Raj reveal themselves: the university; the town hall; the Ajaib Ghar, or 'wonder house' museum; Kim's gun, the Zamzamah; the High Court; the Cathedral; and the General Post Office. There were dozens of shops, and Faletti's Hotel, where the smart and the affluent stayed during the winter social season. Then further up Empress Road is the great railroad station — the hub of the city's activity. Here the Khyber Mail still arrives, and the Express still hurtles south towards Karachi and the Arabian Sea. The Government House, set amongst beautiful gardens with breathtaking beds of vibrant flowers, tranquil stretches of trees and lush green lawns, was not far from the Gymkhana Club, which looked out over the race course. The Punjab Club looked like a military academy, while Prince's College or 'Aitchison' looked like a Maharaja's palace, its red domes and ornate entrances set above the green hedges and trees. And at the end of this esplanade ran the Upper Bari Doab Canal, one of the proud creations of Anglo-Indian engineers. Lined with willows and flowering trees, the canal provided a cool place for a leisurely stroll.

Facing Anarkali Bazaar, on a raised platform opposite the entrance to the Lahore Museum, is the Zamzamah, famous as Kim's gun. It was placed here on the occasion of the visit of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to Lahore in 1870, and Rudyard Kipling wrote of it, 'Whoever holds Zamzamah the fire breathing dragon, holds the Punjab, for the great green bronze piece is always first of the conqueror's loot.' This ancient piece was one of two identical guns cast at Lahore, in 1757, under the direction of Shah Wali Khan, Prime Minister of the Abdali King Ahmad Shah Durrani. A mixture of copper and brass, it is said to be composed of metal vessels taken from each Hindu house in Lahore as *jizya*, or tax, which were then melted down and cast. Ahmad Shah used it in the famous battle of Panipat in 1761; afterwards, on his way to Kabul, he left it with his governor Khwaja Ubaid. He took the other gun, but lost it while crossing the Chenab River.

In 1762, Hari Singh Bhangi attacked the village of Khwaja Said two miles from Lahore. This village housed the arsenal of the Mughal governor, and Hari Singh Bhangi succeeded in seizing all the artillery, guns, ammunition, including the prized Zamzamah — henceforth known as the Bhangi Top. It lay unmounted in the Shah Burj at Lahore until 1746, when it was retaken by two Bhangi sardars, who were Sikh warriors. Two days later, Changat Singh Sukerchakia came to Lahore to demand his share of the spoils. The Bhangi sardars were unwilling to part with any part of their recently conquered territory, and sought to pay him off by offering him the Zamzamah — with the hopes that its unwieldy weight would prevent him from carrying it away. But the Sukerchakia chief called all his men together and carried it off to his fort in Gujranwalla. It was subsequently captured by other rival clans and moved from camp to camp, eventually arriving in the Bhangi Fort at

*Government House at Lahore
was built around the tomb
of Mohammad Kasim Khan,
who died in 1635. In the centre was
the domed dining room, which
was in fact the upper part of
the tomb. The British were quick
to discover that these massive
monuments, built to last virtually
forever, were also extraordi-
narily cool, and they frequently used
them as offices and official
buildings. Over the years the house
was embellished with Gothic
arches, classical columns
and arabesque frescoes, some
painted by Lockwood Kipling,
father of Rudyard.*



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LAHORE, PUNJAB

*The British built the long
boulevard on the southern side of
Lahore. Rather touchingly, they
named it The Mall, and
christened its centre Charing Cross.*

*As one drives eastwards up
The Mall, glimpses of the structures
of the Raj come into view:
(top—bottom) the Railway Station,
Cathedral Square, the High Court of
Lahore, and the Zamzamah Cannon,
immortalised by Rudyard
Kipling as 'Kim's gun.'*



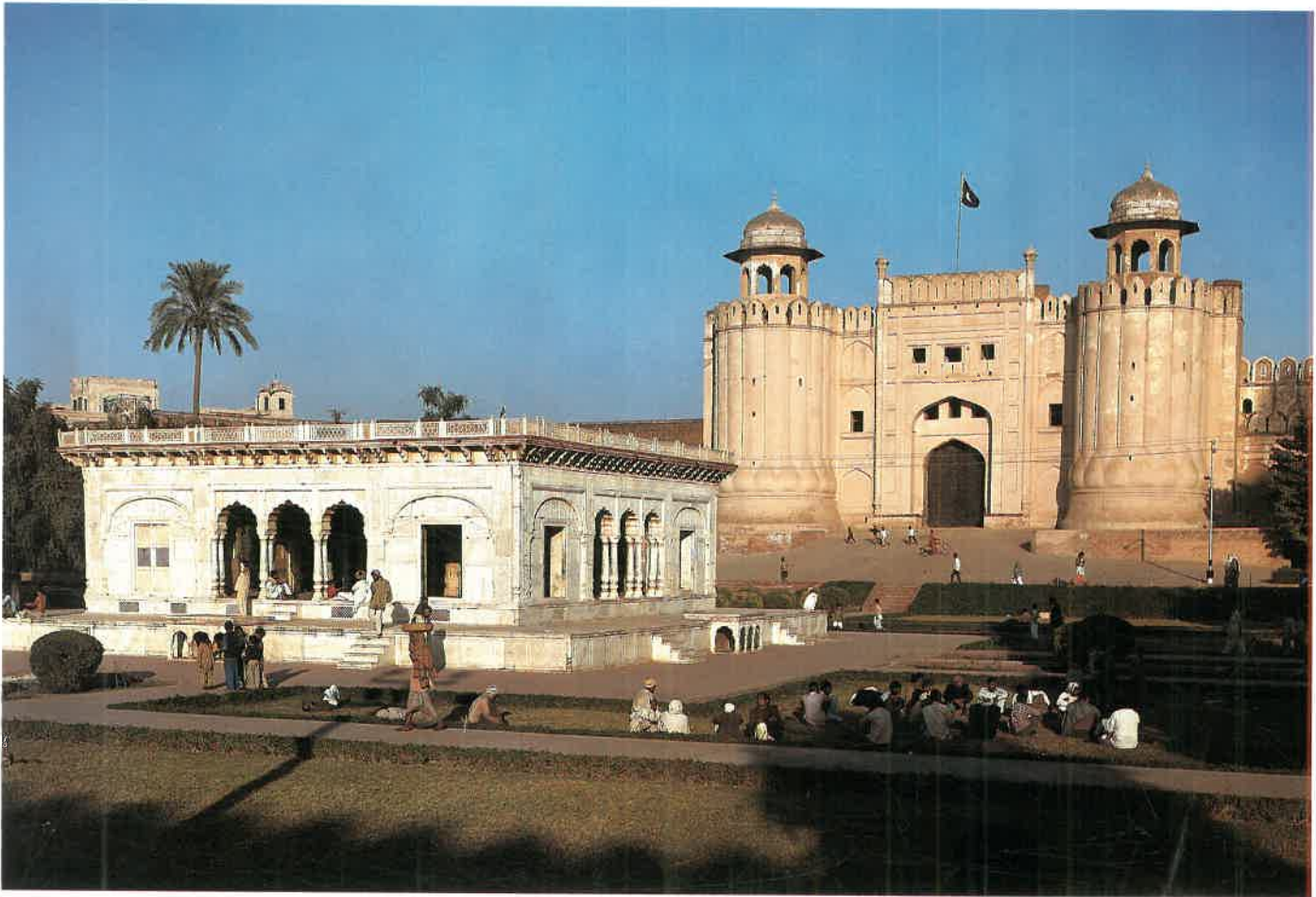


The Alamgiri Gate of the Lahore Fort and the Hazuri Bagh Pavilion; C.S. Hardinge, c.1846; and (r) the Alamgiri Gate, 1982. Built by the Emperor Aurangzeb, the Alamgiri Gate, from its commanding position facing the Badshahi Masjid across the Hazuri Bagh courtyard, was the formal entrance to the Fort. Some 130 years later, the Hazuri Bagh Pavilion has lost its upper storey to the Sikhs, but the Gate remains as graceful and impressive as ever.

Amritsar, where it remained until 1802. Ultimately, however, Ranjit Singh took possession of it, and expelled the Bhangis from Amritsar.

This famous gun came to be regarded as a talisman for supremacy, and Ranjit Singh used the Zamzamah in his campaigns in Daska, Kasur, Sujampur, Wazirabad and Multan. But after being seriously damaged in the last battle, it was removed in 1818 to Lahore and displayed outside the Delhi Gate of the old city. From there it eventually made its way to the front of the Lahore Museum, a proud but benign trophy from the Sikhs, through the British Raj and Independence, to the present day.

But aside from preserving monuments to the city's past, the Lieutenant-Governors who ruled the Punjab from Lahore in five-year terms also attempted to maintain and foster the cultural life of the city they used as their base. They held annual exhibitions of local industrial arts, and erected public libraries as well as hospitals. But their most notable contribution to the life of the city lies in the numerous educational institutions they founded there. For example, the year of 1882 alone saw the completion of the Mayo School of Arts, a veterinary school dedicated to developing better horse breeding, and a technical institute established in honour of the Queen's jubilee. Their stellar achievement in this field, however, is the Lahore



College, which started out as a non-degree-awarding institution, and then later blossomed into the University of the Punjab. This institution, which in truth was initially proposed by the local Punjabi government and pushed to fruition by the *Anjuman-i Punjab*, was designed by the British regents to perform two primary functions: first, it was intended to foster the diffusion of Western literature into the Punjabi vernacular, and in so doing to bring the European classics to the Indians, and second, to promote generally the 'enlightened study of Eastern classical languages'. The excitement generated by this project catalysed its development from a mere proposal in 1858 to a full-fledged university in 24 years. Shortly after that, the Chiefs' College was established for the sons of ruling chiefs and other prominent men.

This British emphasis on education and the diffusion of Western ideas, though intended to produce generations of useful, articulate clerks, produced as well something wholly unexpected — the gestation of Western democratic ideas which would eventually lead to the eloquent rejection of the government which introduced them. By the late 1800s, when Queen Victoria had declared herself 'Empress of India' and it had become *de rigeur* for members of the royal house — such as Prince Albert Victor of Wales in 1890 — to ride imperially through the streets of Lahore on the back of an



*The British planted gardens
everywhere. Like the Mughals, they
favoured lush greenery and
flowered-lined patios; Lahore is still
the city of gardens. Strolling
among the flower beds today, it is
easy to once again populate the
cool walks and pathways with
shadowy figures in long skirts and
parasols, pith helmets and khakis.
Phlox, rose and geranium
loyally ignored climate, history
and architecture. One homesick
woman wrote "My violets
are in bloom ... dear little English
flowers ... carefully, one by one,
have I gathered enough to
make me a buttonhole."*

elephant and be entertained with dinner parties at Shalimar Gardens, the first waves of organised revolt were already surging.

In many ways, Pakistan was an inevitable product of the advent of democracy in the Subcontinent. The British had identified their own advantage in the inherent division between Hindus and Muslims. The two religions were more than creeds: they were separate ways of life, whose secular codes were frequently opposed. Worse, Muslim kings had ruled much of the Subcontinent for nearly a thousand years with Hindus as their subjects. 'Divide and rule,' declared the British; and it worked.

Nationalistic anticolonial movements arose all over British India in the early twentieth century. Their growing popularity posed the inevitable question: 'What constitutes the Indian nation? Who is an Indian?' 'A believing Hindu,' answered Bal Gangadhar Tilak, not stating what he intended to do with the Muslims (not to mention Christians, Sikhs, Parsees, tribals, and untouchables). Mohandas Gandhi's more mystical concept of a 'Mother India' whose differing children would live as brothers was long on rhetoric and short on concrete proposals. Moreover, his Indian National Congress party became pervaded by a distinctively Hindu consciousness and symbolism, despite its secular pretensions. Gestures such as the adoption of the xenophobic and virulently anti-Muslim anthem *Bande Matram* as the official Congress song brought little comfort to the Muslim community.

As the likelihood of some form of self-government increased, the prospect as a permanent minority in a predominantly Hindu India began to worry Muslim political leaders. In the late 1920s many prominent Muslims, among them Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a Karachi lawyer, broke away from the Congress party. For Jinnah and the other Muslims who were opposed to the continuation of British rule, the dilemma was an acute one. The differences between the communities seemed irreconcilable; in a free and democratic India, the Muslims would fare badly, they feared, against the simple fact of a majority of Hindus. Discriminatory actions could be sanctified in the name of democracy by the now openly chauvinistic Congress party, notwithstanding the pronouncements of socialists like Nehru. However the Muslim League, the alternative party, seemed overpowered by the Congress and incapable of really representing Muslim aspirations; it had been founded in 1906 as a reformist, upper-class lobby for gaining concessions in British-ruled India. It had acquired a limited following in those provinces where Muslims did *not* constitute a majority because of its successful pressure for separate electorates and civil service quotas. In the Muslim-majority provinces the League had made little headway, for those Muslims had no need for such concessions. It was not until the League was transformed into a nationalist party that it caught the popular imagination, striking a chord of strong anticolonial sentiment among the Muslim masses with the inevitable question: 'After the British, what? Subjugation by Hindus?'

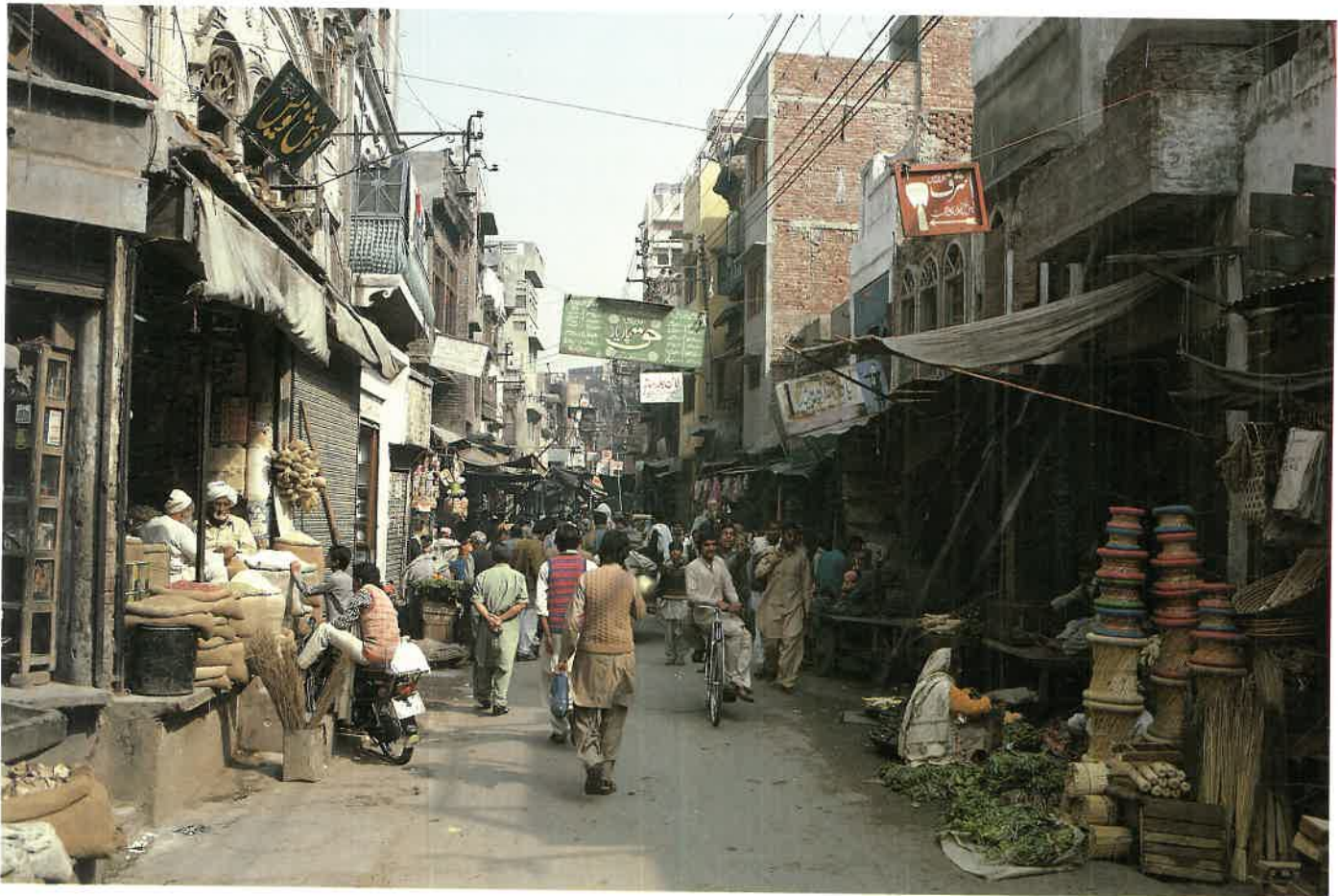




A Street in the City, 1854. *Little has changed in the flow of life that pulses back and forth in the city streets.*

In the year 1930 a solution to this dilemma was posited by the poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, who conceived the idea of a separate country for the Muslims of the Subcontinent. His ideas, as expressed in his verse and in his orations, captured the imagination of the Muslim community, particularly in areas which were the proposed territory of the new country. It was at about this time that the prophetic Indian poet and statesman began to speak out at the annual session of the Muslim League. Though he was dismissed by the Hindu press as a deluded but harmless dreamer, his message was strong and eloquent, and born of the growing general certainty that Hindus and Muslims would never unite. These were his words:

India is a continent of human groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages and professing different religions. Their behaviour is not at all determined by a common race-consciousness. Even the Hindus do not form a homogeneous group. The principle of European democracy cannot be applied to India without recognising the fact of communal groups. The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified. And I have no doubt that this House will emphatically endorse the Muslim demands embodied in this resolution. Personally, I would go further than the demand embodied in it. I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state.



Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North-West India ...

These 'vague rantings' were taken to heart by Muslims, and in 1933 Chaudhri Rahmat Ali founded the Pakistan National Movement in England, and began to install its propaganda centres all over what would eventually come to be Pakistan itself. In fact, this name for the future Muslim country, 'Pakistan', was created by Chaudhri Rahmat Ali was an acronym from its constituent provinces: **P**unjab, **A**fghan Province (also called North-West Frontier Province), **K**ashmir, **S**ind and **B**aluchistan, an acronym which also conveniently means 'Land of the Pure' (Pak-i-stan). Its flag was to be a white crescent and star on a green background.

The somnolent Muslim League organisation was abruptly shaken awake and its machinery wrenched from the control of the vaguely constitutionalist aristocrats and 'notable public figures' whose organ it had been. Now galvanised by the anticolonial Muslims, who poured into its ranks led by Jinnah and Iqbal, the thoroughly altered League began to work for the creation of Pakistan, although this objective was not openly adopted until the party's convention at Lahore on March 23, 1940.

Finally, in early 1947, the long-awaited British proclamation was issued: the British Government would transfer authority to India no later than June of that year. But now that the first and foremost grievance was to be resolved, the second, latent, hostility exploded with gruesome strength. Right-wing Hindus (in their secret organisation, the *Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh*) and fanatical Sikhs (in their group, the *Akali Fauj*), mobilised themselves for a war to the death with the Muslims, who had now become their rivals and archenemies. For though the British had promised to withdraw, it was not at all clear how the new power would be shared amongst India's many different and divisive groups — as Iqbal had forewarned.

Now the Sikhs sounded the battle cry. Gayani Kartar Singh proclaimed: 'This day the Crusade starts. One hundred years ago our yellow flags were flying on the Fort of Lahore. The same flag shall fly again. Our battle-axe shall decide if the Muslims shall rule. Sikhs shall never disgrace the name of Guru Gobind Singh.'

On March 4, Master Tara Singh emerged from the Assembly Party Meeting Room in Lahore, brandishing his sword and shouting what would become the standard anti-Muslim slogan: '*Pakistan murdabad!*' or 'Death to Pakistan!' Incendiary violence, sparked off in full force by this type of propaganda, started in Lahore and spread like a brush fire. The Punjabi plains shook and shuddered as rival Hindu and Muslim mobs clashed. On March 5, eighteen people died in Lahore in mass rioting. In the morning, two or three hundred Hindus and Sikhs had marched through the Anarkali Bazaar shouting

'Pakistan murdabad' and tearing Muslim League flags from over the shops. The Muslims rose to the challenge, and soon murder and arson spread throughout the entire city. Out of 82,000 houses in Lahore, 6,000 were burnt down.

The ferocity of the riots was only a portent of what was to come. The inherent tensions between the two religious groups that had led inevitably to the now-imminent partition of the country had more than once exploded in violence. In response, the Muslims went on a rampage against the Hindus. It took many weeks to restore order, and peace seemed an impossibility.

The wreckage and smouldering fires set the scene for the announcement by Lord Louis Mountbatten (the last British Viceroy) of the final plan for transfer of power to the Indian population. He had been commissioned to get the British out of India, and quickly. After one hundred and ninety years of colonial occupation, at last more liberal sentiments had prevailed — or perhaps the British wanted no part of the expected further violence.

This plan, which all the communities of India agreed to, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah on behalf of the Indian Muslims, allowed for the partition they had hoped for. The Muslim population rejoiced; Iqbal's Pakistan was being born. The Hindus celebrated separately. Then someone asked the 'Punjab question'. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a British civil servant, drew some lines on a map, giving the communally near-balanced districts of Gurdaspur and Ferozepur to India. The Punjab issue exploded into holocaust (as did Bengal, on the other side of the Subcontinent).

At first, the skirmishes were sporadic — fierce clashes between Hindu and Muslim, or Sikh and Muslim, militants. Then the attacks began on people's homes. New heights in violence were set; but this was only the beginning. As disorder raged, people began to leave their homes. The Muslims of East Punjab headed westward, and the Hindus and Sikhs of West Punjab went east. Fleeing families and groups of refugees were mercilessly attacked. Thousands were killed or maimed; others were robbed of their money and possessions; wives and daughters were molested, raped, or abducted. Special trains, each carrying hundreds of refugees, ran between the two countries.

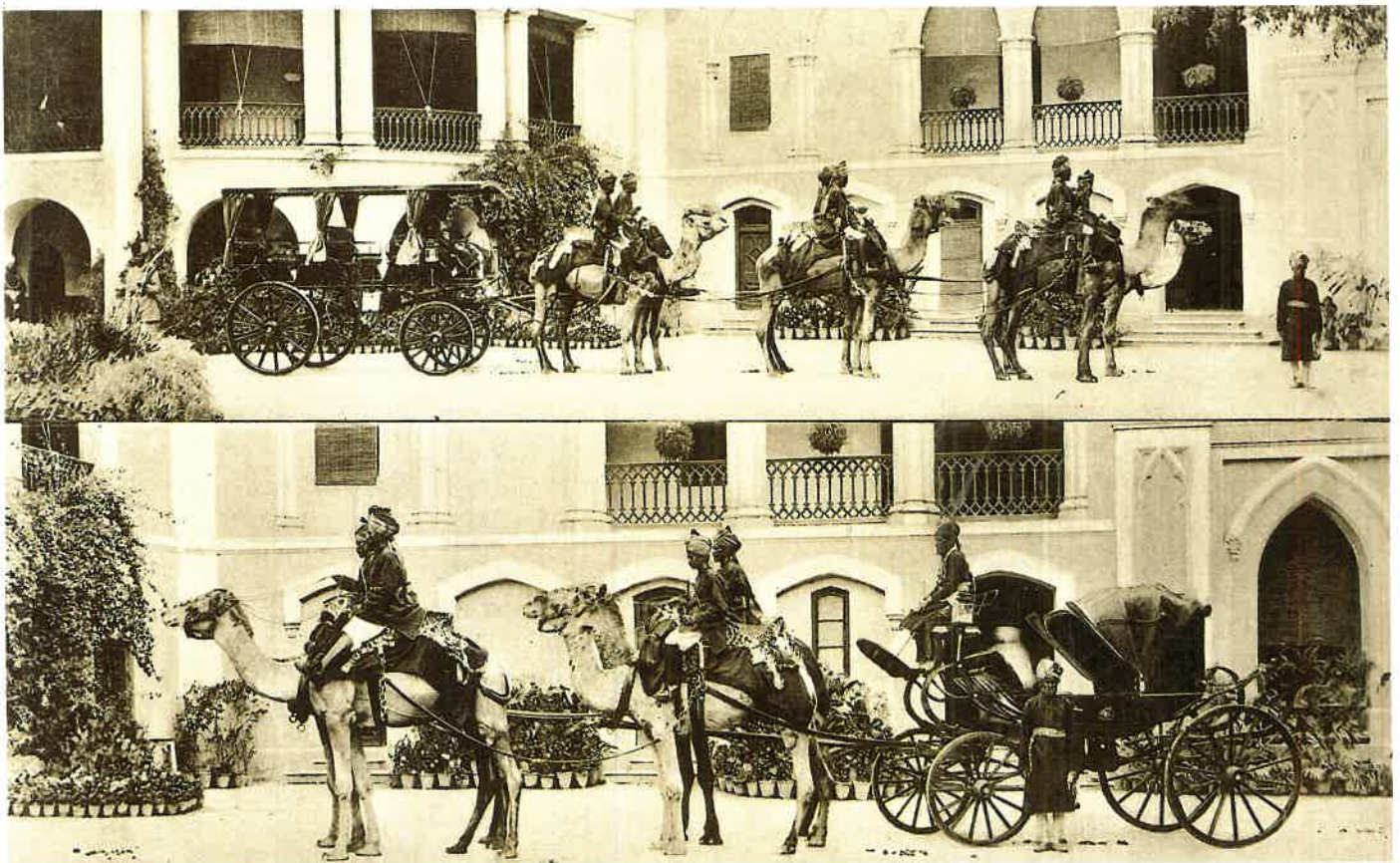
And then the day came that a refugee train crossed the border, moving very slowly. It came to a stop signal, but moved blindly through it, and lumbered on. The switchman worked frantically to avert a collision. He cleared the tracks; and then stood and watched with a growing sense of foreboding as the train gradually lost speed, ran out of steam, and ground to a stop. Those who ran to meet it stood looking through the carriage windows at the hellish scene within. Every man, woman, and child aboard had been murdered. No one is now sure whether the first 'train of the dead' carried Muslim refugees to Pakistan or Hindu and Sikh refugees to India. Whatever the truth, the nightmare had attained new dimensions. The reprisals on both sides

escalated beyond the most horrifying predictions. There were many more such trains; the killing and looting became a widely expanding madness. Punjab was aflame.

The people of Pakistan awoke from the nightmare of violence to the grey reality of pestilence-stricken refugee camps. Five million people had arrived from East Punjab, jobless, homeless, penniless. Many were injured, many were ill, many were in a state of shock from the brutalities and privations they endured on the way, or from grief over the slaughter of family members and friends. Into these overcrowded reception centres on the Punjab borders and the camps in the towns now poured three million more refugees from the UP, Rajasthan, Bombay, Bihar, and other parts of India.

About twelve million people had crossed both ways over the borders of what was then West Pakistan. Some four million moved in and out of East Bengal. It was the most massive movement of populations in human history. And over a million people had been murdered. In the years since, the refugees have found jobs or settled on farms or started business, but the trauma of the events that accompanied independence lingers. It haunts the dreams of Pakistanis; even those who were not themselves refugees were witness to the carnage in their towns or villages, or heard of what was

*H.H. The Lieutenant Governor's
Camel Carriages, Lahore.*



The Ladies Cricket Match,
Lahore vs Mayan Mir; c. 1893.
*Faced with often overwhelming
home-sickness in the midst of a
strange country, the colonists
resolutely transplanted anything
English that might possibly survive
in the new land. Many things did,
including cricket, with all its elegant
overtones. For the most part, the
British avoided native entertainments
and arts, preferring their own, and the
entire cantonment could be expected to
attend on the nights when the clubs
and halls were featuring magic
lantern shows, penny readings, or the
newest Gilbert and Sullivan
musical play.*



happening elsewhere, to others that they knew. History and nature have dealt other blows to this land since that time. There were political upheavals, a military *coup d'état*, civil war, and international war. There have been floods and droughts, strikes and epidemics. But the people have been able to take the worst with a certain equanimity, and even cynicism. After all, they had come through 1947.

Two countries came into being, their birth accompanied by blood and violence. The Indian Independence Act was officially passed on July 18, 1947, and the partition into two dominions was formalised on August 15 of that year. All of India's communities agreed to this arrangement, but, incredibly enough, the Boundary commission had not quite finished its work by the 15th. Lahore's position, as a city in the heart of the Punjab with significant Hindu and Sikh populations, was open to question, but the Radcliffe Boundary Commission finally awarded to Lahore its full and formal status as a city of Pakistan.

So began Lahore's new life, as the queen city of Pakistan and capital of the Punjab, although it could not be chosen for the national capital because it was too close to India and the simmering hostilities of the border. Nothing has changed today; wars still flare up and boundaries are still in dispute. Nevertheless, Lahore, that golden city of dreams and legend, maintains to this day her indisputable position as the most cultured, the most beautiful, the most historic living city in Pakistan.

Street scene, Lahore.

Portrait of a Lady; *Mughal*. This elegant little painting in its bejewelled frame captures the two worlds of the British Raj; a Mughal miniature portrait of a classic English beauty.





سکوتِ شام میں محوِ سرود ہے راوی نہ پوچھ مجھ سے جو ہے کیفیتِ مے دل کی
پیامِ سجدہ کا یہ زیرِ دم ہوا مجھ کو جہاں تمام سوادِ حرم ہوا مجھ کو
سرِ کنارہ آب رواں کھڑا ہوں میں
خبر نہیں مجھے لیکن کہاں کھڑا ہوں میں

شرابِ سرخ سے رنگیں ہوا ہے دامنِ شام لیے ہے پیرِ فلک دستِ عشقِ دارینِ جام
عدم کو قافلہٗ روزِ تیسرے گام چلا شفق نہیں ہے یہ سوچ کے پھول ہیں گویا!
کھڑے ہیں دور وہ عظمتِ فزلے تنہائی منارِ خوابِ گہ شسوارِ چغتائی
فسانہٗ ستمِ انقلاب ہے یہ محل کوئی زمانِ سلف کی کتاب ہے یہ محل
مقام کیا ہے سرودِ خموش ہے گویا
شجر؟ یہ انجمنِ بے خروش ہے گویا

رواں ہے سینہٗ دریا پہ اک سفینہٗ تیز ہوا ہے موج سے ملاح جس کا گرم ستیز
سبک روی میں ہے مثلِ نگاہِ یہ کشتی نکل کے حلقہٗ حدِ نظر سے دور گئی
جہازِ زندگی آدمی رواں ہے نہیں ابد کے بحر میں پیدا نہیں بناں ہے نہیں
شکست سے یہ کبھی آشنا نہیں ہوتا
نظر سے چھپتا ہے، لیکن فنا نہیں ہوتا

The Ravi is absorbed in harmony
In evening's silence.

Don't ask how I feel!

This music, low and high, suggests, "Prostrate!"

The earth seems like the Kaaba's sacred ground.

Here, near the flowing river I am standing,

And yet, I do not know where I am standing!

The evening's skirt is coloured by red wine,

For Saturn brought his glass with trembling hands;

To Nowhere hurries daylight's caravan ...

This is not dusk — these are the sun's last flowers!

In lonesome majesty stand far away

The towers of Jahangir's resting place:

A story of Time's turnings is this site,

A book of ancient heroes is this site!

A place? No, these are songs without a word!

The trees? They seem assemblies without cries ...

A boat draws closer on the river's breast —

The sailor struggles briskly with the waves.

The boat is moving swiftly, like a glance —

And passes soon from view, far, very far.

The ship of human life appears, like it,

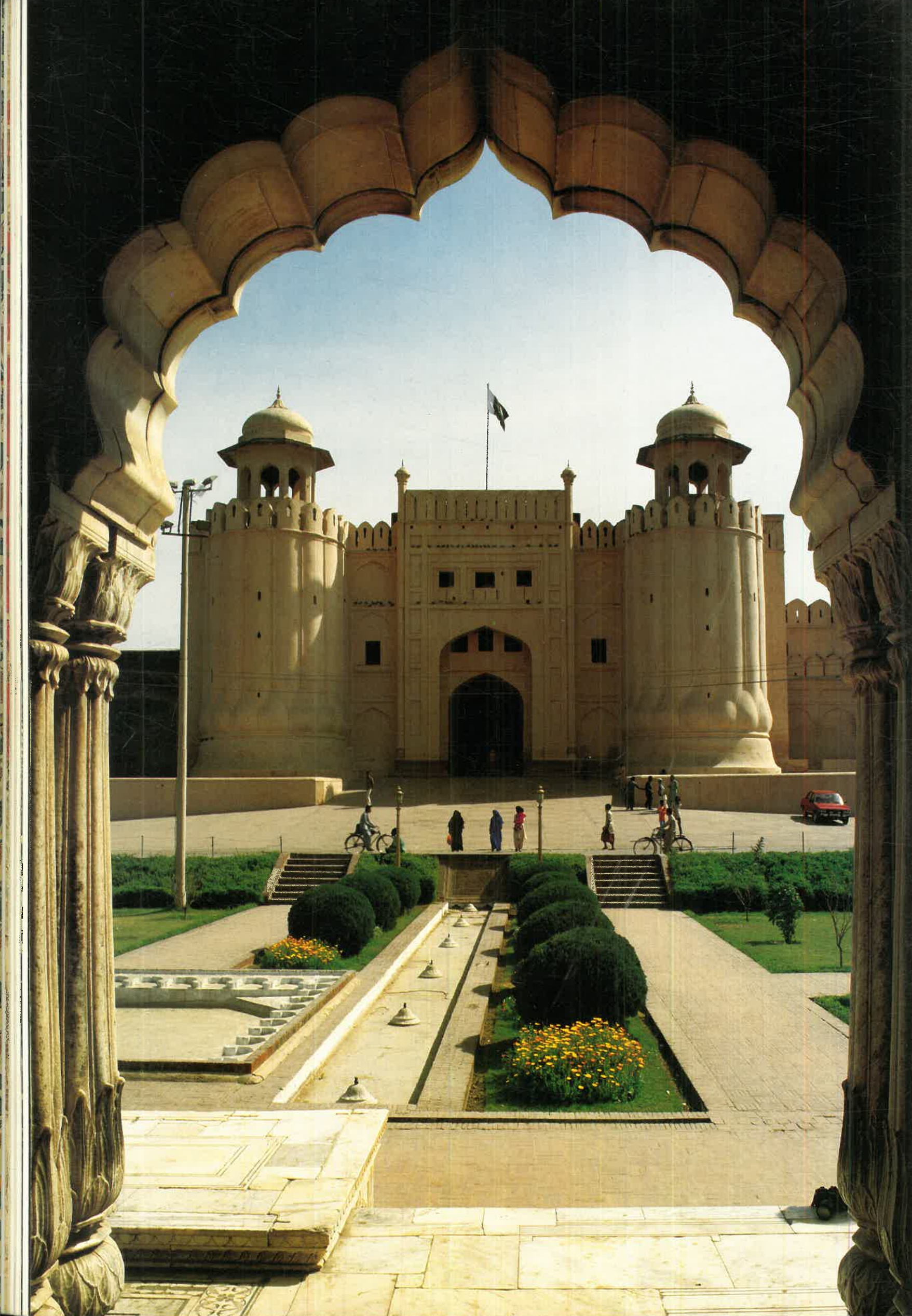
From out the ocean of Eternity, and fades.

It knows no shipwreck, and though out of sight

Can not be naughted into Nothingness.

Part Two

The Citadel and the City



The Alamgiri Gate, main entrance to the Fort. The centuries have done nothing to dispel its majestic presence and martial bearing.

The Lahore Fort is one of the noblest structures of its kind in the world. Rising out of the northwest corner of the walled city, it has been a symbol of might and power from its earliest days. If it could speak, it would tell such things that would leave the listener breathless. It could tell of love, romance and adventure, of dark-eyed beauties and fierce-browed warriors, of queens in flowing silks and kings in shining armour, of poets, actors, slaves and concubines, of soldiers and rebels, of revolutions and court intrigue, of coronations and assassinations, of treachery and black revenge.

After the Fort was destroyed by Timur's hordes in the fourteenth century, it remained desolate for thirty years. The looming hulk became a refuge for stray dogs and owls, a forgotten ghost, until the Mongols' descendants — the Mughals — returned. They restored Lahore and her Fort to the greatest heights they had ever known, or would ever know again. Akbar rebuilt the walls; Jahangir, and especially Shah Jahan, erected most of the magnificent monuments that remain in the Fort today. But each Mughal emperor left his own architectural mark, to carry his name through time. Aurangzeb, the last and most orthodox of the Great Mughals, inherited the Fort as a largely completed treasure, the fruit of his forefathers' labours and inspirations. He could wander at his leisure through the incredible world contained within those massive walls; through the echoing, arched audience halls; across huge, intricately inlaid courtyards, the stones smooth under his feet; from the bright hot sun of a courtyard into the sudden cool shadows of a columned walkway, and out into yet another courtyard, this one green and planted with flowers and cypress trees. He could walk past clear reflecting pools, complete with small islands in the centre, each with its own graceful bridge; past towers, mosques, minarets, baths, sleeping chambers; past an



The exterior wall of the Fort is an unequalled example of exquisite tile work. Captured in this mosaic masterpiece are not only the formal geometric and floral designs associated with traditional Muslim art, but an astounding collection of images of animals and people engaged in various activities.

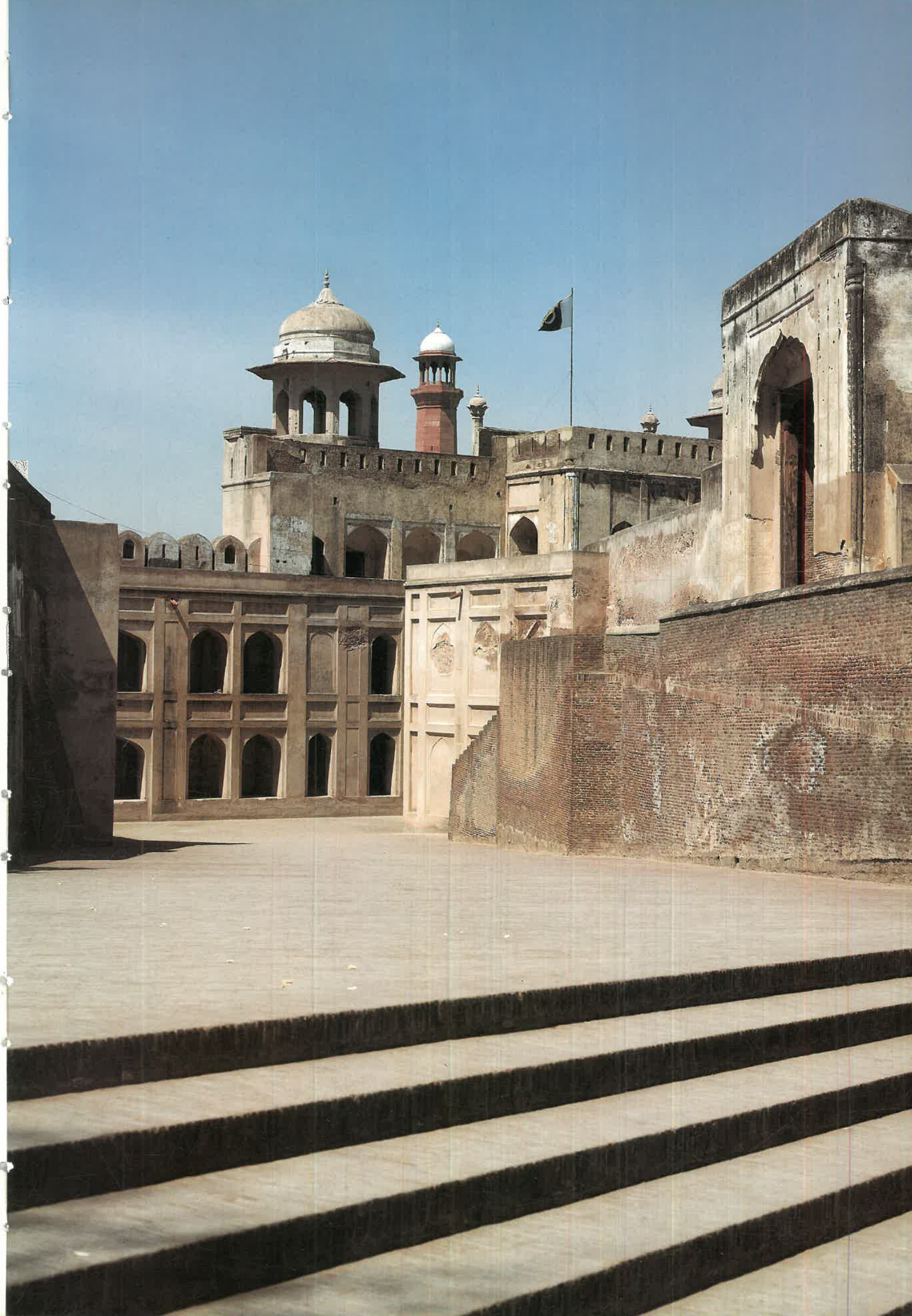
One of the royal gateways to the Fort leads to this immense flight of stone steps. This is the Hathi Paon or Elephant Path, built for the elephants of the Royal Harem, to allow the ladies to enter the Citadel without the necessity of dismounting.

enormous stone stairway, built to accommodate the royal wives' elephants; past mirrored pleasure palaces and delicate white marble latticework windows. He could wander for hours, each architectural feat calling to mind the character of one of his ancestors.

He was an austere and orthodox man; perhaps he frowned at the legendary front wall of the Fort of Lahore. This amazing wall, nearly 500 yards long and 48 feet high (450 × 15 metres), is adorned in rich mosaics of all sorts of designs and symbols. His ancestors' religious eclecticism manifested itself there in the brilliant tableaux: battling elephants, rearing horses, angels from ancient Persian mythology, cherubs, lions, leopards, camels, graceful flying birds, tigers hunting deer, spotted dragons, and men playing polo, hunting lions, and leading tame antelope on leashes.

Shaking his head in disapproval, the Emperor Aurangzeb might then have passed beneath the silent and massive arches of the Fort entrance along the way to his father's throne room, the Diwan-i 'Am. This was the Hall of Public Audience, the place where the common people could come to the Emperor to have their grievances redressed. For aristocrats and nobles, and meetings with his own advisers, there was the Diwan-i Khas, the Hall of







The Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience; this elegant chamber, constructed of pure white marble, served as a quiet meeting place for the Emperor to meet with the Khans, Nawabs, Rajahs, and Maharajahs who sought his attention for their own plans and projects, away from the clamour of the public. Within its serene walls, the politics and powers of the Punjab were decided.

Inside the Fort, the interior chambers were furnished with elaborate tapestries, soft pillows and bolsters, all made and embroidered in the imperial workshops, transforming the cool simple marble rooms into fantastic gardens of glowing colour and textures.

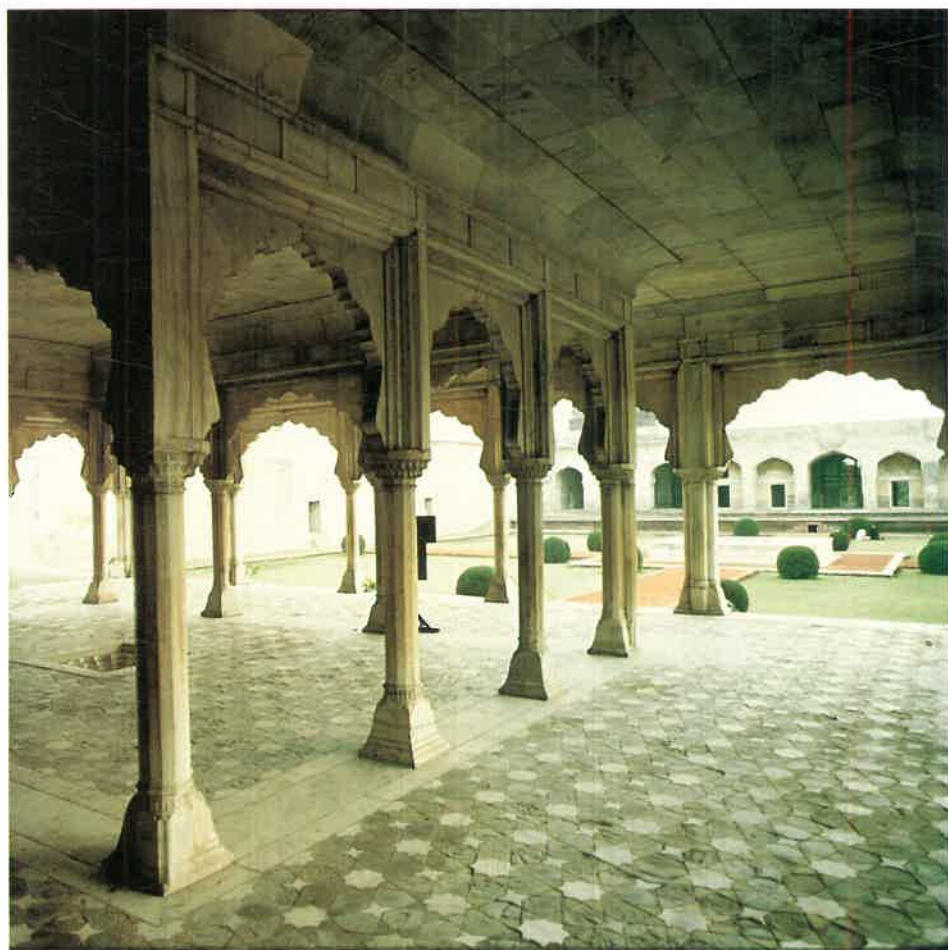




Interior of the Diwan-i-Khas.

The Diwan-i 'Am, or Hall of Public Audience, stands in the centre of the Fort, on a large rectangular platform. The Emperor Shah Jahan had the large open court constructed to shelter from the heat of the sun those who came to seek audience with him. The original building was destroyed during the Sikh struggles for power, and the British rebuilt the structure, so what stands now is only a ghost of its former Mughal splendor. Each morning, when the Emperor first entered this throne room before the assembled crowd, the court poet read this ode:

*"It is a garden, every pillar of which
is like a green cypress tree. In the
shade of which noble and plebian
obtain repose ..."*





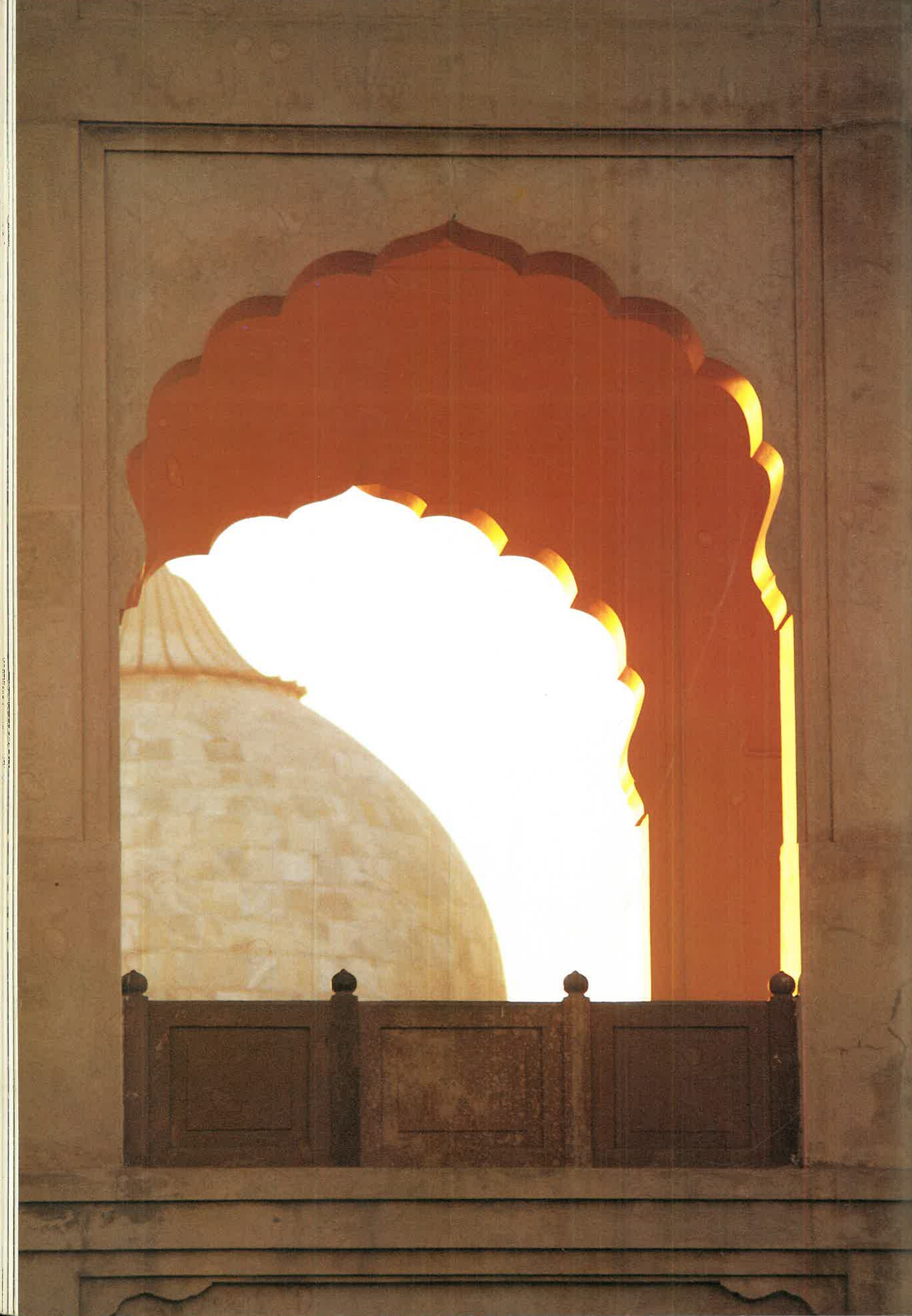
Private Audience. Standing here, perhaps Aurangzeb recalled his grandfather, the Emperor Jahangir: a diligent man dedicated to justice and equity, he had installed over his bed a gold bell, hung with a golden chain weighing three quarters of a ton and strung with eighty small bells, to allow anyone who considered himself wronged to reach the sovereign ear.

When the Emperor convened his court there in the morning, he witnessed first an elaborate hour-long ceremony before he turned his attention to business. This was an oddly sensible ritual, combining splendid pomp with a stern dose of reality. As the Emperor was seated, a parade of elephants, horses, and men clad in brilliant armour and rich silks passed in review before the throne in what seemed like an endless train. Musicians seated on the *naqar khana* across from the Emperor played a vigorous military march. Then, in the midst of the splendid cavalcade, from an open tomb near the throne, the voice of a mullah would be heard over the clamour, reminding the Emperor that he too must die and turn to dust like all other mortal men.

An emperor, sobered by the mullah's message, might wish to say a silent prayer of supplication or to meditate alone. Crossing the great courtyard, he could retire to the Moti Masjid, or Pearl Mosque. Located in a small secluded corner of the Fort, the tiny mosque was once the private house of worship for the royal *harem*. Its name derives both from its small size and its pearl-like polished marble. Inside, the mosque's modest dimensions create a perfect sense of seclusion and peace.

The gleaming interior of the Moti Masjid brings to life its name, 'Pearl Mosque.' The original Moti Masjid was built by Jahangir to serve as a private prayer room for the Emperor and his wives; the masjid seen today was completed in 1654 by Shah Jahan. It is a pearl indeed, both in its intimate scale and beautiful, polished white opalescent marble.





From an arched opening in the wall of the Fort, one of the domes of the Badshahi Mosque can be glimpsed. Arches and arcaded walls are characteristic of Mughal architecture; used to create rooms, courtyards, and corridors, they give Mughal buildings their unique sense of symmetry and rhythm.

Next door, the emperor could relax in the hot or cold *hamman*, or baths, reclining afterwards on a warm marble slab heated from below. Or he could step into one of many spacious courtyards such as his grandfather Jahangir's quadrangle. Here the original foundations of Akbar are all but obliterated, but Jahangir's carved red sandstone elephants hanging above the doors are a testimony to his and his father's spirit of religious tolerance; they are identical to those found in Hindu temples.

To the west of the massive quadrangle, beyond more courtyards, Aurangzeb could step through the marble gate into the Shah Burj, the King's Courtyard — for years, the residence of the royal harem. Here sits the Naulakha Pavilion, so named for the mystical number nine and for the nine lakhs of rupees it took to build it. It is a small white marble building, with a large arched entrance and an extraordinary curved, convex roof, fashioned after Bengali bamboo huts. But its most distinguishing feature is the tiny and intricate inlay work found inside. Agate, jade, goldstone, lapis lazuli and other precious stones are all painstakingly worked into the marble in the forms of delicate flowers and geometric designs. In one of the niches, a tiny floral pattern measuring only two and a quarter by one and three quarters inches contains 102 pieces of inlaid gems. Its windows, screened with exquisite marble fretwork to allow the cool breezes in, overlook the walls of the Fort and the city streets beyond. It was here that the princesses of the *harem* would sit, watching the busy city, seeing all but unseen by vulgar eyes. The sound of soft laughter might have reached Aurangzeb as he passed by, or perhaps a glimpse of bright silk through the lacy marble screens. Also in this courtyard is the long columned hall known as the Shish Mahal, or Palace of Mirrors. It was originally included in the restricted quarters for the ladies of the imperial *harem*, and is still a magical place. Myriad tiny



Mughal culture reveled in great opulence, and the perfection of craft used in the Shish Mahal, or Palace of Mirrors, epitomises the sumptuous reign. The walls of this harem chamber are intricately inlaid with sparkling slivers of multi-coloured cut glass and small silvered mirrors, set into the walls in graceful arabesques; the play of reflections, by daylight or by candlelight, is magical. The arched ceilings are richly painted and lavishly gilded. The pierced marble screens (jalis) cast ever-changing patterns of shimmering light and shadow across the stones.

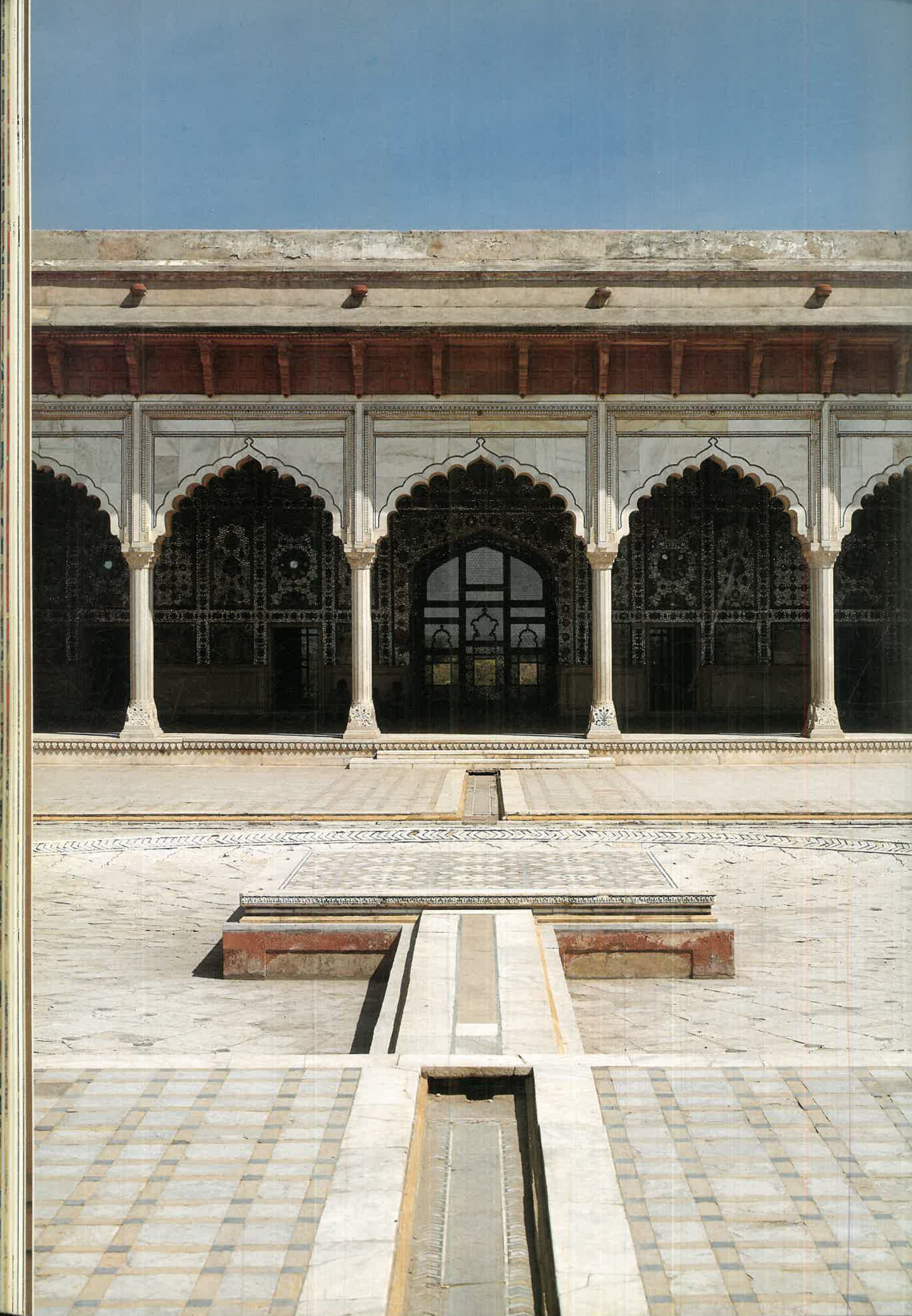
convex mirrors set into the stucco from floor to ceiling sparkle with sunlight, candlelight, moonlight, or even — mysteriously — on the darkest evenings. The fairy-like compartments open onto the courtyard of marble mosaic tiles, a circular pool of water includes a modest island platform, reached by a small causeway. Eleven simple arches of delicate *pietra dura* work offset the busy mirrored hall.

The Shish Mahal is also known as the Royal Tower, and one can climb to the top of this tower, admiring on the way up the intricate gold gilt work on the carved wooden ceilings of the hall below. The Royal Tower commands the best view of Lahore to be found. Breezes here are plentiful, and one can gaze in comfort down to the winding Ravi River below, and over the sprawling city of Lahore, the Juma Masjid, and the bulbous domes of Ranjit Singh's *samadh*; over the Badshahi Mosque, the minarets of Shahdara, and even — on an exceptionally clear day — to the peaks of the Himalayas.

There is more to be seen in the Fort. There is a world within the massive red walls. Time itself is captured and frozen in these stones, entombed in the huge walls like poor doomed Anarkali, the beautiful dancer buried alive in the Fort for loving the young Prince Salim. The history of this site meanders backward to dim reaches beyond written history. Feet patted this stone, this dust; hands carved this marble, this sandstone, hands moulded and mortared this brick; fingers held and cut this jade, lapis, ivory, emerald; eyes squinted over this inlay, tile, sculpture. Eyes, fingers, hands, feet, all turned to dust unimaginable lengths of time ago, but still here, living on in the stone. The







The Shish Mahal and its courtyard were built by Shah Jahan in 1632 as the residence of the Empress. The channels of flowing water along the two principal axes, intersecting at a central pool, alludes to the theme of the Garden of Paradise. The small tiled 'island', with its own small bridges, could be used by the ladies of the harem as a place to play, or to find a cool breeze in the centre of the sparkling water.

Overleaf: From the quadrangle outside of the Shish Mahal, one can gaze over the beautifully curved roof of the marble Naulakha Pavilion to the city of Lahore beyond. The Naulakha was built by Shah Jahan, who modeled the little marble pavilion after a style of Bengali hut with an intriguing convex roof. Beyond the walls of the Fort, from left to right, the domes and minarets of the Badshahi Masjid, the glittering spires of Ranjit Singh's tomb, and the glowing dome of the tomb of Guru Arjun Dev can be seen.



ghost of Aurangzeb stands beside us. Beyond him stand the ghosts of Shah Jahan, and Jahangir, and beyond them, Akbar the Great gazes down at the city; and further on, Babur, and Timur, and the ancient line of Mongol warriors. Time, history, and legend swirl around our feet like dust and rise up like the heat from the red sandstone around us.

But the breeze blows, and our gaze is drawn down to Lahore, to the bustling, noisy, sprawling city below. That seems only fitting. For centuries, the citadel has brooded over Lahore from its imperial seat in the corner of this walled city. Lahore, too, has seen endless change. It has known war, and prosperity; it has been invaded, conquered, destroyed, rebuilt, time and again. It has been bathed in rivers of blood and washed with oceans of wealth. Its stormy history has become the stuff of legends, but above all, Lahore, like the Fort that looms protectively over it, has endured. But even where the Fort stands as a monument to a way of life that will never return, Lahore has changed and grown. In its narrow and twisted streets and alleys, the ancient city's forms live, untouched. The houses, mansions, and mosques are the same; but the streets that once saw pet cheetahs on parade and emperors pouring gold coins from the backs of elephants now contain more and more signs of modern commerce and life.







6

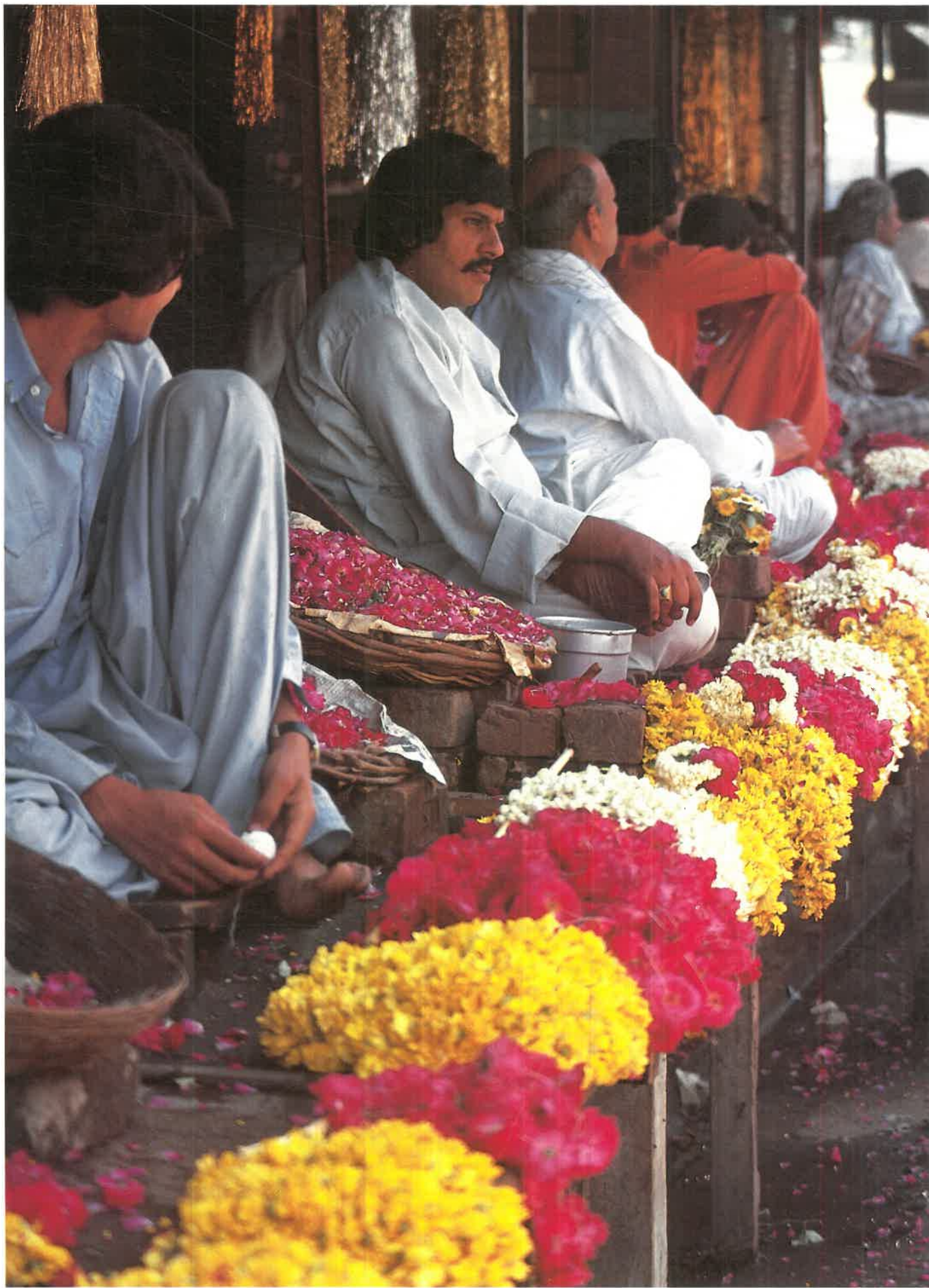
The Thirteen Gates

Many older cities once had walls. It was the only way to protect themselves from the hostile outer world, from strange, violent foreigners and sudden, devastating attacks. Certainly, there was great psychological comfort to be derived from the presence of that vast barricade surrounding one's home; even though the barricade might some day fail. Lahore, like most other old walled cities, has long since outgrown her original fortified boundaries, and the overflow of people, businesses, factories, and industries has spilled through the fabled Gates of the wall and spread for miles onto the plains beyond.

The wall no longer stands, much of it removed by the British to maintain control of the city dwellers within, its thirteen ancient gates still signal one's entrance to the fabled City of a Hundred Gardens. Although the wall no longer repels the advances of Chingiz Khan's warriors, in many ways it still signifies what it always has — security, community, the primal sense of 'inside' and 'outside'.

To those who live within its walls, Lahore's Old City is a community in the best sense of the word. A place in which all who dwell there know their environment. A place where one asks, and is asked, fewer questions than when outside. A place where, having entered, one looks for what is familiar rather than what is unfamiliar. A place where, whether resident or visitor, one is fully cognizant of having entered and being 'within' until one has left again. This is the feeling that an imposing portal provides. But when a portal allows one entry to an entire community rather than a room or a house, the sensation of arrival is intensified. This is the enduring magic of Lahore, the wall, and the city sprawling outward beyond the gates.

*As it has for centuries, the Kashmiri
Gate rises above the vast grain
marketplace that boils at its feet.*



Flower sellers arrange armloads of their fragrant wares into damp, showy banks outside the Lahori Gate; nearby, merchants construct elaborate garlands from folded currency notes, to be given to bridegrooms, graduates, or public figures.

As a civic structure, the Old City of Lahore is a remarkable study in planning efficiency; 260,000 people live in an area of one square mile, or approximately 400 inhabitants per acre. There are some 38,000 households in some 20,000 premises or approximately 58 dwelling units per acre. Within its walls there are 3,422,000 square metres of floor space, 135,000 metres of gulleys, streets, roads and drainage lines. The commercial enterprises number over 4300, the primary schools number 65 and the mosques number over 300.

Though the city is constantly rebuilding itself it has maintained over twenty nationally recognised monuments and buildings of cultural value representing its 1500 years of recorded history.

The hierarchy of the bazaars in the Old City appears to radiate outward from the centre, with perfumes, incense and books still clustered close to the centre, at the great Wazir Khan Mosque. These markets are surrounded by jewellery, precious goods and textiles. Next are shoes, fibres, ropes and utensils, evolving into streets of carpenters, locksmiths, blacksmiths, butchers, produce merchants and basketmakers. The *Bazaar-e-Hakimah* or Bazaar of Healers still offers the diagnostic and curative skills of men learned in the arts of healing. The streets are also lined with shops offering medicinal plants, herbs, oils and unguents. Close to and outside the walls come the more industrial trades of the tanners, potters and foundries. Even today, the more industrial modern trades such as lumber, tyres, auto parts and truck building are found outside the wall.





The thirteen legendary gates into the city stand for much more than simple access to a market. They were named for emperors and saints, for ancient landmarks near them, or for where they led. Some of their history has been lost in the mists of time; in this city there is much that is old beyond all memory. They are arranged almost evenly along the circumference of the city wall, facing out in all directions, the imperial city's eyes on the world.

The Kashmiri Gate and the Delhi Gate opened onto the high roads that ran between Lahore and those great places, and it was probably no coincidence that the largest caravanseraï near the walls lay outside of the Delhi Gate. The magnitude of the Delhi Gate Bazaar and its connecting Akbari Mandi and Kashmiri Bazaar convey centuries of bustling activity and trade, in these great markets scaled for trading in enormous loads of grain, nuts, and spices. The Akbari Gate and the Shah 'Almi Gate are named for rulers Akbar the Great and Shah 'Alam Bahadur Shah, and they lead to marketplaces and bazaars which also bear their names. The Mochi Gate leads to the shoemakers' bazaar; its name is a mispronunciation of Moti, the name of an officer of Akbar who lived near this gate.



The Raushnai Gate lies between the Royal Mosque and the entrance to the citadel. This was the principal entrance into the city from the Fort, and it was through this gate that the courtiers, servants, entourages, and even the emperor himself would pass. Before the gate was opened, the Hazuri Bagh, the courtyard in front of the gate, was watered down because of the heat and dust. Then, through a passage formed by several hundred loyal soldiers, His

Rope, plaited and twisted, made from jute, cotton, and hemp, and dyed brilliant colours, serves a multitude of purposes in the Punjab. It ties bundles, tethers animals, and is woven into hammocks. Knotted onto wooden frames, it forms the cool, comfortable beds known as 'charpoy's.'

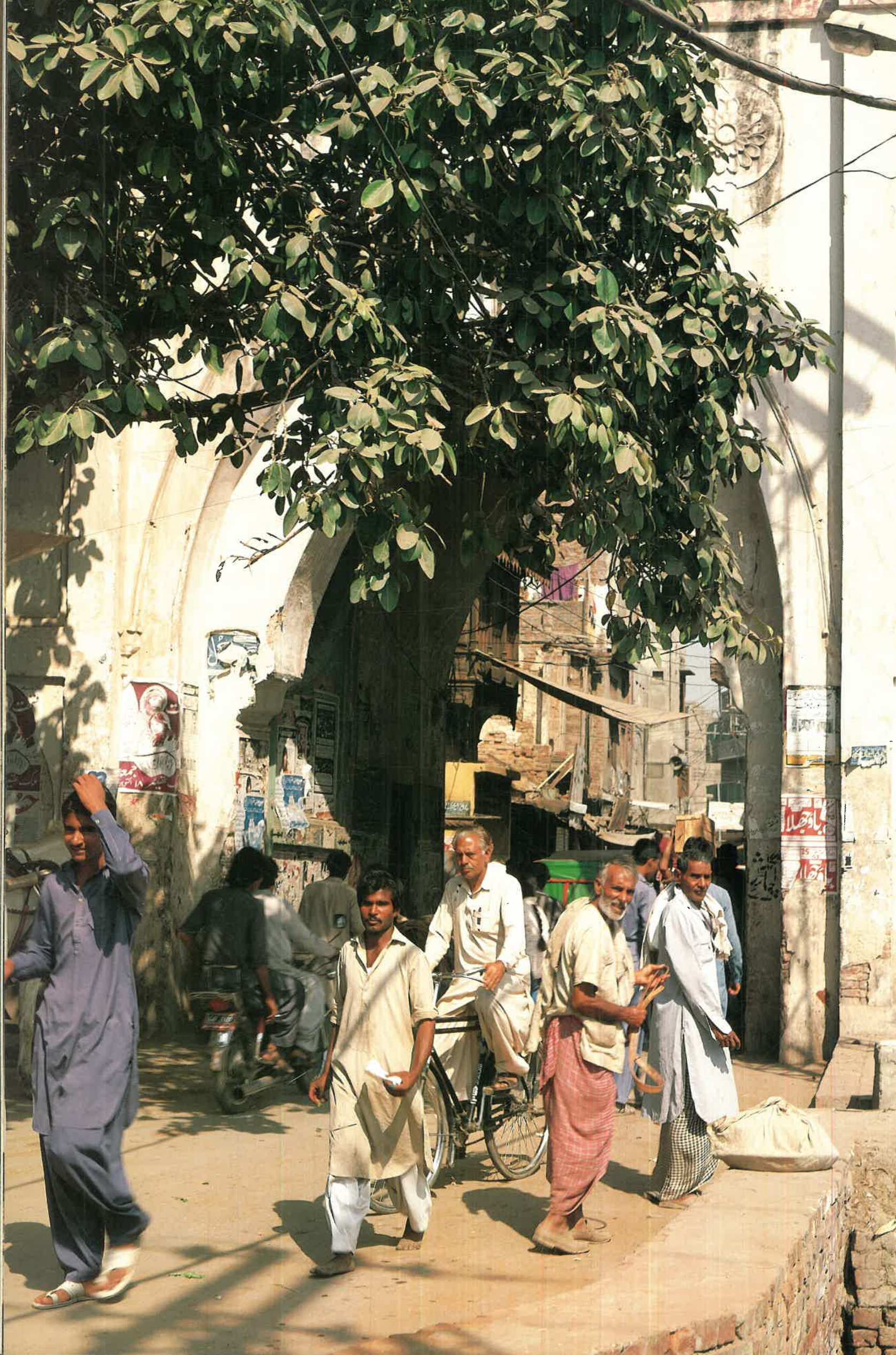






The variety of bags available at the paper bag man's stall is almost as staggering as the jumbled profusion of bird cages for sale to house parrots and budgerigars.







Majesty would pass, with all the glitter and ceremony due such an occasion. The buildings around this gate were all splendidly illuminated at night; hence its name, meaning the 'Gate of Light'.

The Taxali Gate and the Masti Gate are so called for the landmarks nearest to them, although the exact origins of the name Taxali may reach even further back in time. The Masti Gate refers to the Masjid-i Mariam Makani, the mosque of the mother of Akbar, which is nearby. 'Masti' is, in fact, a mispronunciation of the adjective *masjidi*, or 'of the mosque'. The Taxali Gate was named for the Royal Mint which stood near the gate hundreds of years ago. However, the name may have originated even earlier from the Takkas, an ancient tribe once considered the absolute masters of the Punjab plain, whose descendants continue to live in their ancestral domain today.

The original name of the Yakki Gate was 'Zaki', for the truly amazing martyr saint who fell in battle while fiercely defending Lahore from the Mughal invaders. He was beheaded in front of the Yakki Gate; but, being a true champion, the headless body continued to fight for the rest of the day, collapsing — at last — in a quarter of the city nearby. The grateful citizens reverently built two tombs for this hero — one where his head had fallen, and the other where his valiant body finally gave up what was left of his ghost. Both tombs are still sacred sites to this day.



During the reign of Ranjit Singh, visitors of Lahore who entered the city from the gate on the River Ravi were greeted inside by the Emperor's lions, caged on either side of the entrance. In their memory, two bas-relief lion's heads now gaze outward from the beautiful Sheranwala Gate — the Lion's Gate. Some also refer to this gate as the Khizri Gate, for Khizr Elias, the patron saint of running water, who protected the ferries on the river below.

The Bhatti Gate and the Lohari Gate both refer to the trades practised in their vicinity, but these names have been clouded by the passage of time. The Bhatti Gate is named for a clan which eventually became known primarily as brickmakers (*bhatti* means 'brick'). The Lohari Gate refers to the trade of ironsmiths, but it may also refer to the ancient city of Lahore; the city may have been built up from the quarter around this gate.



The smallest gate is the Mori Gate, so called because originally it was used only for the garbage of the city. Over time, what had been only a hole in the wall was enlarged into a proper gate; without, unfortunately, losing its less than savoury name.

Much grew up outside the gates as well. As the gates were closed at night, certain teahouses, inns and shrines outside the gates became known as gathering places for various delights and entertainment: arts, poetry, food specialties, music. Just inside the Delhi Gate, close to the largest caravanserai, was the *hammam* or bath. A grand building erected for the



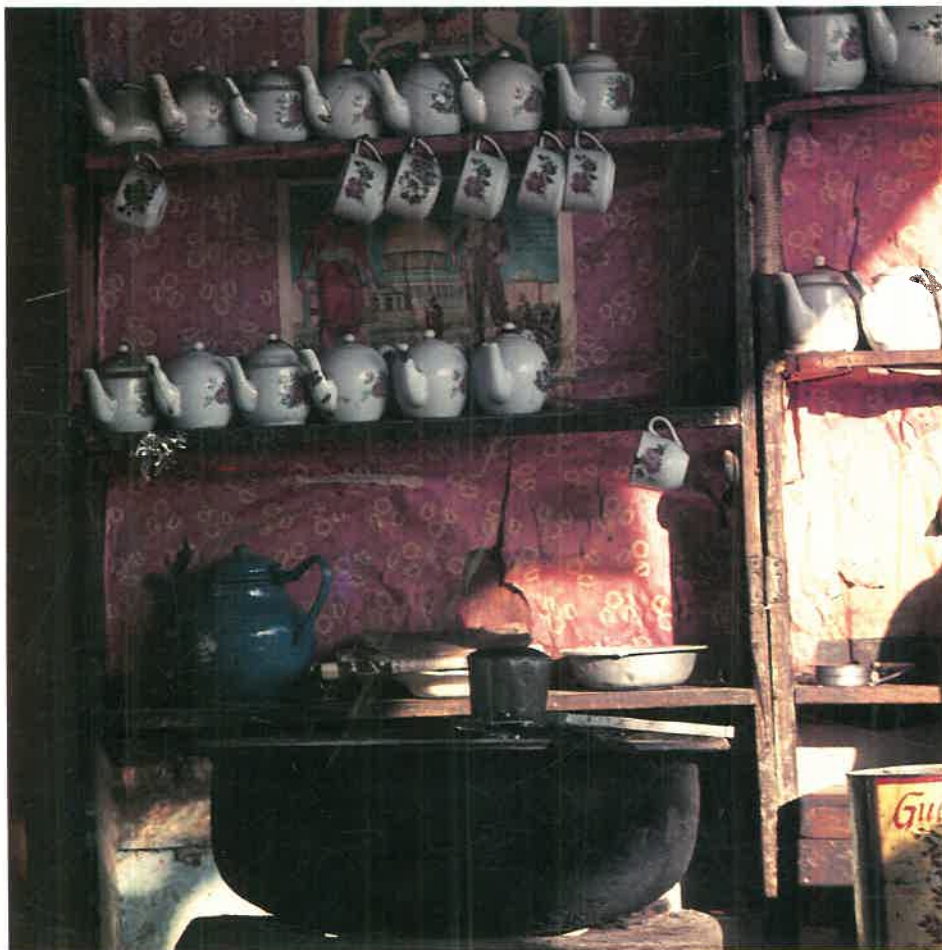
purpose of reviving the weary traveller; it still stands to this day, housing a school in its vaulted and domed caverns.

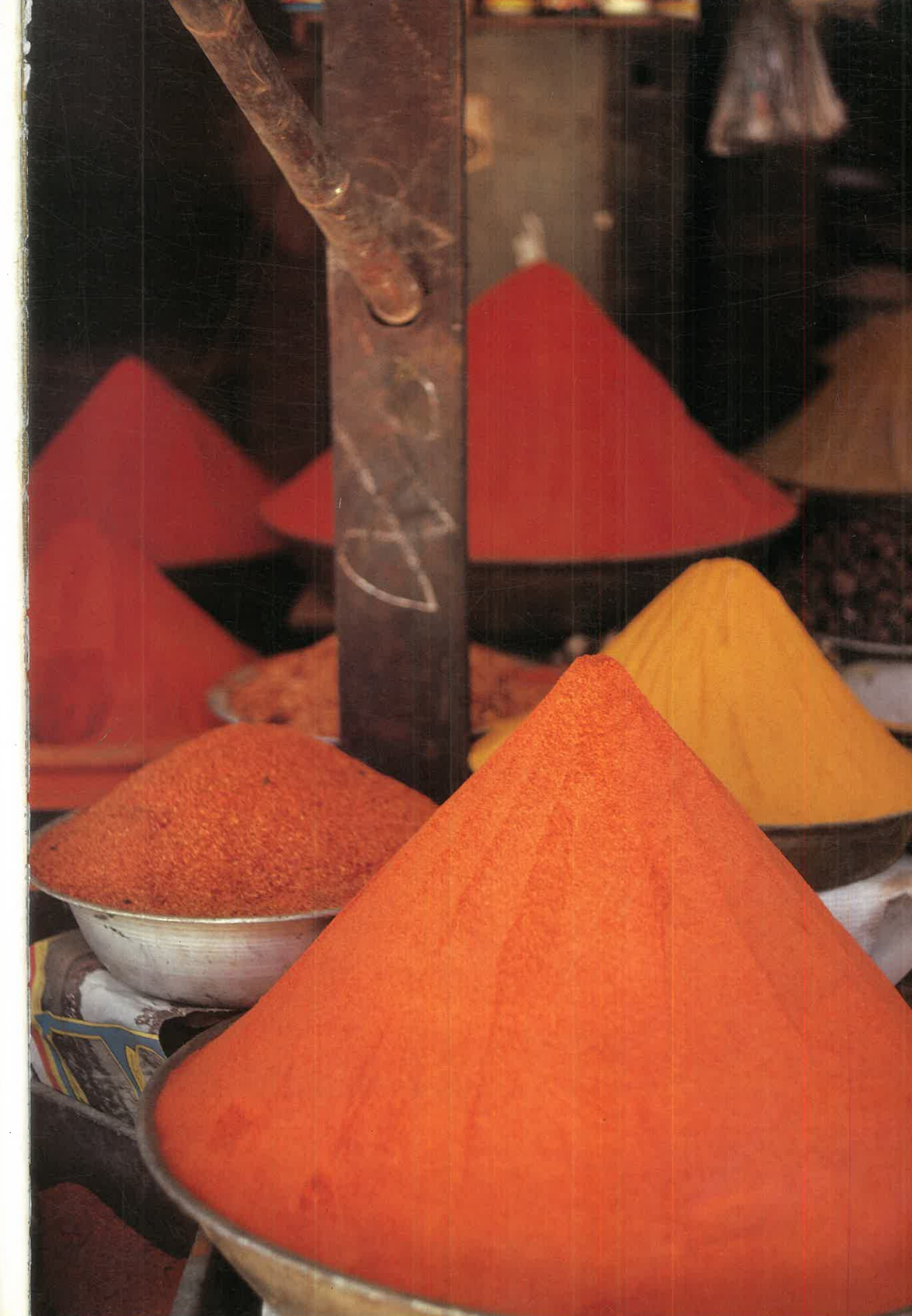
The caravanseraï and resting places outside the walls were places where travellers could find refuge after the gates to the city were closed at night, as well as finding sufficient room for the animals in the caravan. After some time, each developed a particular identity and following, and they were generally referred to as *takias* (pillows) for their warm and comforting role. Certain *takias* became known for their predilection for poetry, others for philosophical discussion or beautiful music. Whether your taste ran to wrestling matches, exotic food specialties, dancing girls, or courtesans, you could find a *takia* in the shadow of the Lahore wall to indulge you. In time, these centres of culture became identified with certain patron saints or seasonal or religious festivals, some of which continue into the present time.

The new city outside the wall has swept over and erased much of the traces of the old life of Lahore. Still, the wall, and its venerable Gates, stand. Like all of Lahore, the gates are saturated with the heat and dust of the centuries of life that have erupted and simmered around them. It is unthinkable that so much emotion and vitality could have been expended in this red dust for



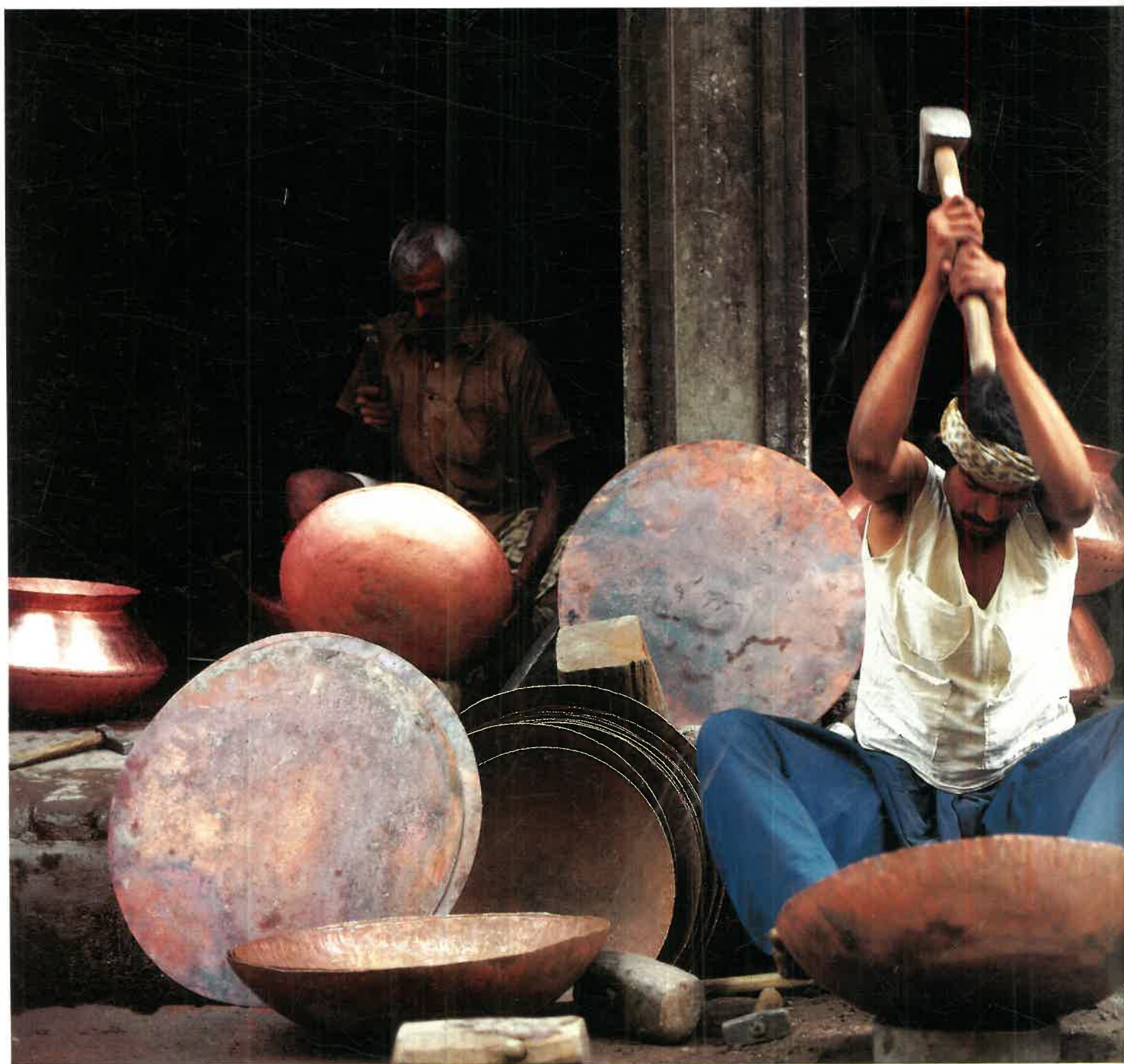
Tea shops are next to the spice and grain merchants in the Akbari Mandi. Here the air itself is hot and pungent, and the deep blue of indigo vibrates next to the pyramid of red cayenne pepper.





*Each brass or copper pot is
hand hammered to the specifica-
tions of its prospective user.*

*Milkmen use narrow-necked
'matkas' of brass, while the shrines
around the city use these 'deghs'
to prepare food for the faithful.*

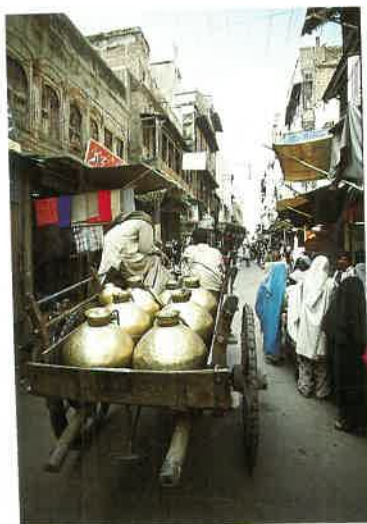
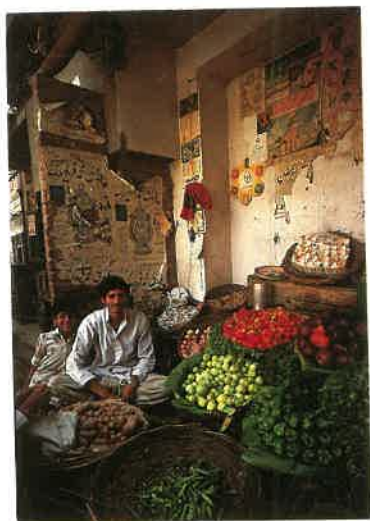
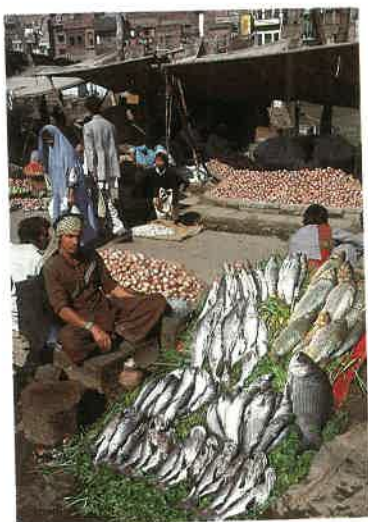


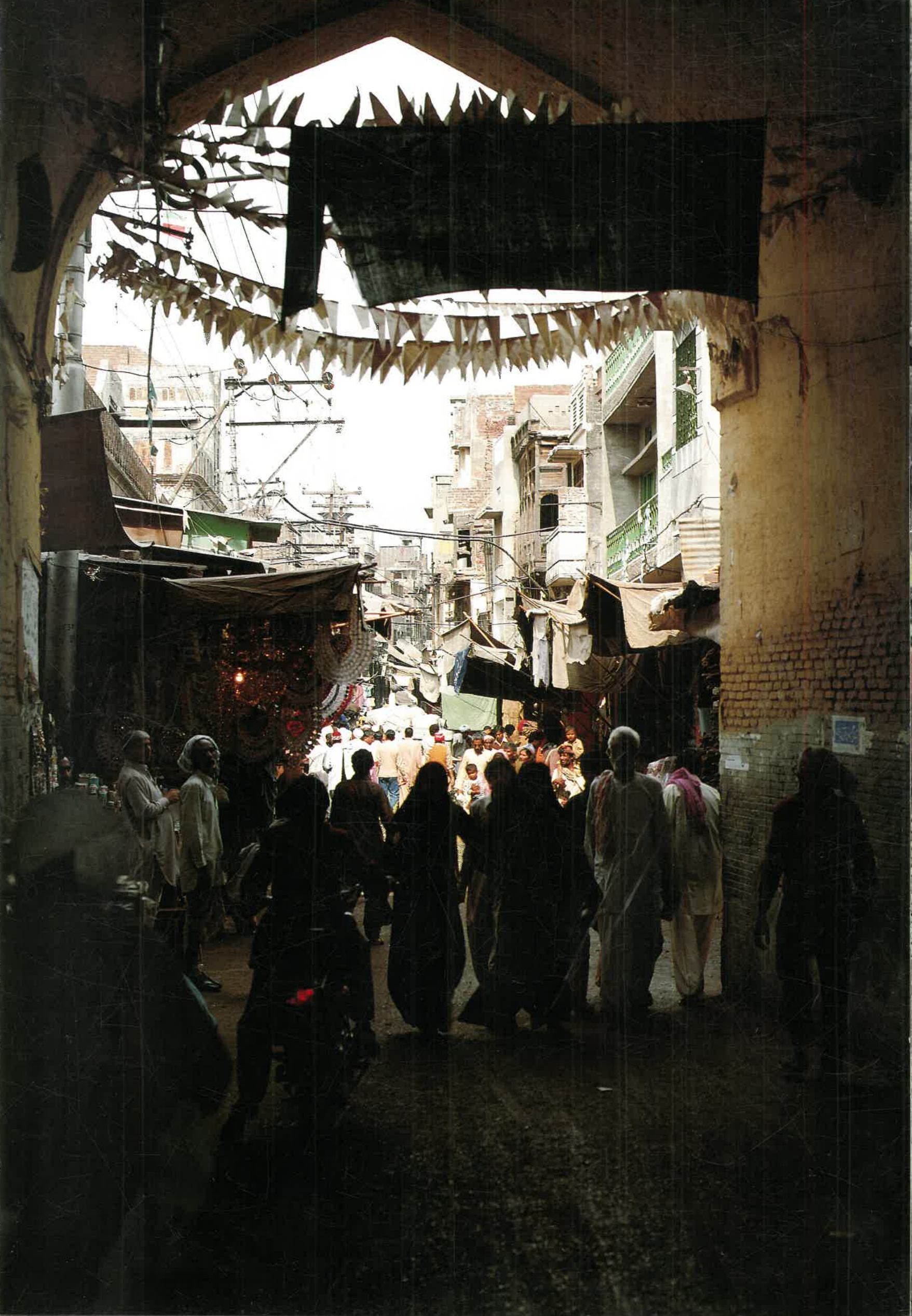
countless centuries without leaving behind some trace, some lingering electric charge or vapour. Perhaps because of that, it requires almost no effort, on a warm night when the jasmine perfume floats in wisps and the stars are like Ranjit Singh's diamonds, to call back the city as it was, in the height of its celestial splendour ...

On such a night it is possible to walk again through imperial Lahore, queen of cities, crown capital of all the Punjabi kingdoms there have ever been. The citadel rising above the city blazes in royal glory; inside, lost in compelling music, a reclining emperor, surrounded by a festive, laughing and slightly drunken entourage of courtiers, wives, and servants, gazes on the fluid shapes of the women dancing before him. Masters of their art, their small, neat, bejewelled feet and belled ankles whisper and ring on the tiles at the edge of a marble pool; their neat, lithe bodies, wrapped in transparent silk designed to reveal rather than conceal, flicker like the light on the water behind them. The streets lie in velvety darkness, pierced with points of light from the houses. Animals stir in stables; voices are raised, briefly, and in front of a lavish *haveli* music and laughter pour into the warm night. Outside the wall, beyond the closed, massive wooden gates, the caravanserai glimmer in the dark like embers. The street is lined with the dark shapes of the inns and *takias*, lit with smoky lamps, meant to be welcoming. The *takias* string their enticements like beads in the night air on this narrow street. From one drifts exquisitely beautiful music; then, from the next, the emotional rhythms of poetry, read aloud with fervour; a sudden smell of something cooking, warm with spices and oil; strains of the hypnotic music of the dancing girls, lost after a few steps in the sound of men's voices, raised in cheers and abuse of unseen contestants; the soft laughter of women, barely audible in the night air. Above, Lahore sparkles. All around, beyond the city, lies the rich blackness of the Punjab.



Shopping is a daily business for the inhabitants of Lahore. Purchasing food and supplies for a busy household is no small task, and requires both time and stamina, to transport the bundles home. Since there is very little refrigeration, the job must be undertaken again the following day.







Pass through the wall surrounding the Old City and find the Lahore of legend. Within the wall with its thirteen gates is the maze of hot, dusty streets, twisting lanes and shadowy alleys woven around age-old bazaars and markets, glorious Mughal tombs and mosques, palaces, courts, stores, businesses. The traditional *muhallas*, or neighbourhoods, of the Old City are still part of its fabric. They were named sometimes for the founder or lord of the *muhallah*, sometimes for a famous — or infamous — resident. Their names conjure up every era of Lahore's past; and, as befits the unique character of the city, the names, the buildings and the houses are woven into the most mundane and day-to-day aspects of Lahore's life. The inhabitants of modern Lahore, bustling through their working day, swept up in the considerations of the moment, hurry down the narrow red sandstone alleys brushing their shoulders against ancient history.

The *muhallahs* were dominated by the noble or lord who made his residence there; in fact, quite frequently he owned the entire string of shops or small factories on his street and exacted rent from the people accordingly. Unfortunately, many of these *muhallahs* have completely vanished today. Of the original thirty-five whose boundaries are still somewhat discernible, only nine remain.

*The history of the city, pressed into
the mortar and bricks, rises around the
life in its streets.*

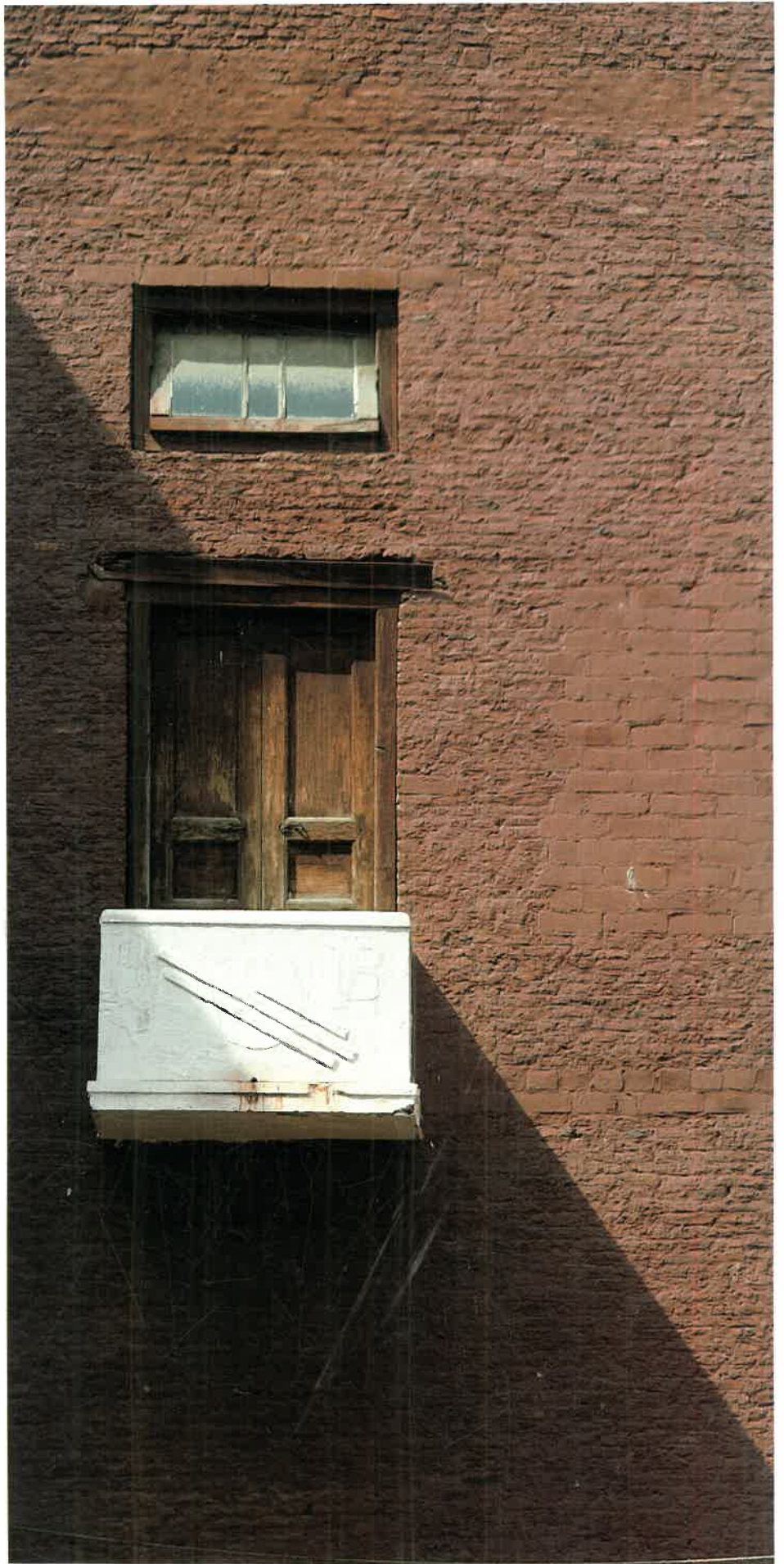
Of these survivors, perhaps one of the most interesting *muhallahs* is Mughalpura. It is, and always has been, the wealthiest quarter of the city. It was founded back at the time of the Mongol invasions by those Mongols who, tiring of a harsh nomadic life, chose instead the comforts and seductive charms of Lahore. Hence its name, which means Mongol Quarter. The story is told that when Durrani Ahmad Shah made his first attack against Lahore, he found such wealth in Mughalpura alone that he withdrew satisfied and left the rest of the city unharmed. Today it is still the home of some of the wealthiest and most prestigious residents of Lahore.

Muhallah Langar Khan can still be found today, named now as it was in 1526, after a conquered noble of Sind, who though defeated built in Lahore a new palace in the neighbourhood which would come to bear his name. *Muhallah* Chauk Dara is named for the beloved prince of Lahore, Dara Shikoh, who had his private residence there. His benevolent spirit lives on in this neighbourhood; it is one of the busiest and most popular bazaars in the city. In its noise, colour, and motion, it must be much as it was when Shah Jahan's favourite son's palaces stretched along its borders.

Muhallah Abdulla Wari no longer stands, but the saint who once lived there is still remembered. Haji Muhammad Said Lahori was well-known for his great learning and wise instructions; in fact, he was revered so widely that when Ahmad Shah Durrani launched his second attack against the city, he spared *Muhallah* Abdullah Wari simply out of respect for his name. On the spot the residents of the *muhallah* declared him to be a saint, and today his tomb can be found, where his neighbourhood once thrived.



The interior of Mubarak Haveli.



In the course of daily life, the vast antiquity captured in the muhallahs is often obscured and overlooked; but to the observer, every wall, doorway, and window yields up treasures from its gloried past.



The *muhallah* of Dai Lado is gone, although the mosque named for this well-known and dedicated nurse still stands on its site. Likewise the tank in the centre of *Muhallah* Sed Sar has faded into the past along with its surrounding neighbourhood. But its waters, which were believed to have magical healing powers, left a medicinal potency in the dust of its rubble, and mothers still use packs of mud made with this dust to heal their children's wounds.

Wealthy Mughal courtiers in Lahore isolated themselves and their extended families not in large suburban gardens or in houses set back from main streets with wide green lawns, but rather in elegant spacious mansions of Lahore called *havelis*. Each *haveli* was a microcosm of Mughal splendour, dominating the *muhallah* in which it stood like the castle of a feudal lord. These clustered complexes of palaces and smaller buildings were worlds unto themselves, often housing several brothers, their wives, children, and servants, not to mention the occasional visiting friend, with his wives, children and servants in tow. The additional spatial dimension of the *haveli* roof network gave the women and children a place to relax and play, and — by hopping from one rooftop to the next — a quick and relatively private route of travel around the city, high above the crush and noise of the public streets below. Indeed, some of these *havelis* were so large and sprawling that today some of the surviving ones house whole mills or schools.

Unfortunately, many of these *havelis*, like the *muhallahs* of which they were a part, have long since disappeared, as a result of the vicissitudes of time. But certain have somehow managed to survive, and other famous ones are remembered in stories, for the peculiarities either of their architecture, or of the owners who once lived within their walls.

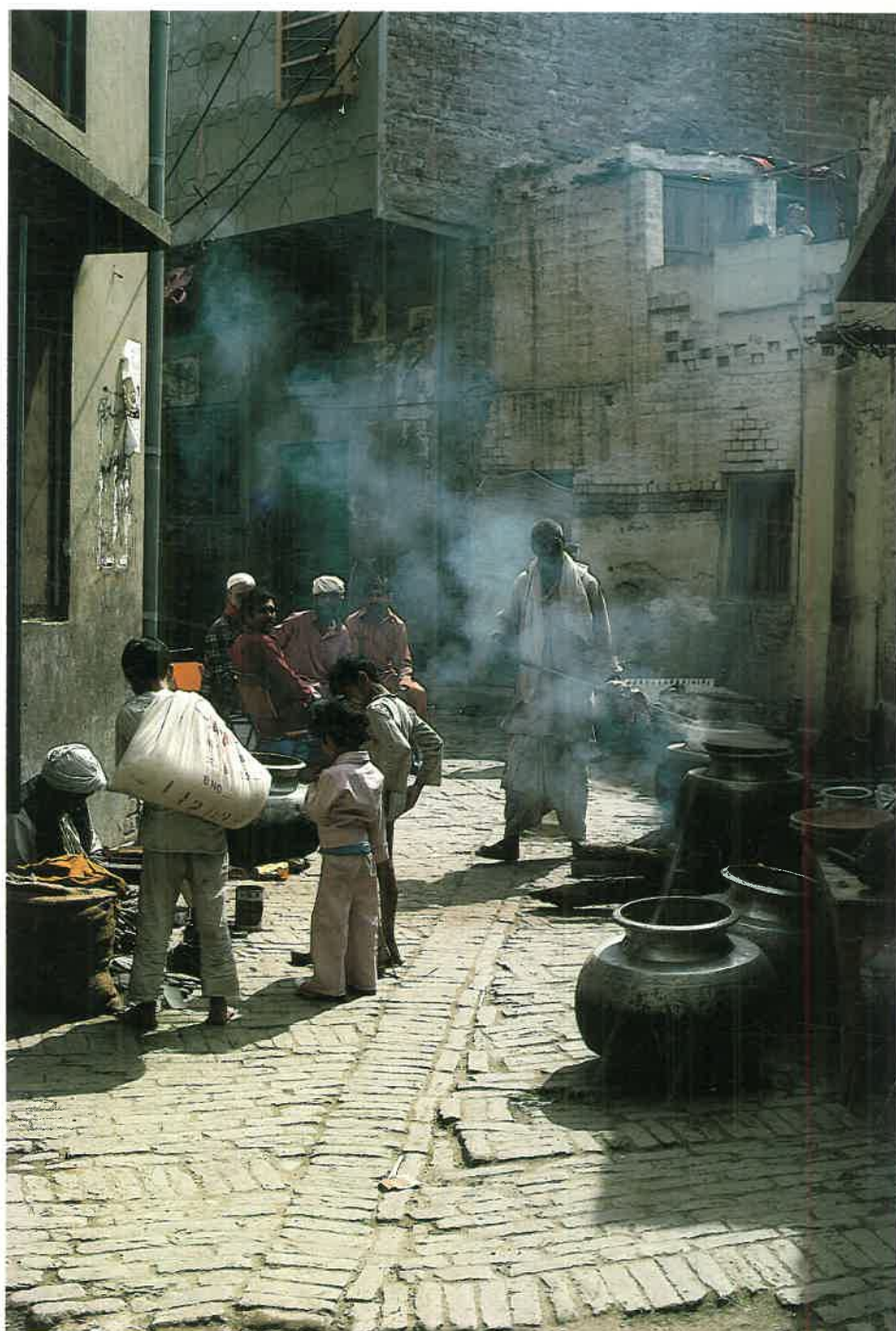
Mubarak Haveli still stands near the Mochi Gate where it did under Emperor Muhammad Shah. Lahori residents will tell you how it got its name: three distinguished brothers who were *omeras* (or nobles of the court) moved into the large complex they had commissioned, and within a short time a son was born to the eldest. Overjoyed with the blessing which the new house had bestowed upon them, they named it Mubarak Haveli, or 'Blessed House'. The same house later proved somewhat less lucky for Shah Shuja', however, when he was restrained there by Ranjit Singh until he finally handed over the Koh-i Nur diamond. But he later escaped with his life through a hole in the wall, under cover of night, and took refuge with a local British garrison.

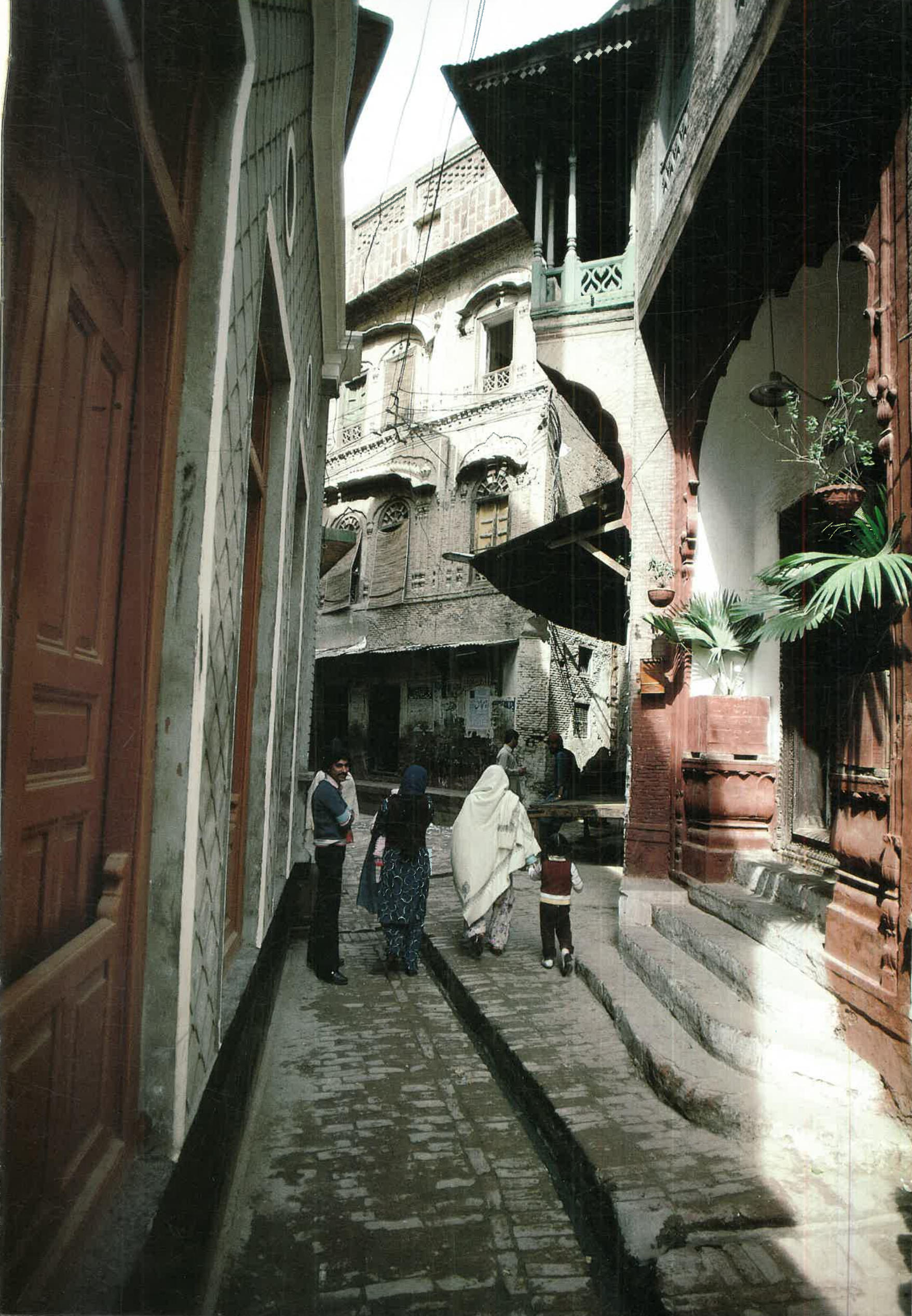
The elegant *haveli* of Prince Naunihal Singh also still stands today, with its magnificent Sikh frescoes almost as vibrant as they were in his time. This most unfortunate would-be Maharaja, grandson of Ranjit and son of the imbecile Kharrak, met his end on the way back from his coronation, as an archway crashed down upon him. But during his lifetime he enjoyed one of the most magnificent buildings in the city of Lahore. His *haveli* contains numerous spacious chambers, halls and balconies, and its ceilings are





*With a certain elegant defiance,
Lahore's havelis ignore the walls
pressing in around them. Undimmed
by either the centuries or their reduced
circumstances, their aura of imperial
splendour continues to radiate around
them, lighting even the darkest alleys.*







Old havelis, abandoned by their owners, are often given to the state to be used as schools or institutions. Their halls and balconies echo with ghosts, and here and there a fresco or mosaic stands testimony to days of former glory.

decorated with paintings and mirrors, all worked with gold. The walls are subtly decorated as well, covered with glass and artificial flowers. One can still marvel at these works of art, as the *haveli*, now in Government hands, has been transformed into a girls', or 'zenana', school.

And there is Nawab Mian Khan's *haveli*. Once unrivalled architecturally, it was the highest house in the city and could boast of ten wells, numerous chambers and arched hallways, underground living compartments, balconies and many upper stories. The Pari Mahal (or Palace of Fairies) in the Shah 'Almi Gate quarters was once the private residence of the same Wazir Khan who built the Wazir Khan Mosque, but its elegant halls, gardens, baths and other buildings were sacked and stripped when the Sikh triumvirate governed Lahore. The *haveli* of Kallo Bai (otherwise known as Ahluwalia Haveli) is a poignant monument to the mistress of one of the Mughal viceroys of Lahore. Being a professional singer and hence of lowly origin,

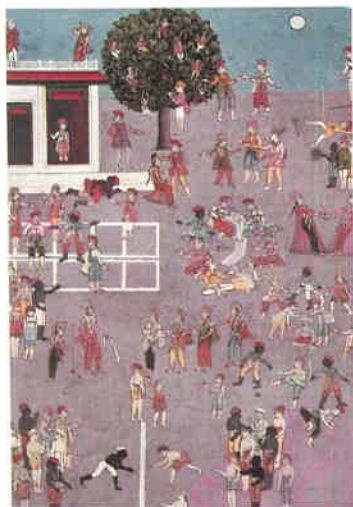


*Scarred and pitted like old warriors,
many havelis are indeed veterans of
countless sieges. No longer used as
residences, they have become instead
monuments to the past and testaments
to the endurance of the city.*





In the old city, the links to the past are sometimes so intense and vibrant that Time seems to fold back on itself, and for a moment the dazed observer feels the Lahore of ages past rising around him again.

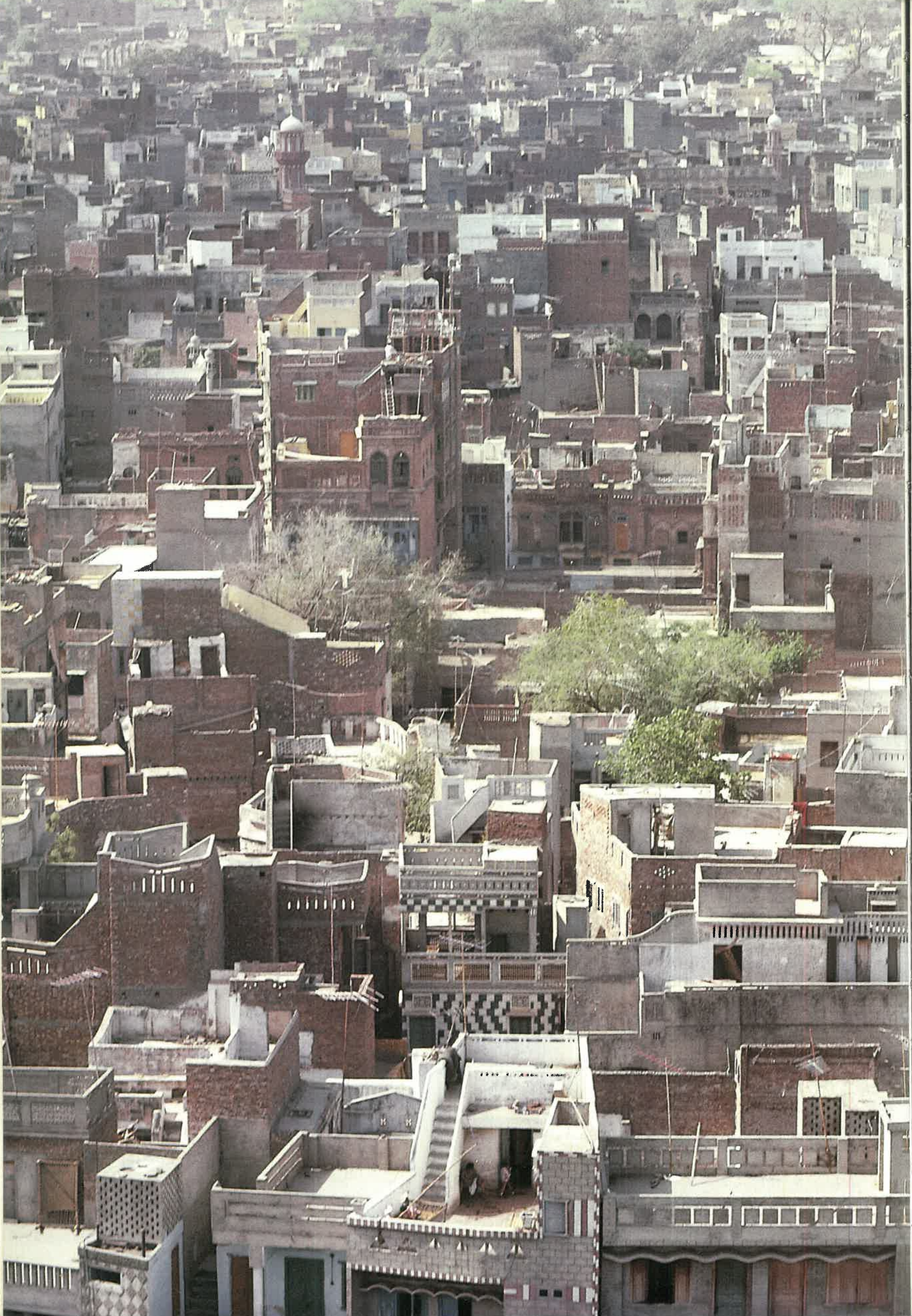


Kallo Bai was not permitted access to the viceroy's *harem*. Out of his love for her, however, he threw convention to the wind and built her this fantastic *haveli* at enormous cost.

The Andheri Haveli or 'Dark House' is so nicknamed for its roofed entrance, which veils the dwelling in perpetual shadow. The *haveli* of Jemadar Khushal Singh in Chuni Mundi was built on such a large scale that it looked more like a citadel than a private residence. But the *haveli* of Dhian Singh (Ranjit Singh's prime minister) in Hira Mundi looms even larger than that of Khushal Singh. It contains vast courtrooms, separate female quarters, and in one of the many courtyards, his own tomb, sumptuously appointed with a gold dome and pinnacles.

The *havelis* and *muhallahs* of Lahore are part of the fabric of the city's life. Within their walls, lanes and bazaars the drama of Lahore was enacted and continues to unfold. With very little effort we can once again populate these streets with the princes and Mughal courtiers who lived here in these small palaces, surrounded by marble and gold, insulated from the noisy clamour of the streets and the people outside.





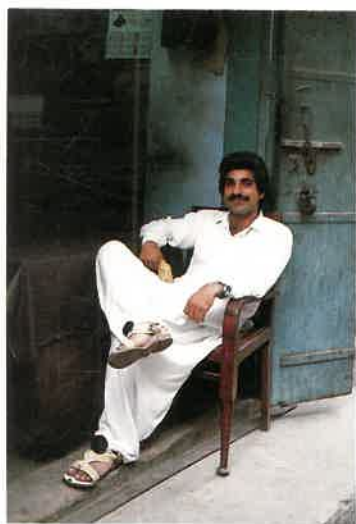
Aziz Ahmad is saving money to buy his own lathe. He has been running his small metal tooling business in the front room of his mother's house, and neither the capacity of the room nor his mother's approval are large. His tools and machines are in the room just inside the door which faces the street and could be rented to a shopkeeper if the house were on a wider street, or one with other shops. But this is a relatively narrow street — only about eight feet wide, and in a residential district. Behind this room are the remains of a courtyard now dimmed by the encroaching floors above. Now only a grate in the middle allows borrowed light and air to filter down to the street level. On each level above, however, more and more light is available to the courtyard areas, drawing rooms, bedrooms and the rooftop apartment.

He climbs up the circular path to the roof often. Past the faded drawing room, now rarely used, he ascends to his mother's room, where she moved after his father died. He passes his grandfather's room with its door always ajar; inside, he knows he would find his grandfather in prayer. He passes his brother and sister-in-law's apartment, which used to belong to his parents. Once on the roof terrace he looks out and scans the innumerable surrounding rooftops. He once figured he could see half of the Old City from his roof. And as his house is at the city's edge near the Lohari Gate, and the current city is built on the mound of previous fallen cities, he can see to the highest part in the centre, and all the rooftops and minarets in between.

His father had told him of secret pathways which wound from roof to roof and which used to aid in the conveyance of goods and information during the riots before and after Partition. He and some friends had often tried to re-discover these routes for less political reasons, but had always run into barricades or chasms which cut short their mission. And how many nights had he counted the stars in the hot, moist months of May and June when his whole family would move their beds to the roof to sleep in hopes of catching the few breezes which would never find the bedrooms below. The roof was a much more desirable place to be now that the family had installed a water closet in the house. Prior to that, the roof had been the place where the 'night soil' was collected before being taken down to the street in the morning.

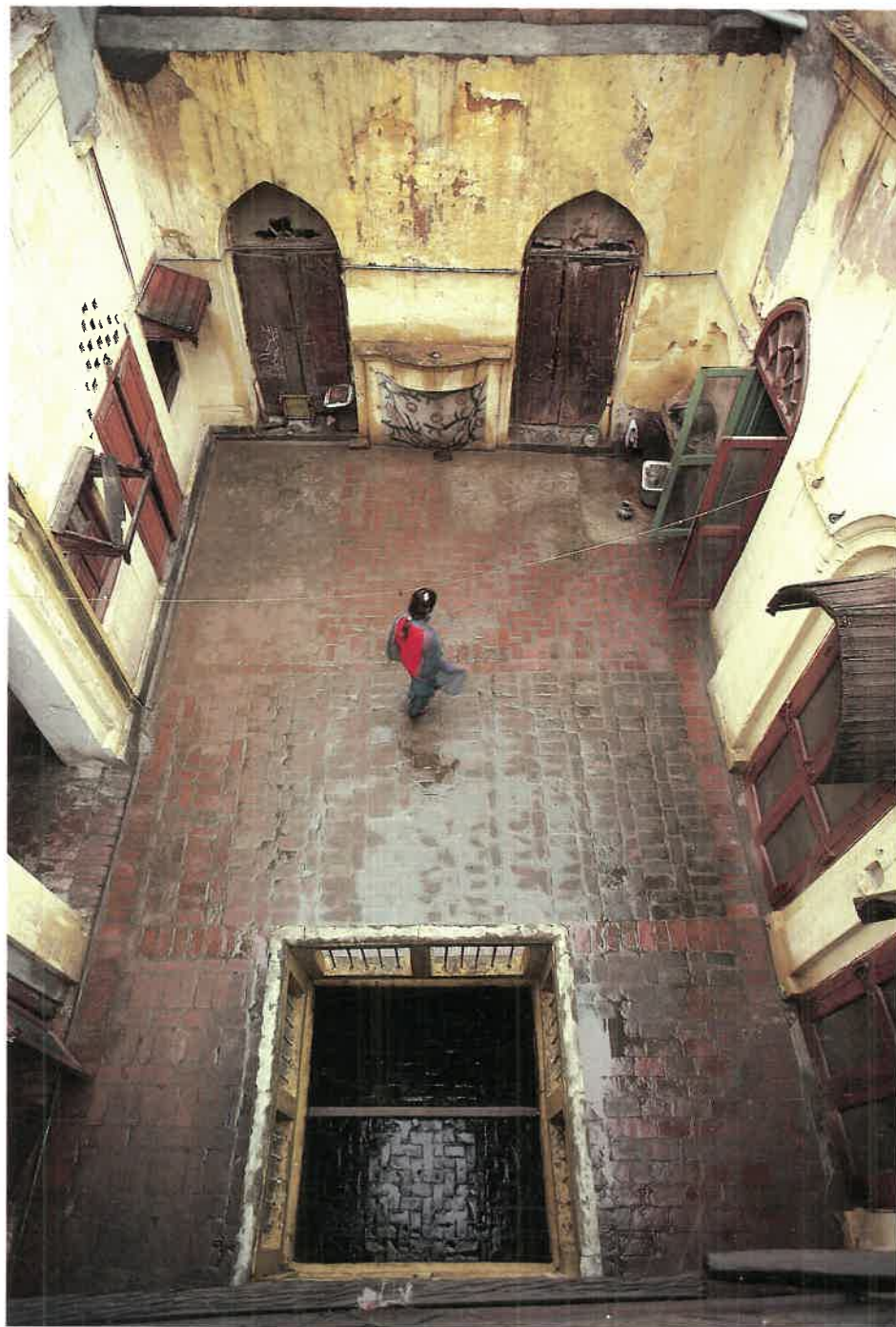
Aziz Ahmad stretches in the fresh air which he never feels in his tool shop, far below. The roof, he reflects, is the ideal place to be. And especially when the roof performs its supreme service, during *Basant*.

Basant, the Festival of Kites, surfaces quite spontaneously at the end of the winter rains in February. It is spring, the trees are in flower, and everyone in the Old City is carried away by the light-hearted beauty of the kites. Capricious breezes blow and the kite makers get busy bending splints of bamboo and gluing on brightly coloured tissue paper to fashion kites that people will buy to fly over the city. Everyone takes up residence on the roofs to watch and participate as the spring winds whip brilliantly coloured diamond-shaped paper kites into the air in such quantities that you can



The inner courtyard of each narrow house is a well of activity. It is crisscrossed with the lively traffic of household and personal matters. Rooms open onto the courtyard, balconies overhang it, and often the stairway encircles it, spiraling upward to the rooftops above.







After the crowded, busy streets and houses below, the roofs open upward to the vast blue of the sky above, populated only by an occasional cloud or flock of birds. It is no wonder that the rooftops are so attractive, particularly when they blossom with brilliantly coloured kites against the blue of the spring sky.

barely see the sky above. Against that deep, cool blue there will be thousands of kites, criss-crossing like a swarm of crazed butterflies. Boys of all ages, including Aziz Ahmad and his friends, prepare for the event by buying and making kites of tissue and sticks, as well as by craftily applying bits of ground glass to their own kite strings in order to cut the opponent's string and reign victorious over any and all kites in reach of their own.

Because, of course, there is more to this Festival of Kites than a simple celebration of spring. The kites of *Basant* are warriors, glorious opponents who battle for control of all they survey. Once the kite is in the air, it is an open invitation to a severing contest — the *painch*. No permission is necessary and no regrets proffered. A kite's weapon is its *maanjsa* — its wickedly armoured string, which the kite flyers of *Basant* spend many days preparing, and the treatment of which is an art in itself. The string is coated in a mixture of rice paste and ground glass to strengthen it and render it capable of slashing through a hapless opponent's *maanjsa*. All sorts of other recipes are whispered about: the adding of tamarind and egg yolk to ensure sharpness, repeated polishing to make it smooth. The surface of the string can never be completely smooth. Some small irregularities do remain in the armour coating; it is these fatal flaws that the opposing fighter hopes to find.

Aziz Ahmad and his friends build their own kites for *Basant*; and then, with almost everyone else, they climb to the rooftops of Lahore, to enjoy the spring weather, witness the heroic combat, and gamble, cheerfully and exuberantly, on the outcome. For Aziz, there is a wonderful exhilaration in standing under the clear blue of the sky, holding the tugging string of the soaring kite he controls high above him, and watching the colourful sky as he waits for the first attacker to appear. The kites of *Basant* are beautiful even in combat. They must fly at a considerable height so that the string can harmonise with the flow and direction of the wind. To attack, they must move in a hawklike swoop across the sky, cross their opponent's string and move swiftly up and down to sever the rival string at its weakest point. During *Basant* the sky is alive with kites swooping and swerving, or hovering poised to strike; there is much manoeuvring and dodging, sneaking up on the tail, creeping in at the belly, slashing from the top, zigzagging to mislead the opponent, soaring high to avoid a dangerous entanglement or diving suddenly to escape the killing strike.

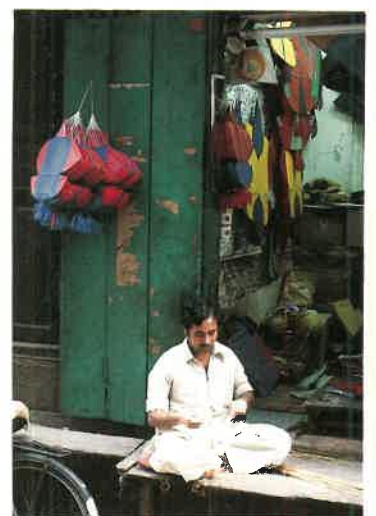
These rooftops that Aziz loves so well are versatile spaces, and it occurs to Aziz, as he reflects on this, that perhaps *Basant* is not the only purpose of the rooftops. In this crowded city, where every house and space is filled with people, families, children, business, the rooftops become the one place to find privacy and solitude; especially for young, romantic couples, who dearly desire a few precious minutes away from the ever-vigilant eyes of family and neighbours. On cool, starry nights, the darkened rooftops above Lahore are amurmur with soft voices, musical laughter, and whispered,



passionate declarations. Aziz is well aware of this state of affairs; he is, after all, engaged to be married.

Aziz Ahmed knows the Old City well. He is so familiar with the sounds and smells of each lane that he once bet his cousin that if he were to be placed anywhere within the city walls blindfolded, he would still be able to tell the spot. He knows where the best place is to view a wedding procession. He knows where the *tazia* towers are crafted for the *Muharram* procession. He knows where to buy the finest sweetmeats, the tangiest pickles and the tastiest seekh kabobs. He can get from the Lohari Gate to the Delhi Gate in less than 10 minutes, a journey which is normally traversed in no less than twenty minutes. Yet he prefers to stroll slowly through the various *muhallahs*, surveying each widely divergent market area and marvelling at how the merchants have stayed together in their traditional locations over the centuries, despite rivalries and disputes. He sees, but knows by heart, the flower vendors near the Lohari Gate, the pickle vendors, the kite makers in the Masti Gate Bazaar, and the brass utensil sellers of the Kassera Bazaar near the great Wazir Khan's Mosque. And on he walks to the great covered Azam cloth market, the bangle market, the grain market and the rope market in the Akbari Bazaar near the Delhi Gate. He knows everything that his grandfather taught him of the city history; stories about the *muhallahs*, their vendors, their resident heroes or saints; about the city's legendary rulers, past glories, and semi-mythical wealth and power; all the folk tales, myths, songs, traditions, and stories about Lahore. They mix in his head as he walks, swirling and blending with what surrounds him, with all that he perceives, with all of his senses.

After the rains of February comes the long-awaited spring, and the Festival of Basant. Kite vendors appear, hawking their fragile, jewel-coloured warriors to every would-be conqueror.







The Diamond Market

Within the walls of Lahore lies a *muhallah* named after the pleasure-seeking noble Hira Singh, a man notoriously dedicated to the pursuit of the sensuous and hedonistic elements of life. This quarter exists today; its counterparts exist in almost every city, particularly cities of great antiquity. The streets of this neighbourhood are lined with *havelis*, now dim with dust and years. Once, however, they were lavish, with curtained or shuttered windows, behind which could be heard music and laughter, or could be seen a jewelled hand, a dark-lined eye, a flash of white teeth. It was a street of enticements, of entertainments, of pleasure of many kinds. It was — and is — the prostitutes' quarter, at one time the *muhallah* of the *havelis* of elegant, educated, cultured courtesans. It is Hira Mundi: the Diamond Market.

Since Lahore's earliest days this has been the residence of the city's courtesans and prostitutes. But the role of the courtesan in Lahore, particularly the Lahore of the Mughals, was not the role of the sordid streetwalker found in most cities. The courtesans' houses were the seat of culture in most respects; the ladies themselves were trained and educated in all of the gentle and creative arts: they were the masters of music, poetry, and dance, and their *havelis* became the centres for enjoyment of pleasures far more cerebral and spiritual than the simple business of prostitution.

The role of the married woman in Lahore, and especially that of a royal wife or concubine, clearly placed them as homemakers, mothers of children, keepers of the flame. Quite often they had somewhat limited contact with their Emperor or husband; their social network consisted of supportive and loving female companions from their families or neighbourhoods, or from within the *harem*.

The Mughal kings and princes and other nobles, not to mention courtiers and other men, would visit their favourite courtesans to spend an entire evening, enjoying conversation, music, poetry and stories, a much more diverse world of activity than simple sexual coupling. Young men were sent to them, not for sexual education (which Mughal princes, like most other young men, handled on their own), but to learn gentling manners, etiquette, and the art of polite conversation. Older and wiser men came to enjoy the dancing, the music, and long evenings of intelligent and vivid conversation.

Within their elaborate *havelis*, which were often gifts from their noble patrons, the courtesans would cover the bright hot colours of furnishings and rugs with cool white sheets, clothe themselves in shimmering and transparent silks and brilliant jewels, and await the arrival of their Princes and Emperors.





This area is known as much for its profusion of enticing street food as for its other, more direct attractions. The aroma of succulent kebobs combines with the sounds of music, tinkling ankle bells, and melodious women's voices to create a sensual assault.



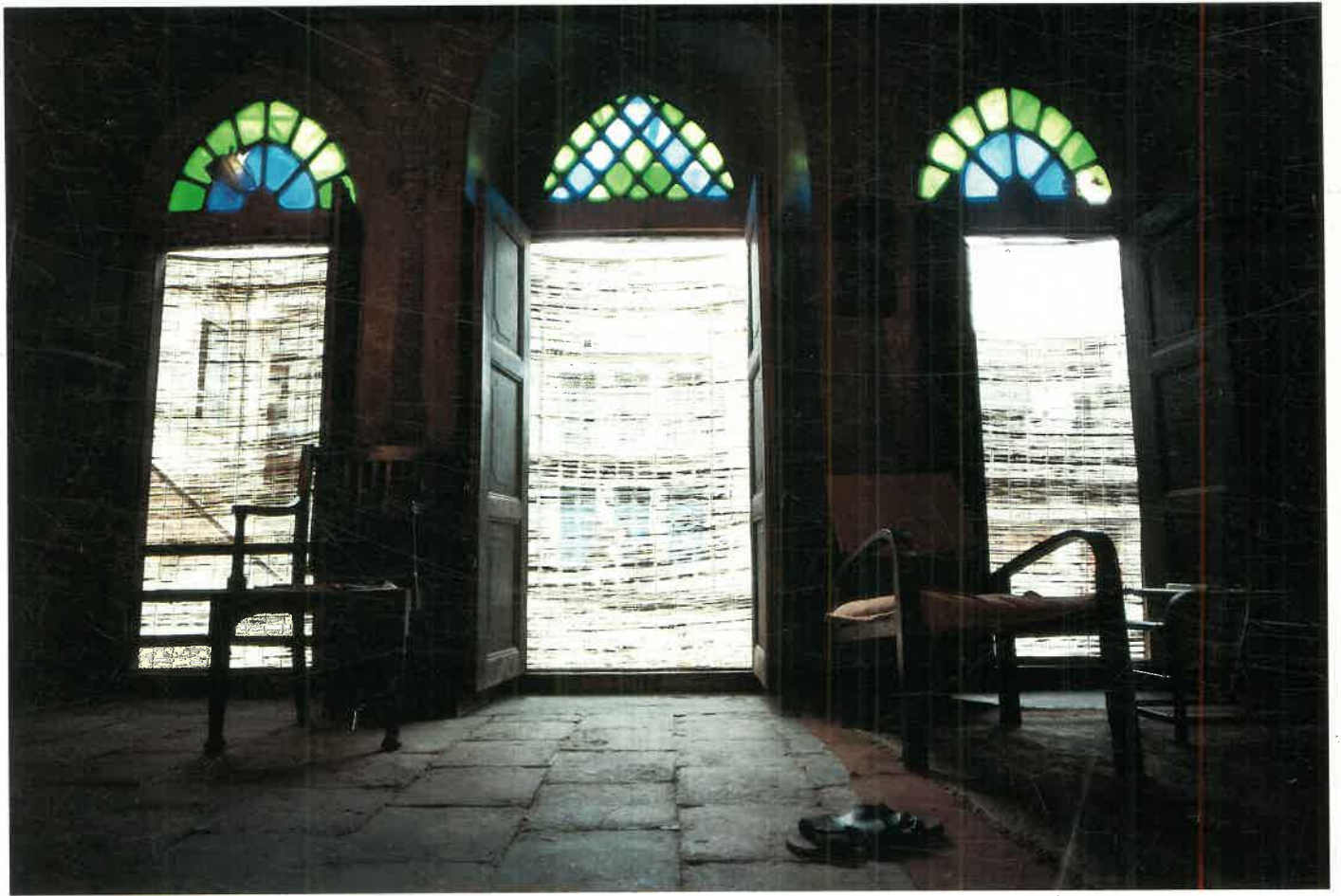
*The interior of a 'kotha' is a
world of perfume, music
and lowered lights. Visitors are
given seats among the cushions,
offered 'paan,' or betel leaf,
and entertained by the timeless
movements and sinuous
grace of dancers.*



*Even in the glow of electric
lights and the hum of
modern music, it is possible to
catch a sudden, brief glimpse
of the glories of the past,
caught in the sparkle of an
earring, the clash of bracelets,
the lines of a face.*







The hospitality of the Diamond Market is legendary. Despite the impossible squalor sometimes found here, there is still a sensual experience in its streets, where one can be at once lulled and stimulated, seduced and repelled, turned away and, ultimately, drawn in.







Leila 'Alam

Leila 'Alam's maternal aunt was coming to visit from Karachi. And with two *munnae* (infants) at home and Leila's older sister just married, the honour of greeting and entertaining her aunt during her stay fell to Leila. She swung her legs from the high bench at the Lahore railway station, and strained forward in the heat, squinting to scan the tracks again for the train from the south. She was twelve, but small and high-spirited for her age, and her brother Kamal cast a benign but disapproving glance at her dangling feet. Her feet slowly swung to a stop, and faintly above the din of the station she felt the powerful rhythm of the approaching engine. Soon, amid squealing brakes, cries of welcome, and a fat woman being coaxed down the steps of one of the cars, her graceful aunt Jamila emerged from the train — easily spotted in her bright yellow sari. 'Leila-jan, Kamal-jan, how are you?' and the tinkling of bracelet and the heady scent of some delicious perfume as she embraced the children and kissed them.

It had been six years since Jamila had come up to visit her sister, married to the Lahori tailor, and Leila retained only vague memories of this delightful creature who seemed only to smile, and tell naughty jokes that made even her pious grandmother laugh in spite of herself. Jamila was a history professor in Karachi, and though she had been to Lahore only a handful of times, she seemed to know more fascinating stories about the city than Leila had ever heard, even growing up there.

*A detail from the mosaic exterior of
the Wazir Khan Mosque.*





Rush mats and prayer hats await the
next 'aazan,' or call to prayer,
outside the Sonehri Masjid.

Leila's mother scolded, 'Jamila, you must rest! Such a long journey ...' But Jamila clasped Leila's hand and said, 'No, please, Leila has promised me that we would go on an adventure in the city together, and the beautiful twilight is just falling. Now is the time for fun. Please let us go and explore.' And so Leila took her to the best spots, to the Anarkali Bazaar where Jamila bought her silver and glass bangles, past the old *havelis*, and then up to the top of the Shah Burj for the best view of the city.

Jamila scanned the city slowly. Finally she sighed, and said, 'Ah, that is what I want to see ...' Leila tried to follow her eyes. 'The Sonehri Masjid?' She was amazed. Why would this exciting woman want to visit that old small mosque? But they made their way through the streets of the Kashmiri Bazaar, and up along a narrow and crowded lane, and finally, right there, the Sonehri Masjid — the Golden Mosque — stood up above them. Jamila's face was rapt with attention; Leila, captivated by her intensity, looked from her to the mosque. Well, it did look 'dramatic' as others had said, with its three glittering golden domes and gold topped minarets in the deep slate blue twilight. Leila stole another glance at Jamila, who at that moment gave her head a small shake and turned to Leila. Her eyes shone, and Leila thought, she looks so ... happy. Could it be that an old *masjid* made her so happy?

Jamila took Leila's hand again. 'Let us go and see the 'Wazir Khan', Leila, what do you say?' Another mosque, thought Leila disconsolately, but Jamila's pretty face and warm smile made it seem somehow very enticing. With a concerned glance at this beautiful, sophisticated woman who was entranced with old buildings, she agreed.

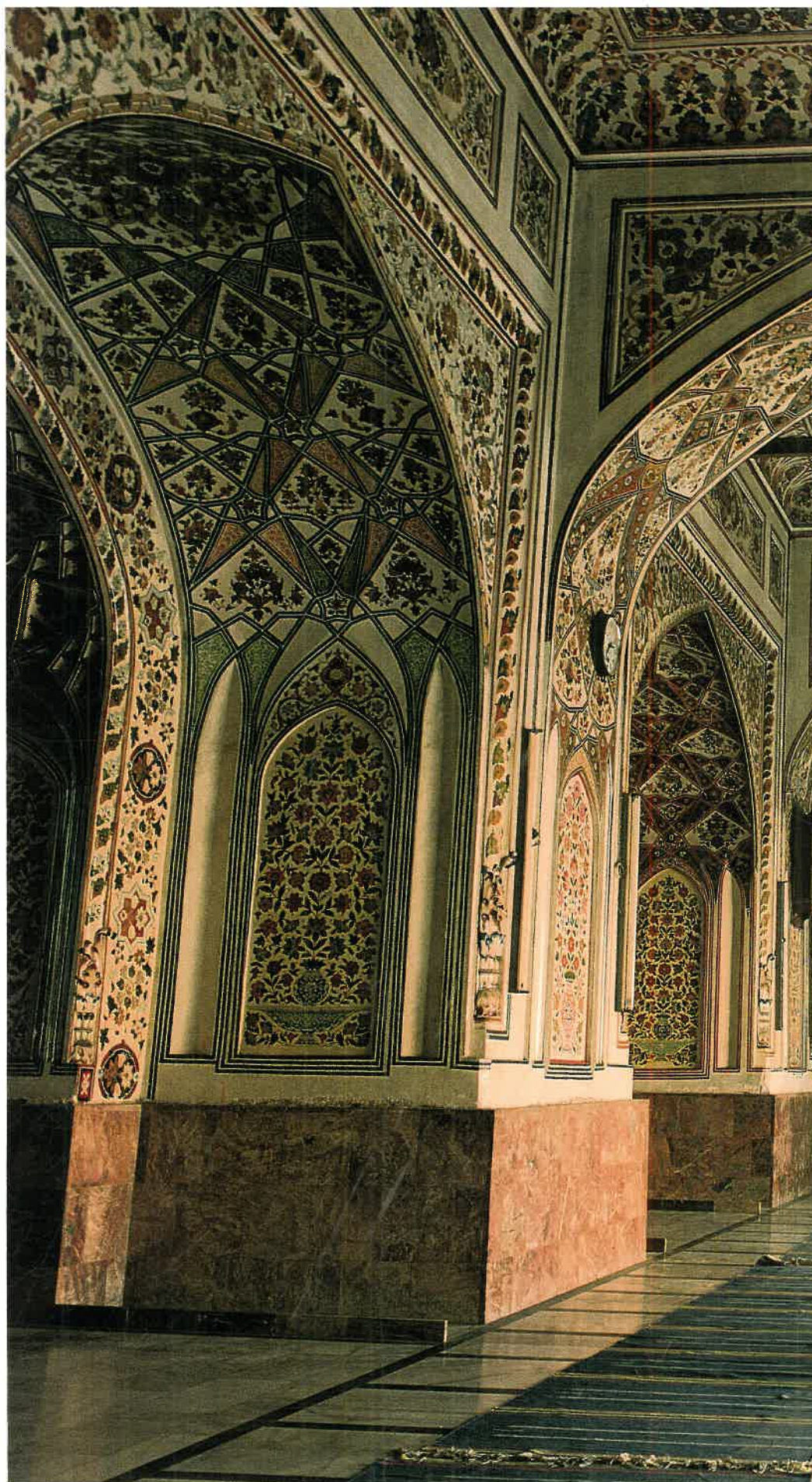
'Let me tell you a story about this *masjid*, Leila-jan,' Jamila said as they stopped outside the Wazir Khan Masjid. It towered above them, majestic in the twilight, its vast, vivid mosaics, inlays, and frescoes glowing in that magical light. Around them people flowed into the courtyard, in preparation for the evening prayer. 'You know of course who Wazir Khan was, Leila?'

'Of course,' Leila said feeling very proud that she remembered this story from her father. 'He was a great minister — a *wazir* — under the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan.'

'Very good!' Jamila exclaimed. 'But did you know that this great minister was also the head physician to the royal family, and at the same time the Emperor's head cook?'

Leila conjured up her mental image of the Wazir Khan. Somehow she could easily add a stethoscope to her portrait of this dignified and splendid old man with the smart beard and neatly bejewelled turban, but she simply could not picture him in the kitchen giving orders about how many pounds of beans to buy, with that long feather streaming from his turban and the stethoscope dangling around his neck. She laughed out loud.

The interior of the Wazir Khan Mosque has managed to survive the years virtually unchanged and in excellent condition. Its beauty continues to inspire its worshippers.







The Masjid Wazir Khan.

Jamila laughed too, and took Leila's small chin in her hand. 'Yes, indeed, that's how he gained the Emperor's respect and loyalty. He was such a good doctor and such a good cook that Shah Jahan decided he should be a *wazir* too! And it seems that he was a good *wazir* as well, because he took all the riches he had acquired from his service under the Emperor, and he built this beautiful mosque. Then he left provision in his will that the profit from that row of 20 or so shops across the street there should be used to keep the mosque clean and in good condition. Of course some of his descendants eventually managed to contest the will, and now the shops belong to a private family. But still, the shops inside the gate are reserved for bookbinders and the cells inside for painters, writers and students of the mosque, just as he wanted it to be.'

What an eccentric man, Leila thought, but she had always liked his pottery decoration on the mosque — ornate and beautiful flowers, trees, and vases, set in simple stucco. And she had even watched art students from the Mayo School there on her way home from school, as they sketched and imitated the complex inlaid design. Leila looked up at the arch to the calligraphy she had seen so many times before — in so many places. It was the *bismalah* in graceful Arabic script. Jamila followed her gaze. 'You know, on the other side of that arch, there is a very wise and sobering inscription. I remember the day I saw it when I was last here. I was in a carefree, light-hearted mood, and it really struck me.' She recited in Persian, then translated for Leila:

Muhammad of Arabia is the honour of both realms,
He who is not the dust of his threshold,
Let dust be thrown over his head.

'It's true, Leila, is it not?' Jamila gazed at the arch, soft shadows falling across her oval face. Then she turned back to Leila, and her eyes were bright again. She raised an eyebrow at Leila. 'But not all of the mosque's inscriptions are like that one. There are some that are even' — she smiled mischievously — 'riddles'.

'Riddles?' Leila's mouth opened. 'In there?'

'Yes,' Jamila answered, and she quoted in Arabic: 'When I asked of Reason the date of the foundation of this magnificent mosque, it answered, "This is the place of the worship of the pious."' Leila looked puzzled. 'But it doesn't make any sense.'

'Wait a moment,' Jamila said, 'count the value of the letters in Reason's answer — you know, "alif" is one, "be" is two and so on.'

Leila counted slowly, her forehead furrowed with concentration. She dug in her pockets for a scrap of paper and pencil, and laboured away. '1,044?' she finally asked, her dark eyes round and fascinated.



‘Yes! The worshipper asks Reason when the mosque was built, and it tells him: “1044 *hijra*,” but in code.’ Ah, thought Leila, Jamila is like magic.

‘O.K. Leil-i, do you think we could just stroll up to the citadel and pay our respects to the Badshahi Masjid, and then go back home to see your adorable little brothers and the rest of your family? What do you say?’ Jamila slipped her arm around Leila’s thin shoulders and hugged her to the yellow sari.

‘Sure,’ Leila responded, and surprised herself with her own enthusiasm for yet another trip to the Badshahi Masjid. This *masjid* was impressive by any account, it was true, and her mother and father often took guests up to see it when they came. But it was more than that. She was beginning to understand Jamila’s love for the mosques now. It was not like when her grandmother went to say prayers in a still voice and then left beaming with a silly righteousness. It was different with Jamila. For Jamila, it was real, Leila thought. She seemed to feel the life of God’s buildings, and she revered them and found them beautiful for that spirit that stirred within them. She clasped Jamila’s hand in the falling darkness and breathed in her perfume.

The swelling white onion domes of the mosque were visible from far away. And the muezzin’s cry pealed out long, low and familiar — an extended rising note for ‘Allah’ that went on for some counts, and then a short quick ‘Akbar’, and then the sequence was repeated again. It was time for the evening prayer, and by the time Leila and Jamila reached the top of the 22 steps, they barely had time to throw their scarves over their heads, perform their ablutions, and seat themselves behind the columns with the women.

Leila stole a glance up at the sea of bodies in the courtyard. The massive space, more than 500 feet square, was not filled. It hardly could be, except of course on ‘*Id al-Fitr*’ when the whole city turned out to celebrate the last day of *Ramadan*. But this was just the daily prayer, not even the Friday noon service, and so only a few hundred backs were visible as the men rose and fell on their mats and positioned their hands according to the moment of the prayer. She wondered how they all stayed in such even long rows; she remembered how her father had told her once that there was a time when the places used to be marked by a thin black marble outline. But the courtyard had since been repaved; it was all one vast white expanse. It should have been overwhelming, but somehow the delicate white marble swirls set into the red sandstone in the form of acanthus leaves and an occasional palmette made the great structure delicate and decidedly approachable. Even the towering minarets in the four corners — 143 feet high, one-third the length of each side of the courtyard — did not deter the worshipper. All this simply instilled one with a proper sense of God’s majesty in His home.

The short prayer service was drawing to a close, and as the participants with their mats shuffled out of the great gates, Leila noticed the small compartments behind the columns where they had been sitting. She craned her neck, peering at them.

The imposing entrance to the Badshahi Masjid, with its graceful pyramid steps. It is said that the materials for this mosque, built by Fidai Khan for his foster brother the Emperor Aurangzeb, were in fact collected by Dara Shikoh, to be used in a mausoleum for Mian Mir, his spiritual guide. After Dara Shikoh was put to death, Aurangzeb confiscated the materials and had this beautiful structure built; constructed of red sandstone with white marble veins, it is considered to be one of the most beautiful mosques in the world.



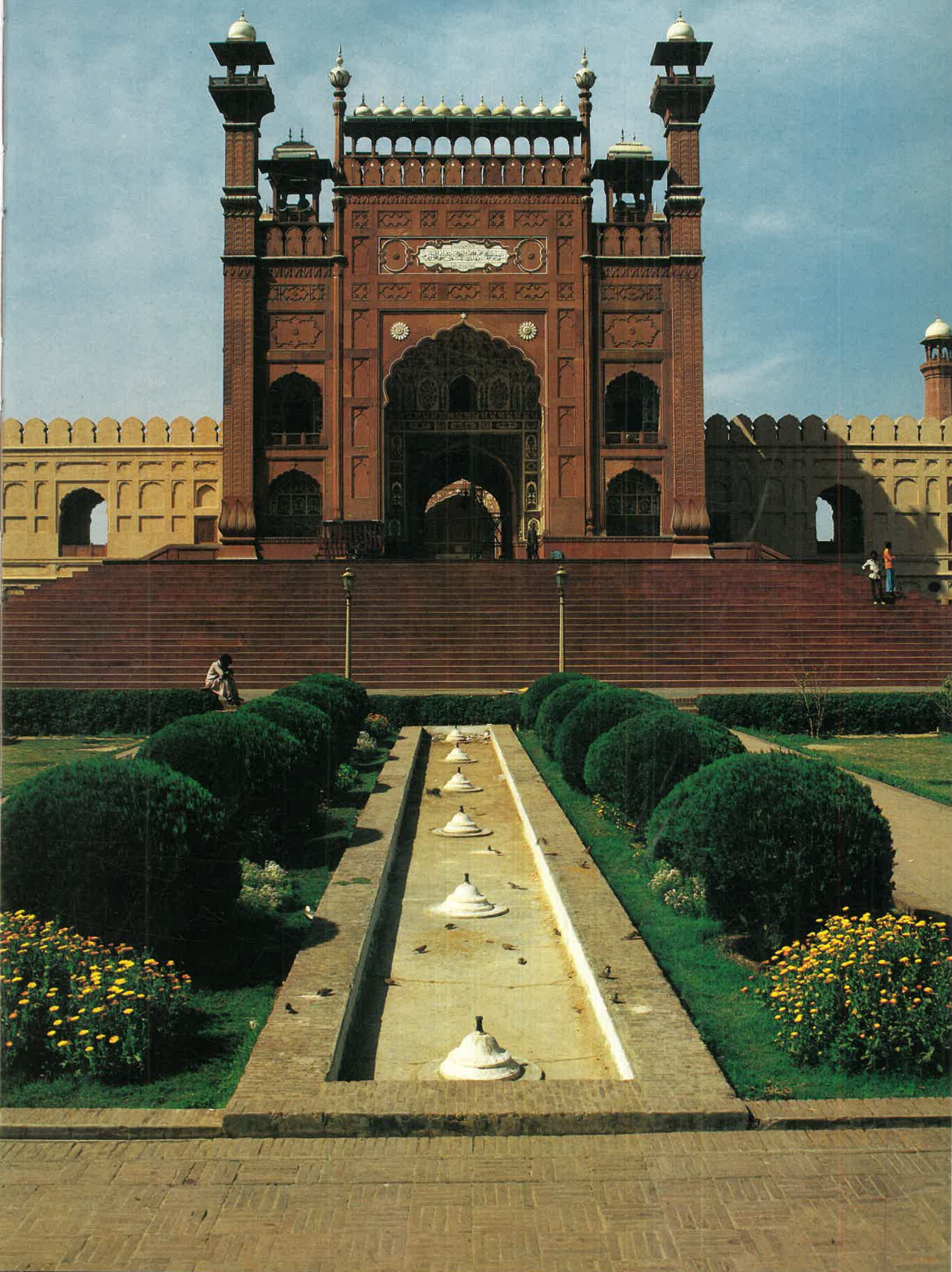
Again Jamila followed her gaze. 'Those were for the students of the mosque when Emperor Aurangzeb built this building. As you can see there must have been quite a high enrollment. But now there are only a few. And, if you are not tired of my silly stories, let me tell you some gossip about this old place. I have heard, though it may only be an old wives' tale, that after Aurangzeb killed his brother Dara, he took over all the building materials which his brother had intended to use for a tomb for his own spiritual guide and master, Mian Mir. It was that stolen booty that the Emperor then used to build this mosque. But in spite of that, and even though some people are still superstitious about that story, all great scholars agree that it is the most beautiful mosque in the entire Subcontinent. Many, many other *masjids* were modelled after it. For example, did you notice how the domes of the Golden Masjid bear a resemblance to those of the Badshahi? That one was modelled after it, on a much smaller scale.' Leila turned and looked upward to the familiar domes above.

'The most beautiful mosque,' she thought. 'But my favourite tidbit about this mosque,' Jamila said, swinging Leila's hand in hers, 'is the story about how it contains actual relics of the Prophet and his companions. Babur brought them with him to India after Timur captured them in Damascus.'

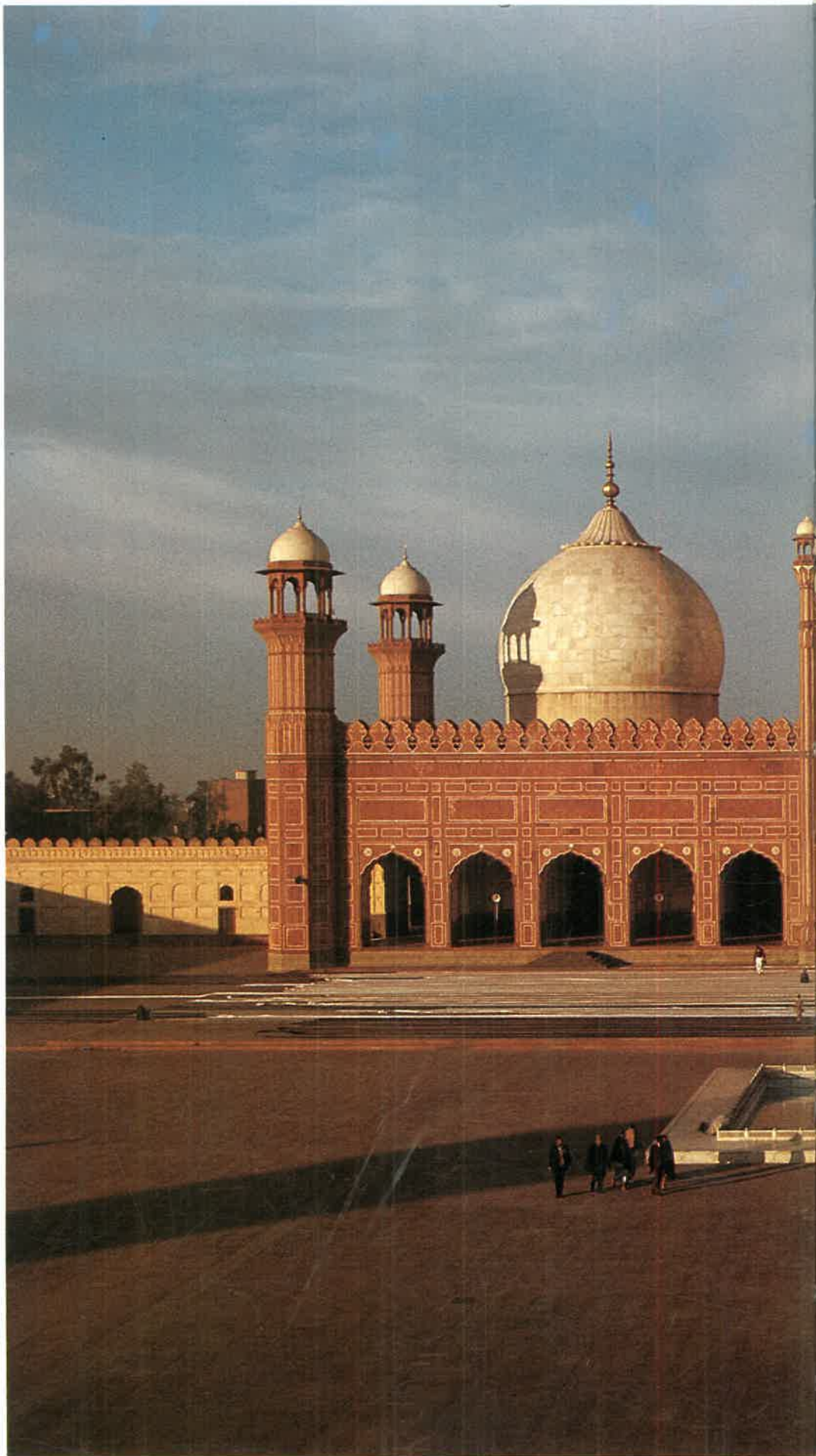
'Yes, yes, I have seen those! They are wonderful, aren't they?' Leila interrupted excitedly. 'I have seen one of Muhammad's slippers there and his green coat. And there was one of the chapters of the Quran written in Ali's handwriting, and a handkerchief that belonged to Husayn with his blood on it. And I remember, there was even an old tooth of one of Muhammad's friends!' She smiled broadly. Then she turned her face, intense with curiosity, up to her aunt's where it gleamed in the evening dusk.

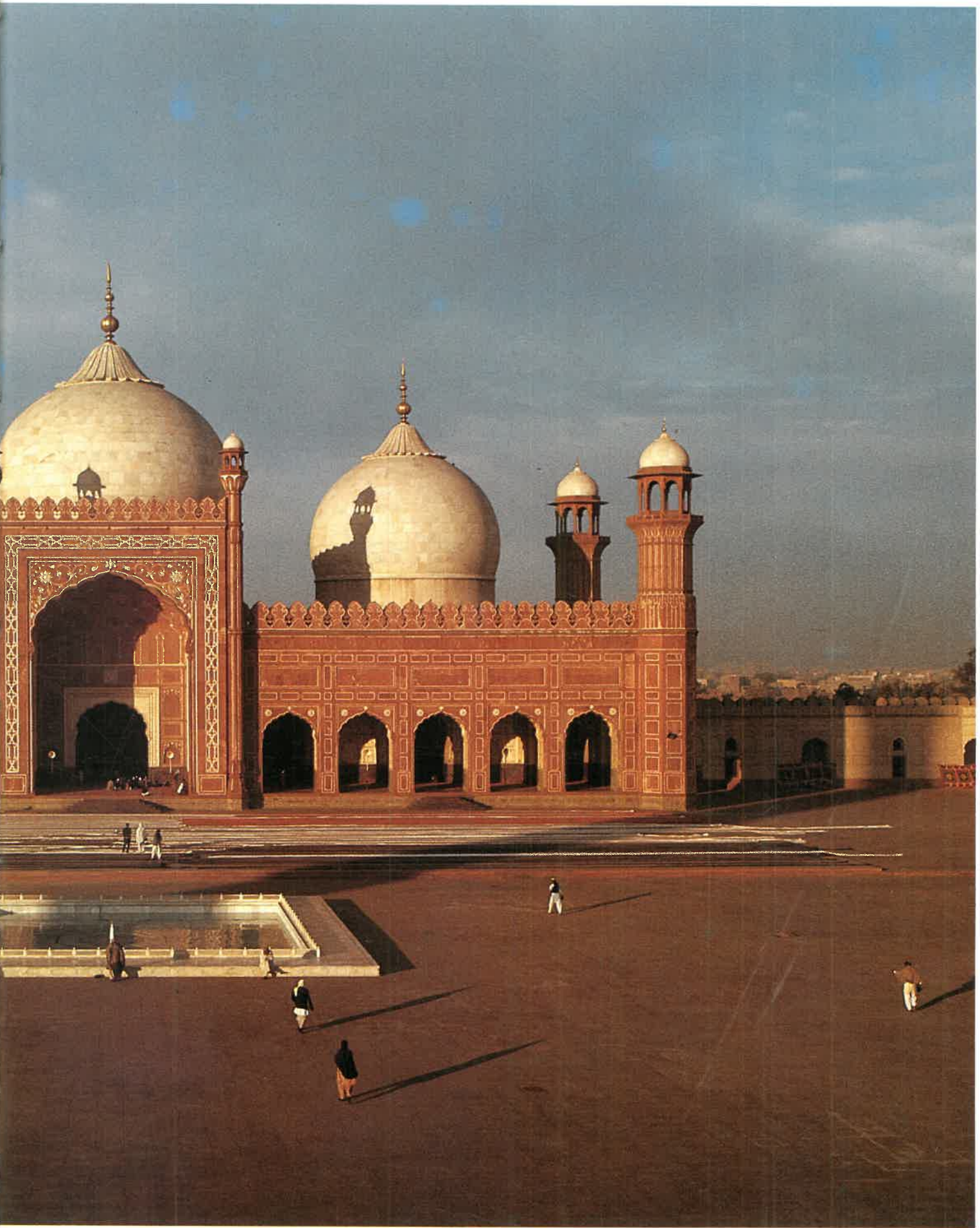
'Are they real?' she asked, half-whispering, tentative in her doubt.

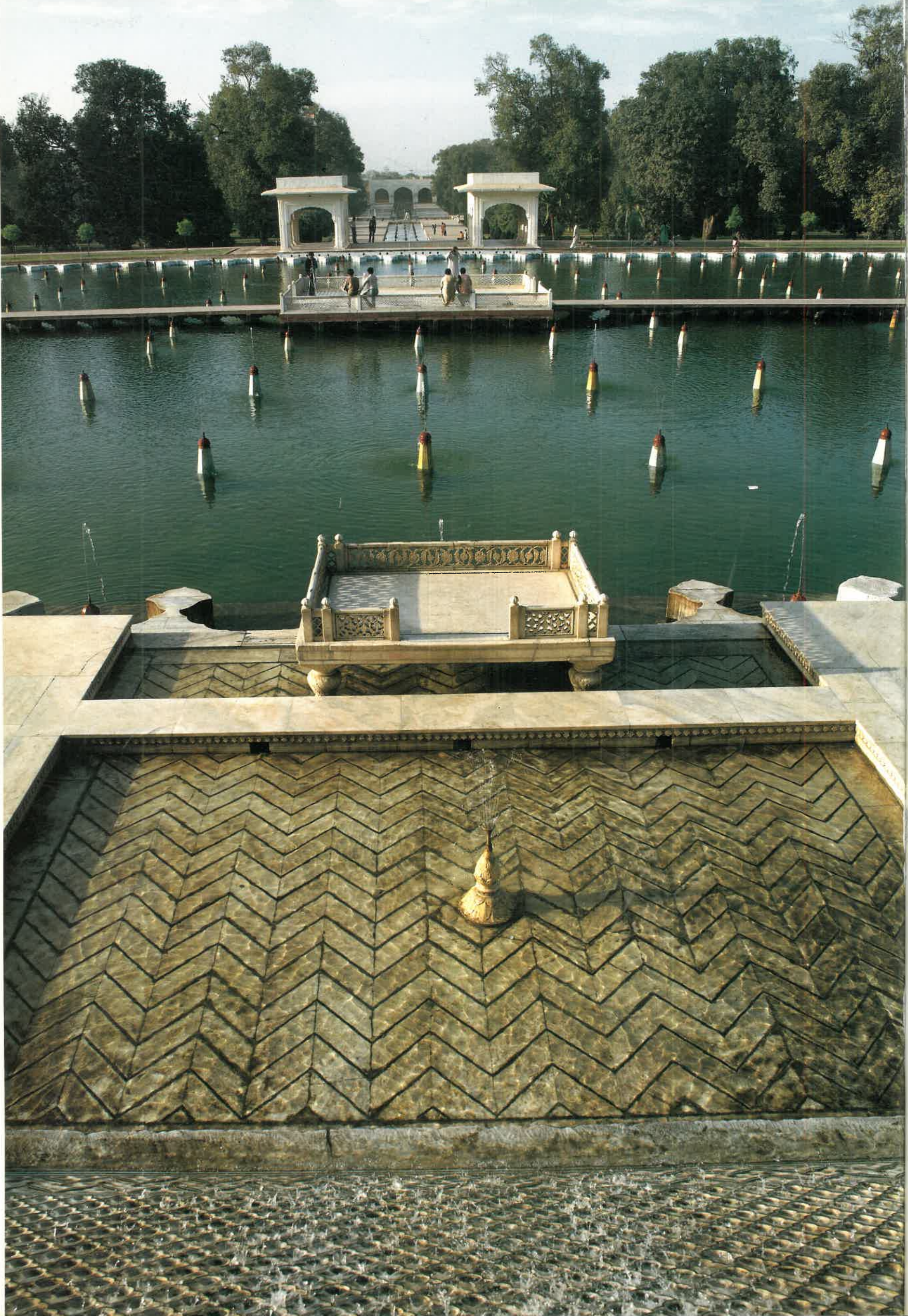
'I don't know,' Jamila answered simply. She smiled down at the small, serious face, with its dark eyes full of questions. 'But if they're not, they should be ...'.



The vast courtyard of the Badshahi Mosque is the largest in the Subcontinent. Huge as it is, it will be filled with worshippers on religious festivals and holy days.







The Shalimar Gardens

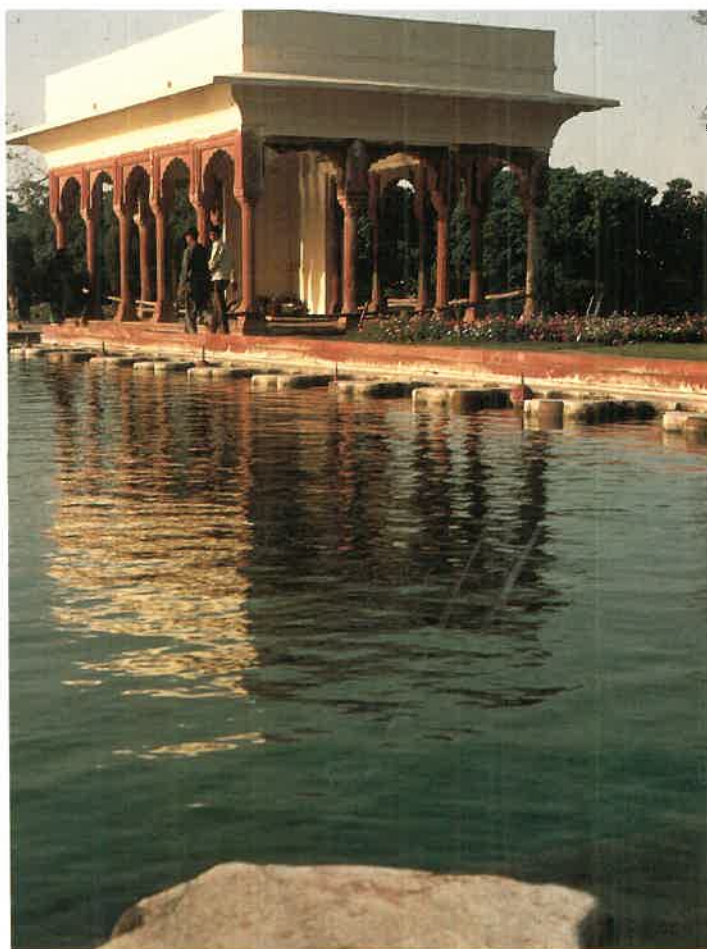
Shalimar ... cool clear water glides through the canal, spills in splashing rivulets, foams at the bottom of marble cascades, sparkles in fountains and jets, shimmers in deep, brimming tanks. Everywhere, water catches light; the sound of Shalimar is the musical sound of moving water, a soft, constant background to voices and birdsong. Water from the canal feeds the extraordinary variety of flowers and fruit trees in the garden's three levels, some flowers fragile and perishing after a debut of one fragrant day, orchards heavy and thick with their own colour and fruit, trees tall and green and swaying in a passing breeze. A privileged visitor reclines on silken bolsters, gazing out through the sparkling white carved marble screens of a small pavilion. There is the soft sighing sound of trees brushing each other in the breeze to listen to, and the calls of birds singing to each other from the corners of the garden, the hypnotic drone of insects, and everywhere, the sound of splashing, bubbling, moving water. Shalimar was created by Shah Jahan to be a refuge, a paradise of earthly delights, and the name of his garden still conjures up fantastic romantic images in people's minds all over the world.

In 1634, the Emperor Shah Jahan had the Gardens of Shalimar constructed to serve as a place of refreshment and amusement for the royal family. It was the desire of the Emperor that the tents which invariably were provided for his ladies on any excursions, but which took up a large space, be avoided. Therefore, he desired adequate shelter for the royal family and entourage; but the emphasis was to be on the gardens, to make a beautiful paradise, where the royal family could relax amid all imaginable pleasures.

The project was the combined work of Mulla Ala-ul-Mulk and Ali Mardan Khan, a brilliant canal engineer. It was completed in one year, five months,



The pavilions at Shalimar were stripped of much of their marble and agate work by the Sikhs, to decorate the Ram Bagh and the Golden Temple, and many of the pavilions are restored in brick and plaster. In spite of this, their pastoral beauty in the setting of the gardens can still be felt.



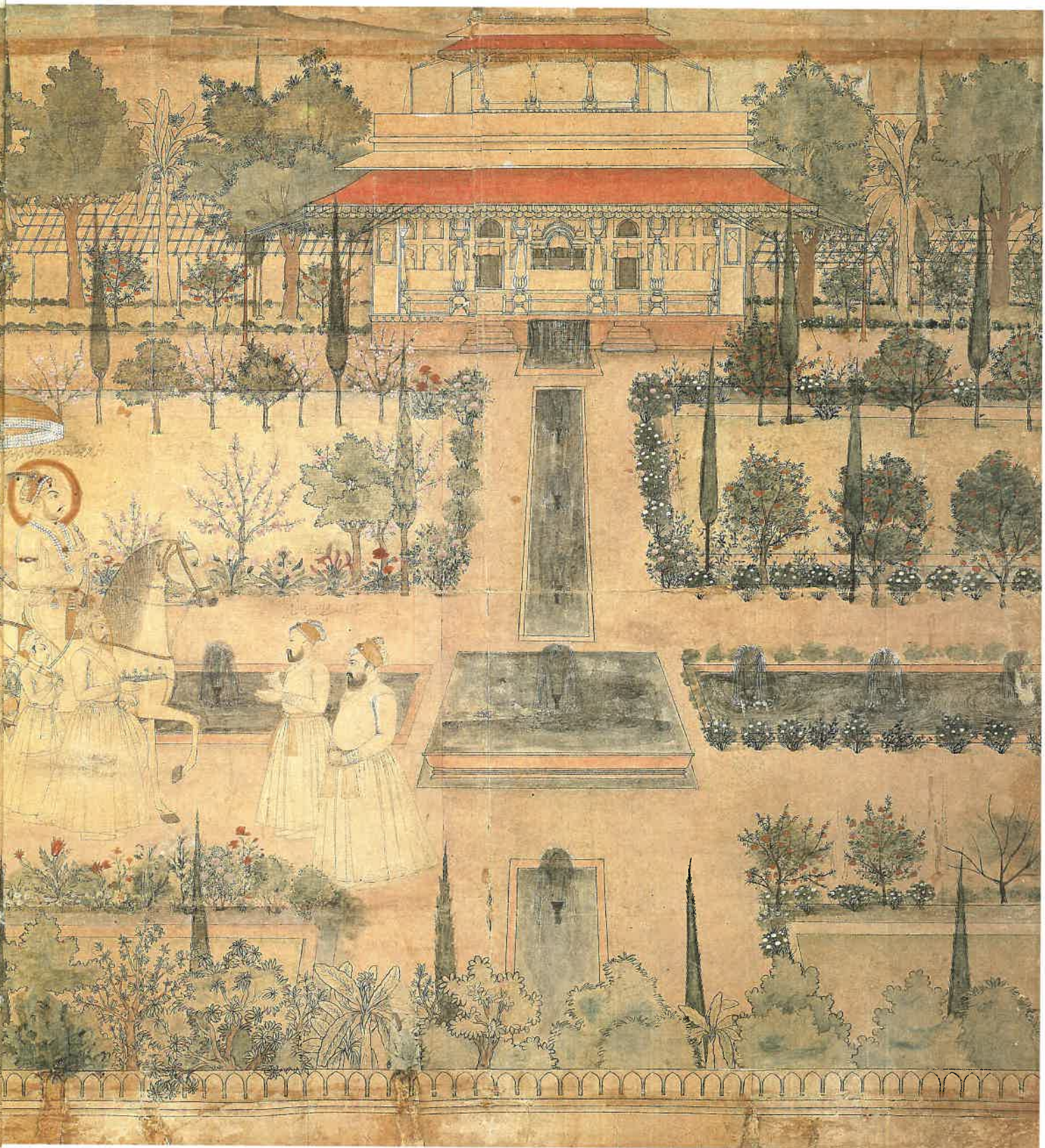




Muhammad Shah in a Garden;
Mughal painting, c.1730.

Muhammad Shah was a man committed to a life of leisure, and it is fitting that he would choose a garden as the embodiment of pleasure. This garden has a tremendous sense of idyllic peace and quiet within, undisturbed by the appearance of the imperial army outside the wall.









A Blue Iris Plant with a Butterfly
Alighting; *Mughal painting*,
c. 1635.

and four days. And, on a date carefully selected as auspicious, the Emperor lifted his eyes to a miracle.

What met Shah Jahan's gaze was a fantastic display of technological wizardry and aesthetic marvel. Before him lay 80 acres of exquisite gardens and waterways, enclosed in a high wall of red sandstone and white marble inlay. The garden rose in three terraces, each one perhaps twelve or fifteen feet above the previous, divided down the centre by the Shah Nahar, or Royal Canal — Ali Mardan Khan's masterwork of engineering. Brought in from Madhupur, the canal's water flows down through the three terraces, a drop of some forty feet, but the water level on each terrace is maintained at precisely the desired height; even more amazingly, the entire system was so fluid and sensitive that when additional water was let in at the top, all four hundred and fifty fountains in Shalimar began flowing at once. The Emperor's delight can only be imagined. The gardens were a glorious green tapestry of walks and promenades, flowering bushes, fruit trees, pools and fountains, pavilions of white marble and red sandstone, summerhouses of agate, all protected by the high wall with its marble inlay and five tall towers. After the heat and dust of the long trip to the site, the contrast between the burning Punjab plain outside and the cool green beauty of the new royal pleasure grounds must have been staggering to the senses.

The entrance to Shalimar was on the first level, which, with the second level, was known as the Faiz Bakhsh, meaning 'bountiful'. From the first level the raised brick walkways, or *khayabans*, lead upward to the next levels. The Faiz Bakhsh is planted with endless flowering plants and bushes, and avenues of magnificent fruit trees of every kind: mangoes, peaches, apricots, pears, almonds, pomegranates, quince, mulberries, lemons, and oranges.

The second level floats in the heavy perfume of the roses that bloom here in tremendous numbers. The walkways and *khayabans* here are shady avenues of cypress, poplar, and plane trees, and lead off to shaded marble pavilions or reflecting pools. In the centre of this terrace the Royal Canal empties into an enormous marble basin, and from this basin more than a hundred water jets throw up a glittering mist that cools the air wonderfully. This middle level, although much smaller than the other two, may be the most spectacular; the beauty of this magnificent main reservoir creates the illusion of great space.

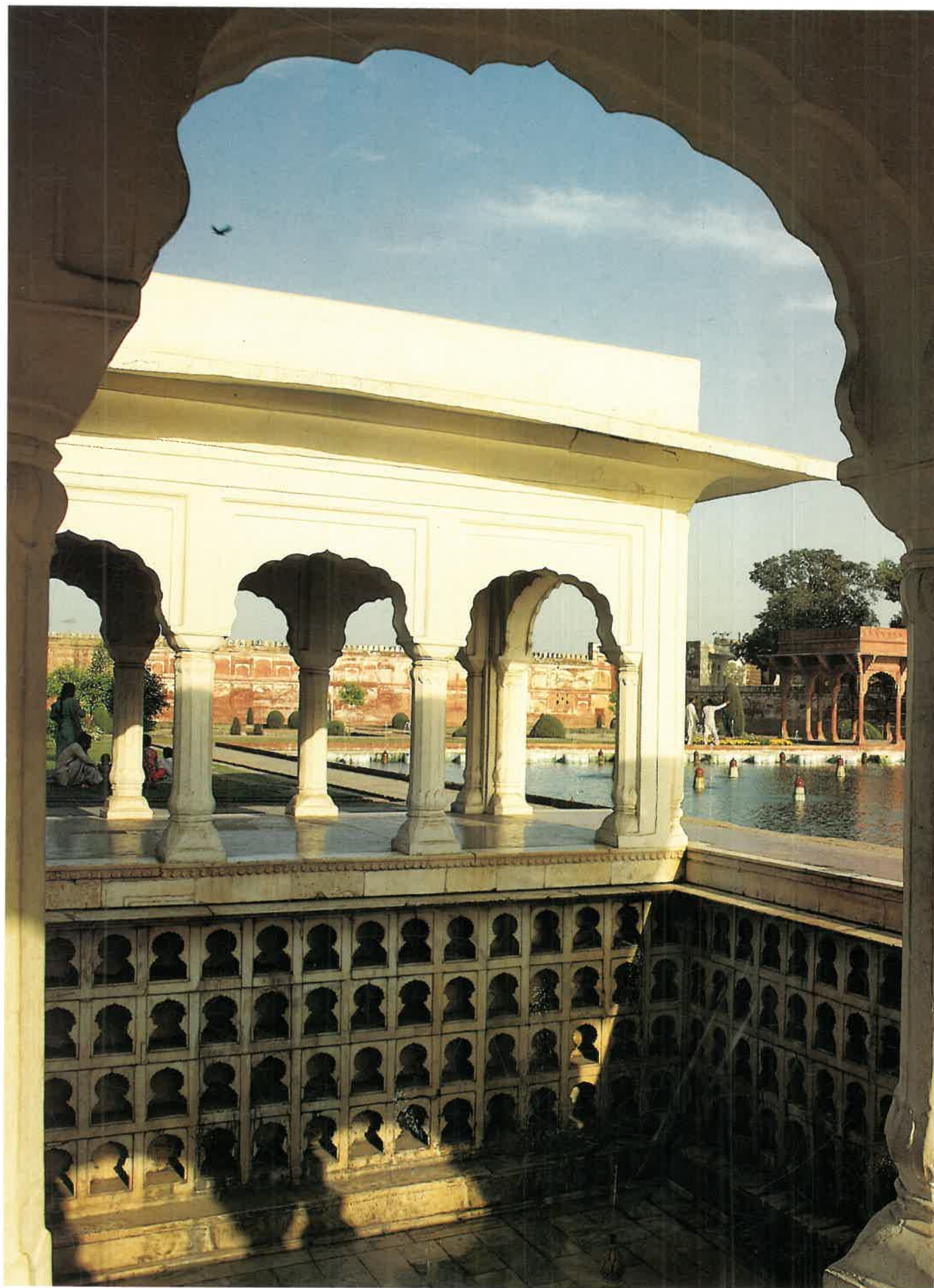
The third level was known as the Farah Bakhsh, meaning 'pleasure-giving'. Only the most trusted courtiers were allowed to accompany the royal family to Shalimar, but even those most privileged beings were forbidden to ascend to this highest terrace level. The most one could do was to cast a cautious but eager glance up to the carved marble screens which set this section off from the other two, and to avoid carefully the warning glance in response from the frowning eunuch guard on the marble steps.



The name 'Shalimar' has been variously interpreted as 'abode of bliss' or 'light of the moon.' Now the most commonly heard translation seems to have captured the spirit of the place more than the others: 'House of Joy.' To this day, Shalimar is synonymous with 'garden,' which, as the Emperor Babur observed, 'is the finest of human pleasures.'

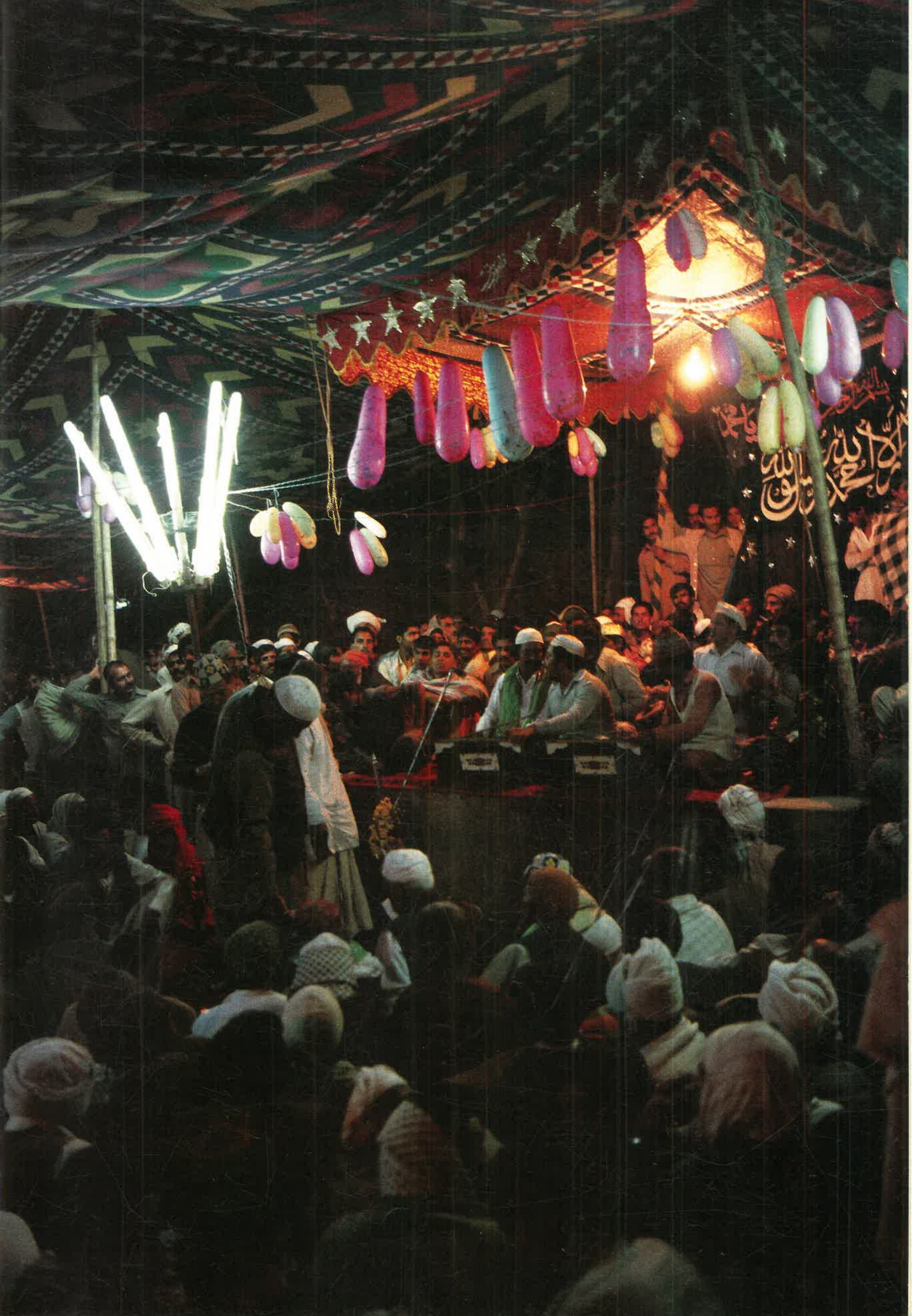
Only flowers blossomed on the third level, a profusion of fragrant flowers of every imaginable variety — roses, irises, cyclamen, crown imperials, lilies, pinks, narcissus, jasmine, lilacs, and lotus. But this was not the reason for keeping the terrace so tightly guarded. One need not employ an army of eunuchs to preserve a jasmine bud or a velvety rose. The security here protected the emperor's precious human flowers: his royal *harem*. It was here that the ladies of the *harem* made their private home when accompanying the emperor to his royal hideaway. Here they enjoyed complete female seclusion, as only female musicians, cooks, dancers and handmaidens performed for them and attended to their every need.

The emperor also made his residence on this level. When he was there without his wives, he was able to entertain guests in this spectacular white marble pillared pavilion, open on all sides and cooled by a string of fountains across the front. From here he could gaze down to the next level, to the fountains and marble pools, and the splashing, sparkling water that is the central theme in Shalimar. From a marble reservoir in the centre of the emperor's terrace, a waterfall spills through a carved screen and into a pond below over inclined planes of white marble called *chadars*, which are carved into myriad patterns of delicate curves, chutes, ripples and scallops, designed to break up the flowing water into spray to cool the air and musical noise to please the ear; thus their name, which means 'shawl'. From that pool the water spills again over another *chadar* into another pool at the bottom of the garden. Behind the cascading water were niches in the marble wall, known as *chini-khanas*, which held golden vases of fresh flowers during the day.





*One of the loveliest festivals is the
Mela Chiragon, or Festival
of Lamps, held in Shalimar on the
last Saturday in March and the
following Sunday. Houses and
pavilions are outlined with glittering
coloured lights, echoing
the times when Shalimar
would be illuminated with coloured
paper lanterns and scented
candles in niches behind waterfalls,
and fireworks would light
up the night sky.*



The Night of Shab-barat; *Mughal painting, c.1735-40. Once again, the gardens are alight. The Mughal Emperors loved lights and later, fireworks. While her lady-in-waiting holds a dish with more fireworks in it, this lady is letting off her golden fireworks over the water, perhaps to see the reflections in the shimmering tank below.*

At night, the vases in the *chini-khanas* were replaced with scented beeswax candles, which glittered fantastically through the falling water. While the emperor dined with his guests in the open pavilion, the Gardens of Shalimar would be illuminated with thousands of coloured lamps — glowing through the foliage of the orange and mango trees, glittering like stars in the fountain spray; reflecting on the roofs of the marble pavilions; the pools, the lakes, the channels, all shimmering with liquid colour. After dinner, the royal party would turn in their seats to watch the elaborate fireworks display over the gardens.

The magic that existed in Shalimar then remains today. The passing centuries have done nothing to dispel the atmosphere of peace and happiness that still floods through this green oasis. A traveller to Shalimar once remarked, 'outside all is glare and dust; within all is green foliage, white marble, cool reservoir, and rippling cascade'. Shalimar means 'House of Joy', and within its walls the spell remains, as potent a drug now as it was years ago, when Shalimar moved royal princesses to tears and poetry. Zeb-un-Nisa, the daughter of Aurangzeb and a talented poet, spent as much time as possible at Shalimar. Surrounded by the other princesses and her own handmaids, this dreamy, intense artist wandered along the *khayabans*, finding endless inspiration in the beauty around her. Once, seated by the waterfall, among her light-hearted, chattering companions, she startled — and moved — them all with this mystical piece:

'Oh waterfall! For whose sake art thou weeping?
In whose sorrowful recollection hast thou wrinkled thy brows?
What pain was it that impelled thee, like myself, the whole night,
To strike thy head against stone and to shed tears?'





Light of the World

Standing alone in its own garden, apart from other buildings, is the tomb of Nur Jahan, the extraordinary wife and queen of the Emperor Jahangir. In spite of the fact that this woman once wielded as much power as any emperor, very little is known about her. She dwelt in the secrecy and seclusion of the Mughal *harem*, and her history, like so much of the history of Mughal women, has come to us only as fragments.

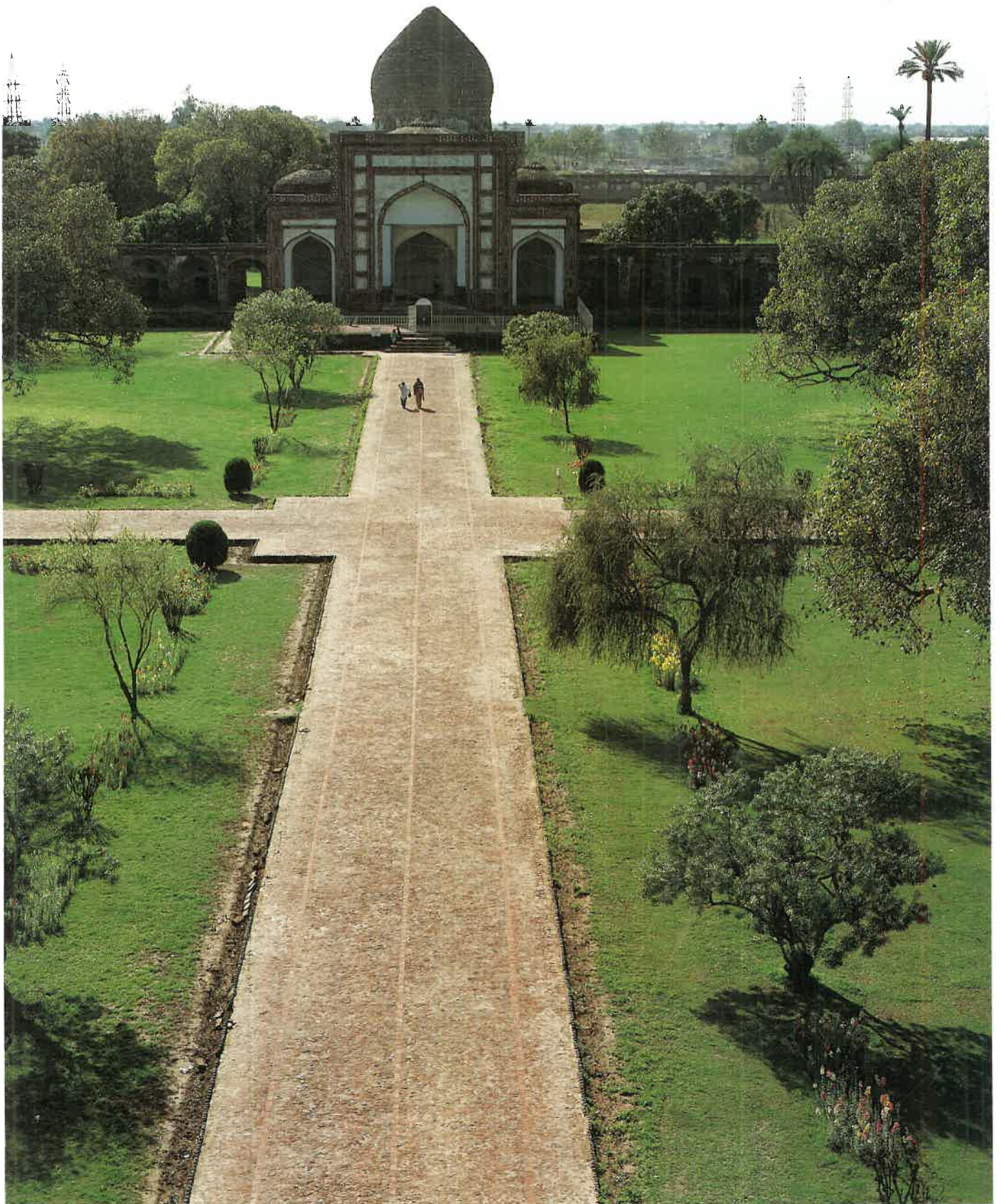
But Nur Jahan achieved a prominence that few women knew. Some parts of her life have been woven into the folklore of the country. From her birth, abandoned in the desert to die, to her rise to the throne as one of the most powerful women and rulers of her time, she is indeed the stuff of legends. She was, by all accounts, both beautiful and extremely intelligent, possessed of great character and talent. As a young woman, she captivated the Mughal Prince Salim, who later as the Emperor Jahangir would marry her and give her the title Nur Mahal, or Light of the Palace; later, as her importance to him and to the kingdom increased, she became known as Nur Jahan — Light of the World.

Nur Jahan was apparently an able administrator. According to record, it was Jahangir who was indulgent and capricious, and Nur Jahan who kept her capable hands on the reins of government. But the other, less well-known aspects of her life are equally intriguing. An accomplished painter and poet, she also designed fabrics, clothing, and jewellery in her own style, in addition to designing first Jahangir's tomb and later her own. She was a keen hunter and would shoot tigers from a closed howdah on an elephant. Her judgement was remarkable for its fairness, and she was praised and revered for her beauty, her wisdom, and her levelheaded influence over Jahangir and his counsellors: Jahangir wrote of her, 'Before I married her, I never knew what marriage really meant.'

Still, some facets of Nur Jahan are lost to us. Despite her fame, there are no actual portraits of the Empress. Protected by Jahangir's sense of honour and the fierce rules of the royal *harem*, she was seen only by a select circle. There are likenesses of Nur Jahan in existence, but they were probably painted from descriptions, since no artist would have been allowed to set eyes on the queen.

It seems strange that so little would remain of this amazing woman. At a time when women for the most part were unseen and unheard, Nur Jahan stands out. It is difficult to reconcile so a vibrant a personality with such obscurity. But perhaps it is appropriate that Nur Jahan has left a legacy as remote and compelling as she was. Sir Thomas Roe, England's first official ambassador to India, wrote many descriptive accounts of his travels to the Mughal Court. He wrote of Nur Jahan: '... all justice or care of anything or publique affayres either sleepes or depends on her, who is more unaccessible than any godesse or mystery of heathen impietye ...'

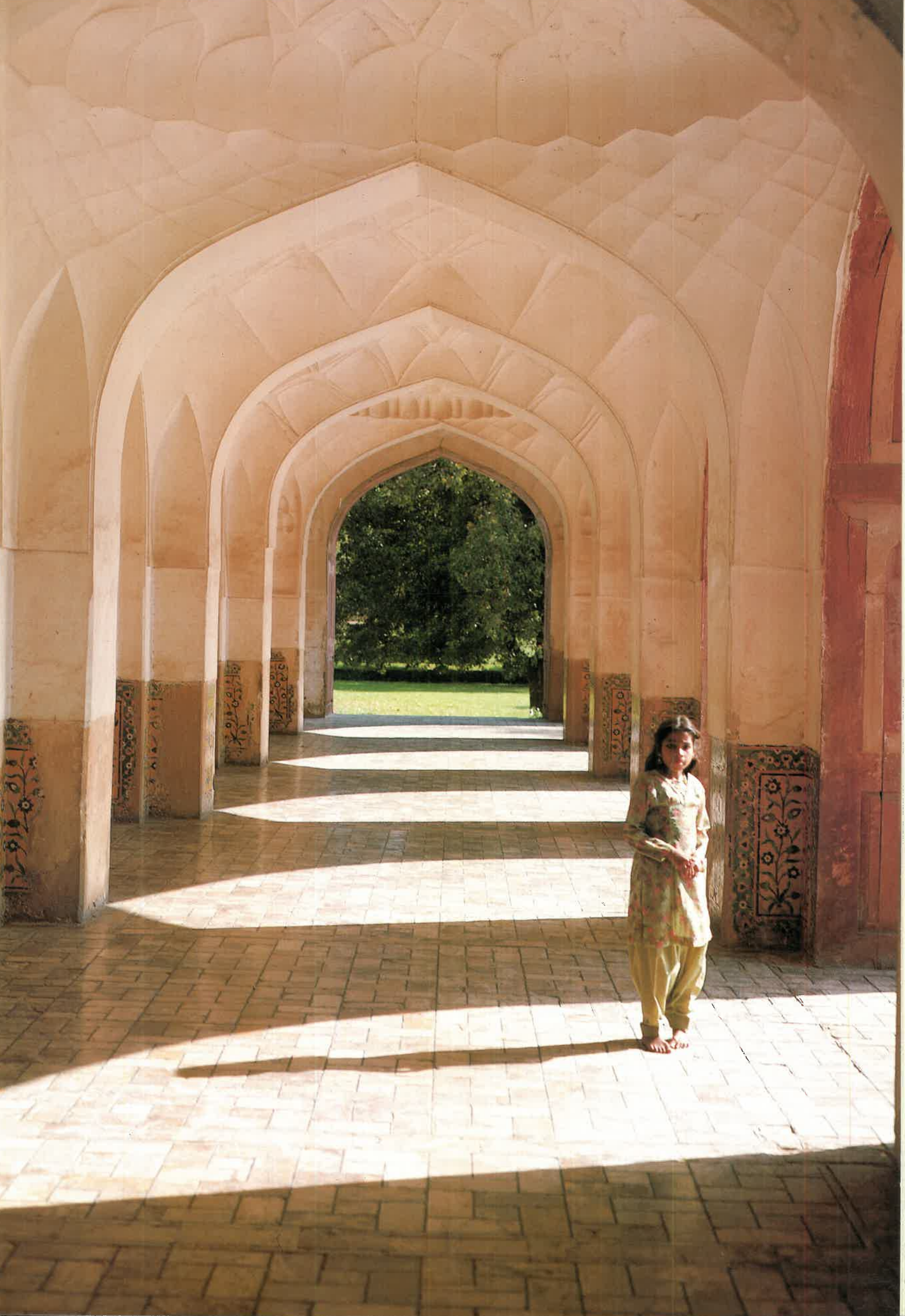
Overleaf: *The tomb of Asif Jah, brother of Nur Jahan, and the tomb of Jahangir, both on the grounds of the Dilkusha gardens.*

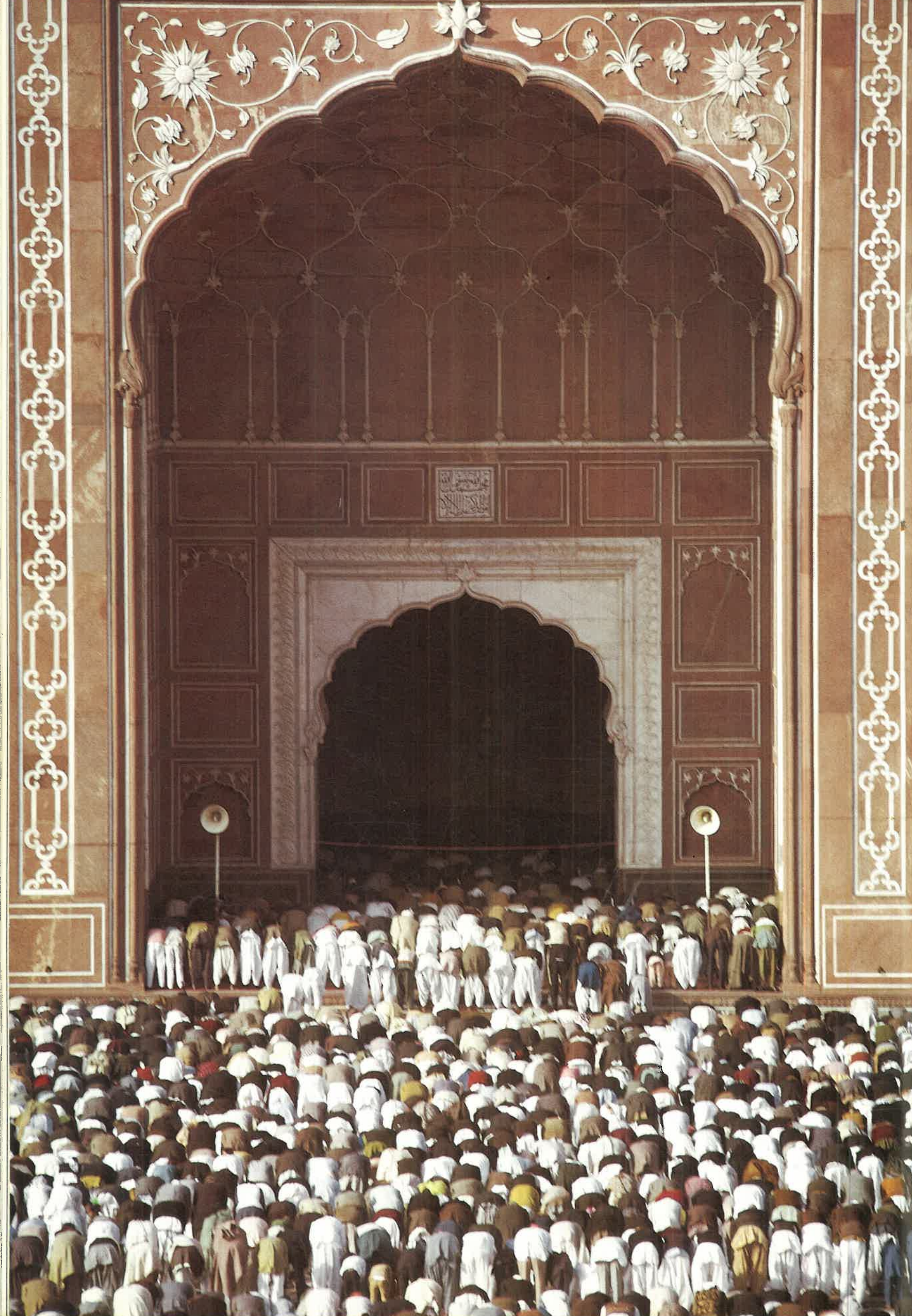




The entrance pavilion and gate to the tomb of Jahangir. When Jahangir died in Kashmir, Nur Jahan designed and had built his magnificent tomb in her garden, according to his last wishes.







The Day of 'Id

Ramadan comes once a year. It is the month of fasting and meditation. This is a period of cleansing, purifying one's thoughts, reflecting on God's will, and distributing *zakat* (alms) to the poor. Offices are in half-day session during this month, as are schools; also, much to the dismay of non-Muslim visitors, all the restaurants are closed during the day.

Before dawn, each day of Ramadan, faqirs wander the neighbourhoods waking everyone with the rattle of their canes on gates and fences. Families rise in the darkness, and eat a light meal to get ready for the hours of daylight when they will not be able to eat or drink. As the *azaan* (call to prayer) is heard all over the city, the fast begins. No one will eat, smoke or indulge in sexual activities until the evening *azaan* is heard, and the fast is broken.

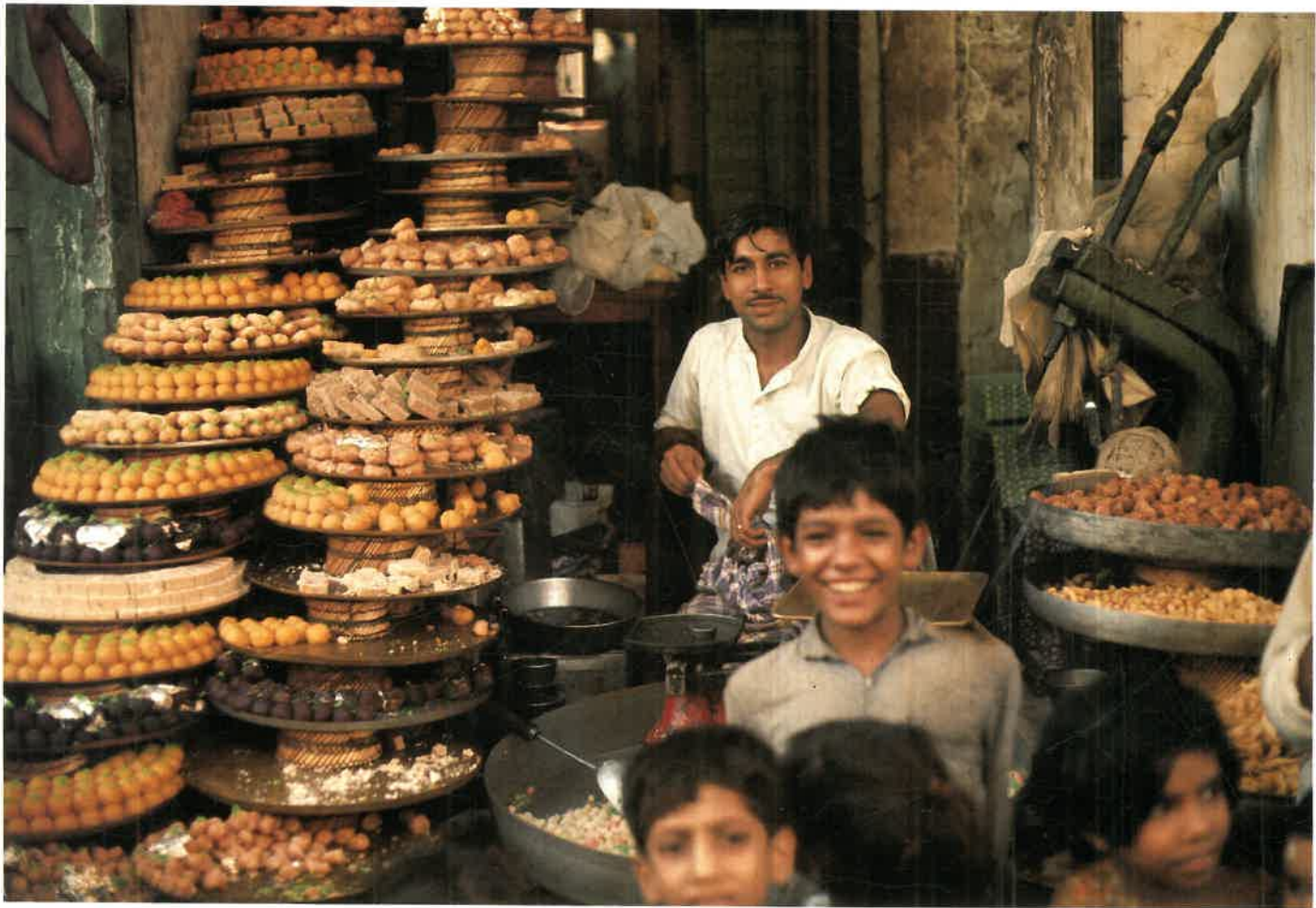
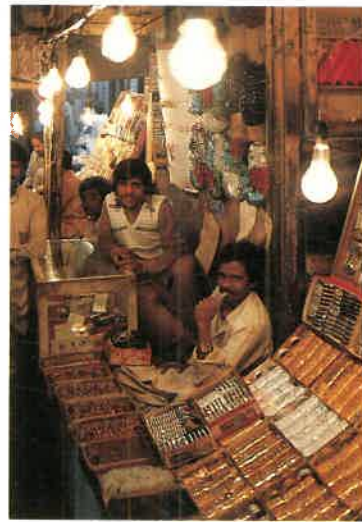
During the day, families go about their business, say their prayers and, if it is a hot summer month, take naps until it is time to break the fast with *iftari*, the evening meal. This is usually an elaborate and festive affair with many courses, and often relatives and friends drop in and stay as guests. As 'Id — the joyous last day of Ramadan — draws nearer, friends get together and tailors are busy night and day running up new outfits for everyone. On the last few evenings, everyone goes up on the rooftops to try to sight the new moon, which heralds 'Id. The new moon *must* be seen with the naked eye, or 'Id cannot follow! The evenings find the bazaars thronged with people; the toy sellers and the bangle merchants do a brisk trade. The lane of the bangle sellers in the Old City is vibrant with colour and the tinkling of glass against glass. Each shop has hundreds of tiers of hand-blown glass bangles of every conceivable design: coloured glass, faceted glass, dipped in gold, brushed with silver. The light and colours stun the eye. Even the humblest family can afford these brilliant 'jewels', since glass bangles cost only a few cents each.

*Worshippers crowd into the main
portal in the courtyard of the
Badshahi Masjid.*



*In the festive atmosphere of 'Id,
balloon vendors push their wildly
decorated wares through the crush of
hectic holiday shopping.*

Bundles and racks of bangle bracelets are displayed everywhere, irresistible in their jewel-like colours and gleaming metallic finishes; elsewhere, sellers of sweetmeats prepare their most enticing displays of candies and sweets to tempt the passing eye.





Shopkeepers vie with each other to get the ladies' attention, and by dusk everyone goes home laden with wonderful parcels.

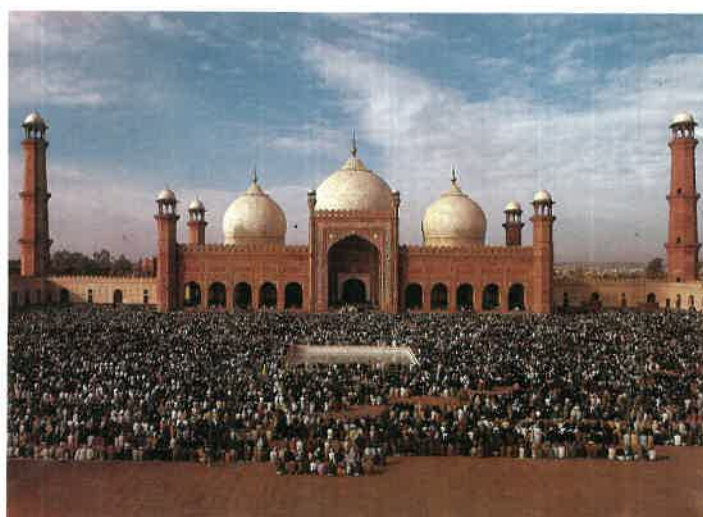
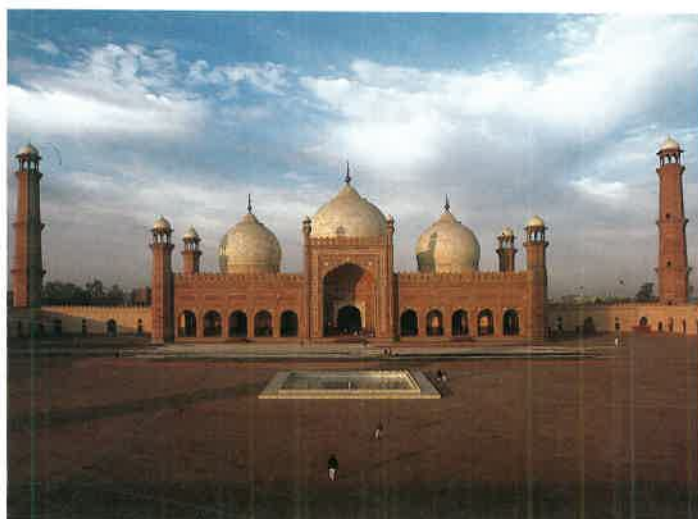
The last day of Ramadan's activities begin, like the twenty-nine days that precede it, with prayers. But this special last day also begins with preparations for 'Id. This festival at the end of the month of fasting symbolises a kind of spiritual rebirth. It is anticipated with great joy, particularly by the children of each household. 'Id means new clothes and gifts, and 'idi is pocket money to buy treats with for weeks afterwards.

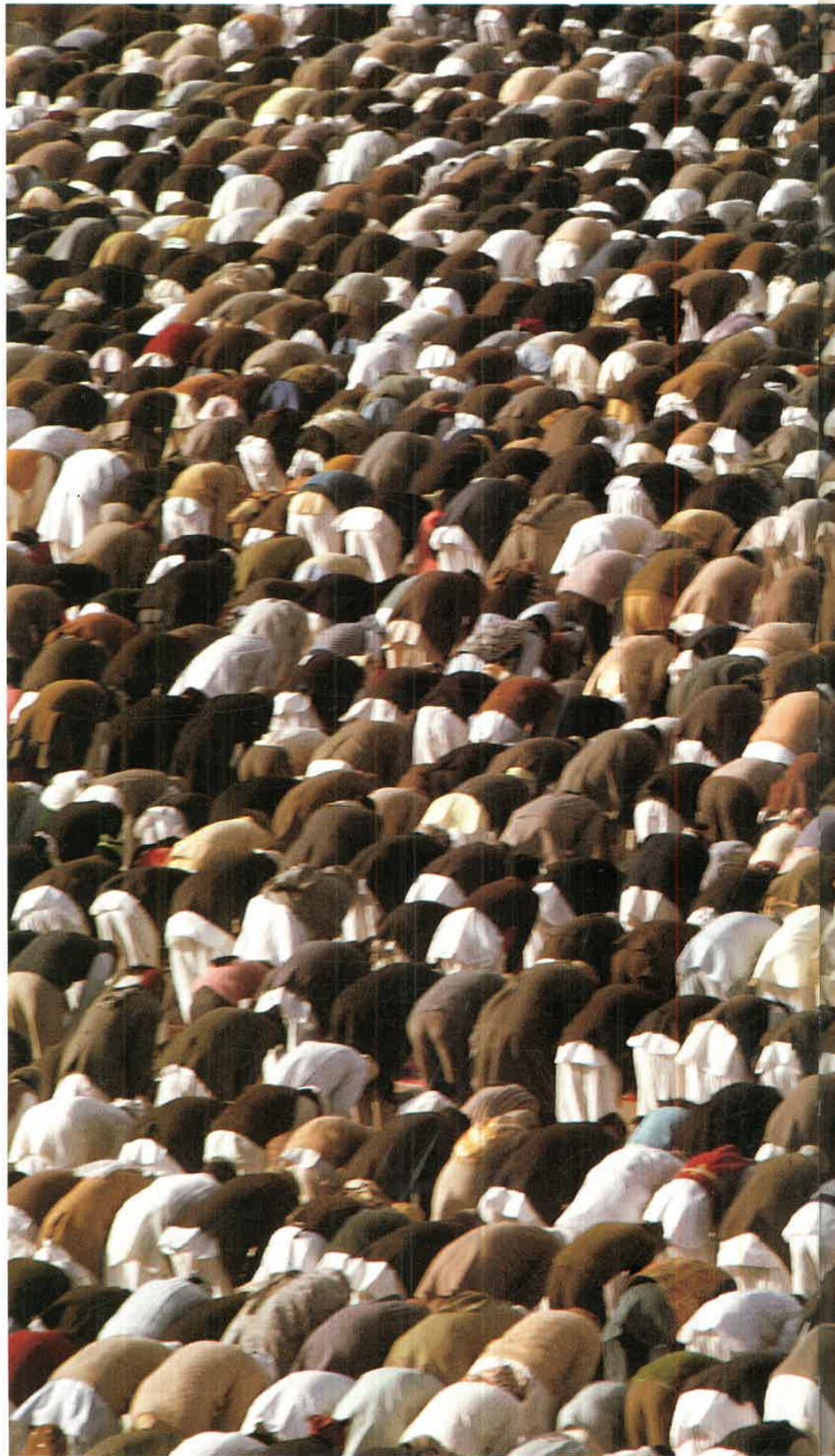
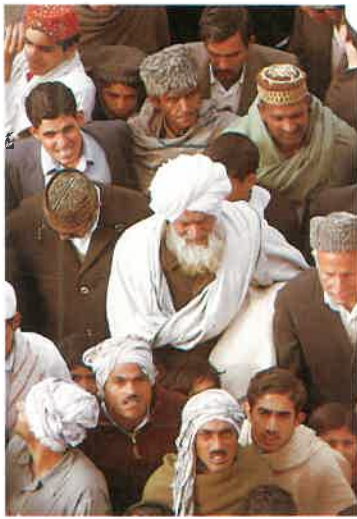
'Id lay dawns. The family rises and everyone, glorious in their beautiful new clothes, goes off to the Badshahi Masjid for prayers. At this 'Id gah, there are thousands and thousands of people, so many that they fill even the enormous courtyard of the Badshahi Mosque; everyone excited and elated, brilliant in their finery, with *attar* perfuming their bodies and black *kajal* lining their eyes. There is laughter and the sound of voices everywhere, and then at the muezzin's melodious chant of 'Allahu Akbar', a sudden quiet descends on the crowd. Everyone stands in rows one behind the other and the prayer begins. Allah is praised, thanks are given for His many blessings and a new day begins.

When the prayer ends, everyone turns to embrace one another, family, friends, neighbours. It is a moment of great, spontaneous warmth and joy, a time to celebrate the end of the fast, the new year, and the blessings of Allah. Before returning home, the men and children stop and purchase fresh sweetmeats from the stalls, and return to the women laden with goodies. The women meanwhile have said their prayers, dressed in new clothes and prepared the milky vermicelli pudding that is the traditional start of the feast. The children run about extorting 'idi from everyone in reach, and relatives and friends begin the joyous rounds of visits to each others' houses, bringing presents and exchanging affectionate embraces.

During this celebration, none of the traditions of Ramadan are forgotten. Ramadan is a time to feed the poor. Now, in the midst of this joyful festival of food and gifts, the poor come around to every door in the Old City; no one is turned away without money or food, or both.

*The Day of 'Id arrives, and the
Badshahi Masjid fills
with the devout. On a religious
festival like this, the crowd
of worshippers dwarfs even the
huge courtyard of this mosque.*









The Marriage

Preparations for marriage begin very early in a traditional Muslim household. A mother begins discussing this rite of passage with her daughter even before puberty. A young girl who may still prefer playing with her siblings and toys will begin working on her wedding dowry, now an important issue in her life. She is taught embroidery and fine stitching to embellish her household linens, which are assembled, piece by piece, until the wedding day. Her mother, aunts, older sisters and cousins all become involved in the acquiring of small treasures for the hope chest, so that when the time comes the new bride will have the basic equipment to start her new household. The dowry will be completed with furniture, fine apparel and ornaments of silver and gold closer to the occasion, but the process of assembling the collection takes years. Young men are instructed by uncles and fathers about their roles as husbands and heads of households. The attitudes and expectations of these future husbands and wives are formed by all they hear and observe in the various complex relationships of their own extended families.

Although modern Pakistan is co-educational, segregation of the sexes is still favoured and quite widely practised. In the more orthodox families, young men and women do not meet openly; any communication is by letter or telephone — and, of course, the all-too-fleeting conversations at festivals, family weddings or other ceremonies. Hopeful and/or worried parents and hawk-eyed relatives keep a vigilant watch on these occasions, carefully noting any signs of a romantic tryst or a new flirtation.

The women of a family always closely observe the young ladies they meet as prospective brides for sons, brothers, and cousins, and meetings are arranged by carefully contrived social events between the two families. The family knows the basic needs of their son, as well as his strengths and weaknesses, and they try to compile a 'short list' of potential fiancées who might complement the young man. Eventually, they take the eligible young man to tea at the desirable young girl's house where he can see her, displayed to her best advantage, in her own environment. If the initial glimpse is pleasing to both, the young man pursues the idea. At last, the young people meet and talk, and a formal courtship ensues.

When the young man declares his wish to marry a particular girl, his family goes to visit her family with a formal proposal. (In the earlier days, these marriages were arranged years before the young people were of age. They grew up accustomed to the idea of their predestined mates, and because there was no question, adjusted well to the union.) The subtleties of blood, economics, loyalty, and the desires of the young people involved are all factors in the ultimate decision. This process of arranging a marriage is a monumental task. There is a monstrous labyrinth of issues to consider, so many nuances, so many politics, so many obstacles of old feuds, offended





Countless hours are devoted to the creation of the bride's wedding clothes. The elaborate embroidery on every garment is often so thick and heavily worked that the material appears stiff and almost sculpted.

pride, money, and distance. It is a delicate and complicated affair, and one that would tax the mind of a master tactician.

Once the proposal is accepted, preparations for the marriage begin in earnest. The households erupt in hectic, jubilant activity. Clothes are bought and made. Yards of silks and satins are examined and embroidered, and the house is made ready to welcome guests. Provisions are bought and stored, and cooks are retained to feed the assembled guests. Relatives and friends come from near and far, and often neighbouring houses are borrowed to accommodate the overflow. Members of the family divide the numerous tasks. The person in charge of the kitchen must make sure that all who come are fed.

The house is alive with voices, with noise, with movement. Women laugh and talk, cook and serve an apparently endless supply of food, and continue arranging the last minute details of the bride's dowry and gifts. Miles of lace and gold and silver borders are tacked on veils, and the clothes are assembled in shimmering sets, bound together and decorated. Each item is examined and the taste of the giver admired or criticised; all the while reminiscences and stories abound. While the bride's family is busy with her dowry and the traditional presents for the bridegroom — his turban, his wedding clothes, his shoes and shirt — the bridegroom's family is putting the finishing touches on the bride's gifts. The bride always wears the clothes sent to her by her groom's family. These garments are usually gold or red (the colours symbolising joy and fertility), and made from rich brocades and tissues stiff with heavy embroidery. Along with all this finery there are ornaments made of gold, studded with gems. So many glittering objects: earrings, rings, bangles, necklaces, gold nose rings, head ornaments and tinkling anklets. There are trays full of *attar* of roses and French perfumes, cosmetics; other trays contain dried fruits and sugar, and sweetmeats.

The most important trays contain beautifully decorated plates of henna for the bride's hands and feet, and flower jewellery. The bridegroom's family carry these trays and arrive for the henna ceremony, the *mehndi*, a few days before the wedding. It is a joyous procession, accompanied by singing musicians and the loud beat of the *dholki* (drum). The bride's family receives this *barat* (wedding procession) with garlands of flowers and showers of rice. Each family vies for attention, and there is singing, banter and merriment.

In the midst of this rowdy and festive company is the bride, completely veiled and dressed in yellow. She will remain veiled in front of all but her family now until the wedding ceremony; the next outsider to see her face will be her husband, when he lifts her veil at their wedding. The bridegroom's family bedeck her with the flower jewellery, fill her lap with fruits, sweeten her mouth with crystallised sugar and apply henna to the palms of her hands in elaborate and beautiful designs. Each ceremony is accompanied by a song, and when the family elders have all wished her well



Bearing trays laden with gifts,
sweets, and flowers, the
bridegroom's family arrives at the
home of the bride for the
mehndi, or henna ceremony.

and put money at her feet (this is distributed to the poor afterwards), people fall to gossiping and enjoying the festive meal provided by the girl's family.

The following day, the bride's family arrives at the groom's house with his wedding presents and the entire ceremony is repeated, this time with the bridegroom seated in the middle. Friends and relatives put sandal paste on his forehead and feed him *paan* (betel leaf) with crystallised sugar, joking and asking for bribes to stop some of the chicanery. Bigger and bigger sweets are stuffed into the groom's mouth until he is 'rescued' by an uncle, offering rupees for mercy. The children steal his shoes and again he must buy them back. It is a time of revelry and abandon and great enjoyment. After the meal the company, exhausted but happy, relaxes on the white sheets and cushions spread over the carpets and listens to musicians sing ballads of love.

The day of the wedding arrives at last. The bridegroom attires himself in his *shervani*, his long brocaded coat with the high collar. When he is dressed, his turban is folded on by an older brother or uncle, and the family assembles for the *sehra bundi*, the laying on of the flower headdress all bridegrooms wear. The *sehra* is beautiful, a heavy curtain of flowers, usually red roses, falling from his turban almost to the floor, and covering his face.

A poem — specially composed for the occasion — is read, blessings are echoed and seven happily married males touch the *sehra* to their heads to add luck to the union. The *sehra* is tied on over the turban, and his attendants help the bridegroom into the saddle of a white horse, ornately bedecked for the wedding, or into a flower-covered car. The party pours into the street, and the groom's family, friends and relatives, on foot, form a brilliant entourage around him and his handsome mount. With the sounding of the *shehnai*, the sinuous flute reminiscent of a wedding march, the wedding party sets off for the bride's house.

The bride has been getting ready for hours. Her preparation for her wedding is traditional; regardless of how attached she may have become to modern cosmetics, this ceremony is performed with traditional mixtures from centuries-old formulae. For several days before the wedding she has been bathed with *ubtan*, a fragrant paste made of sandalwood, orange peel, lentil flour and milk. Her hair has been dried with the smoke of incense and braided with jasmine, and her eyes lined with antimony. Intricate patterns have been painted on her hands and feet with henna. Her wrists have bangles of glass and gold, and the rich brocades of her garments are reflected in yet more ornaments. Her sisters and cousins are almost as brilliantly garbed; in fact, some of the married ones may be wearing their own wedding dresses. Their garments are all the colours of the rainbow, and the embroidery and lace and jewellery combined with heady *attar* fragrances stun the spectator. There are hundreds of women and children milling around, and when there is a lull in the conversation, the singers can be heard singing joyous songs and beating time on the drum.



The marriage party arrives at the bride's house, and the bride's people receive them with welcoming songs, shouts and garlands of flowers. The bridegroom is blocked by the bride's sisters, again pretending to demand 'ransom', but finally the bridegroom, his parents, elders and brothers are led to the platform where the ceremony will be held. This is also elaborately decorated with flowers, just as each stage of the wedding ceremony has been, and on the carpeted platform is the family *maulvi*, or religious elder. As he begins reciting verses from the Quran there is a hush, and a rustle as the assembled company covers their heads — a sign of respect for the Holy Book. Then all present bow their heads, wishing peace and prosperity for the couple and their families.



Henna, mixed into a paste, is used to trace traditional designs on the hands and feet of the bride, and then left to dry. Later, the bride will wash off the dry powder, leaving the intense deep-red patterns dyed on her skin.





When the bridegroom affirms his wedding vows, his three witnesses leave and go ask the bride whether she agrees to the marriage. Once her agreement has been obtained, she is brought to the decorated dais by her family for the *arsi musaf* — the ceremony of unveiling the bride.

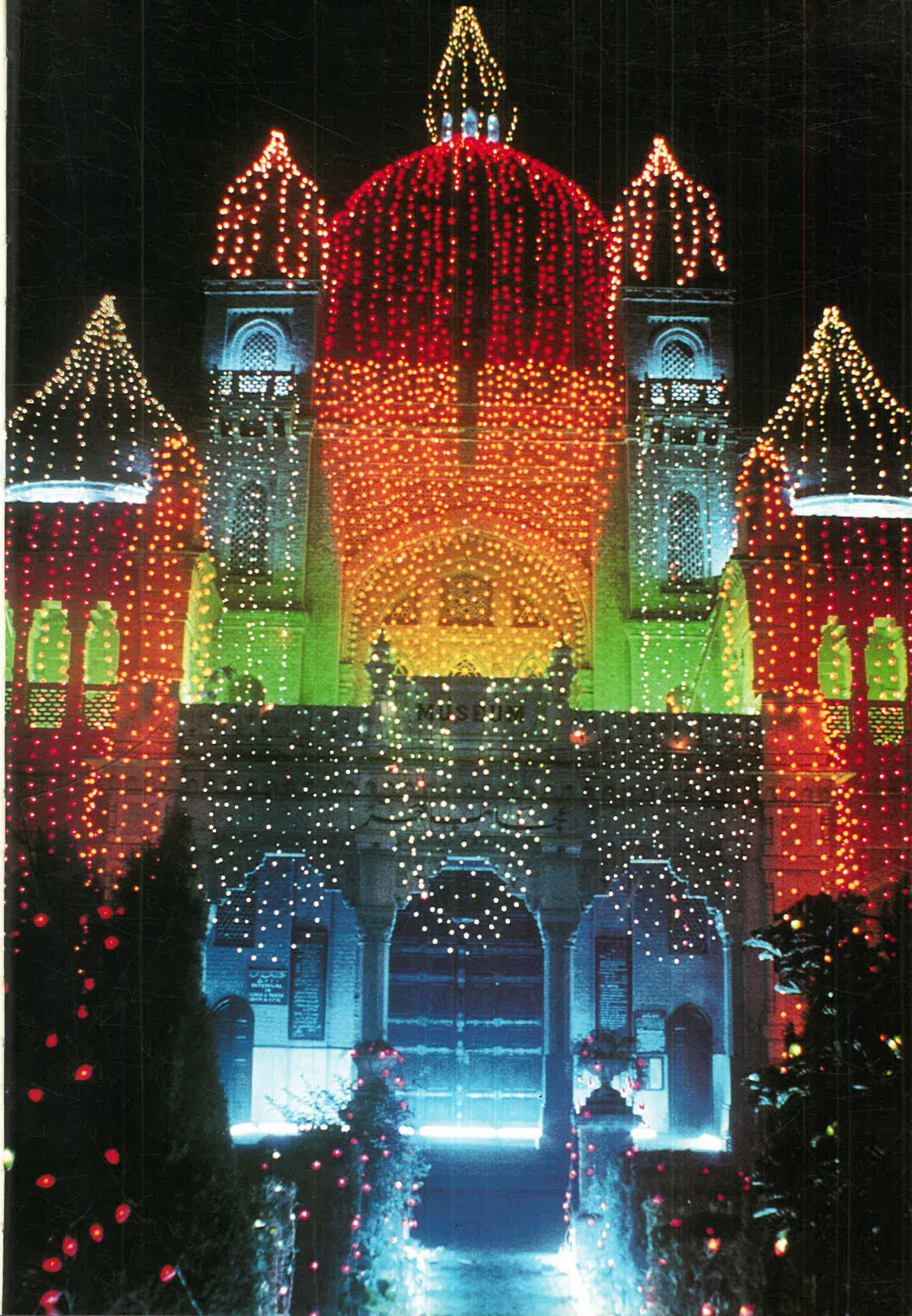
There is always excitement and great emotion during the *arsi musaf*, a particularly touching and moving moment in the ceremony. The couple are seated opposite each other, and a copy of the Quran and a mirror are placed between them. Over the heads of the couple, the family holds a beautiful veil, which nearly covers them. Within its folds, the bridegroom recites a verse from the Quran, in which he wishes her well and promises to do his best in their life together. He looks at her for the first time in the mirror placed between them, and then lifts her veil. The bride raises her downcast dark eyes, soft with tears, and they gaze at each other. Brides usually cry; in earlier times, she may have been frightened of this first encounter with a man she had never seen before. Nowadays, like most brides, it is more often the emotion of the moment that brings tears to her eyes.



After a moment, the veil held by the family is lifted, and the bride may face the assembled party. In the past, as with her husband, this was often the first time that the bride and her new in-laws could get a good look at each other. With the veil raised, the ceremony is over, wedding guests and family members file past the couple to offer their congratulations and good wishes.

An elaborate feast is served, and then the bride's family bids farewell to the bride. This *ruksati* (leave taking) is usually said; it is the end of childhood and of her life in her parents' home. The parents worry about their daughter's adjustment, and the bride is probably filled with trepidation on embarking on a relationship so uncharted, so filled with unknowns. She is swept quickly into her new life, however, as the bridegroom's party now sets off for home, where there is yet another ceremony to welcome the bride. Finally, that evening there is peace and time to be alone for the couple. The following day there is still another feast, the *valima*, involving the family, and then — at last — the festivities cease, and the young couple, for better or worse, begin their life together.

As in any rite of passage, there are moments of private emotion.





The Potters' Story

There are three potters' villages around Lahore. The villages have been known through the ages for their skill with clay. Everything is made by hand. The clay around these villages is rich and pliable, and the skill of moulding it has been passed down from father to son for uncounted generations. Even those potters who move away from their villages to pursue their craft in the city continue to use this clay, travelling to the villages and bringing the wonderful earth of their homes back with them, to their shops in the city's markets and bazaars.

Baba Allah Ditta lives and works in Lahore, in the shadow of the city's ancient wall, and he is teaching his son Nazir to be a master potter like him. Allah Ditta explains that craftsmen use the strength and sensitivity in their fingers and hands to express emotions, intuitions, humour, and fantasy, all the while kneading the clay into a smooth wet ball and letting it grow into a shape of its own under their touch.

Nazir finds working the clay very satisfying. It delights and pleases him to mould and work this wet ball into a form and transform it into an object that is well made and pleasing to an eye which falls upon it. Nazir has grown up watching his Baba make all sorts of pots and vessels on his simple stone wheel, shaping the clay with his hands as he spins the wheel with his feet.

The kilns are behind his home. They are made of red brick and seem to be perpetually belching smoke. Nazir's mother and sisters paint the pottery in a small workshop, lined inside with shelves. Here, they keep all of the glazes and brushes they use for the pottery decoration. His sisters keep a constant watch for discarded coffee tins or milk tins; these are great finds, because the mixtures and colours they concoct keep better in these containers.

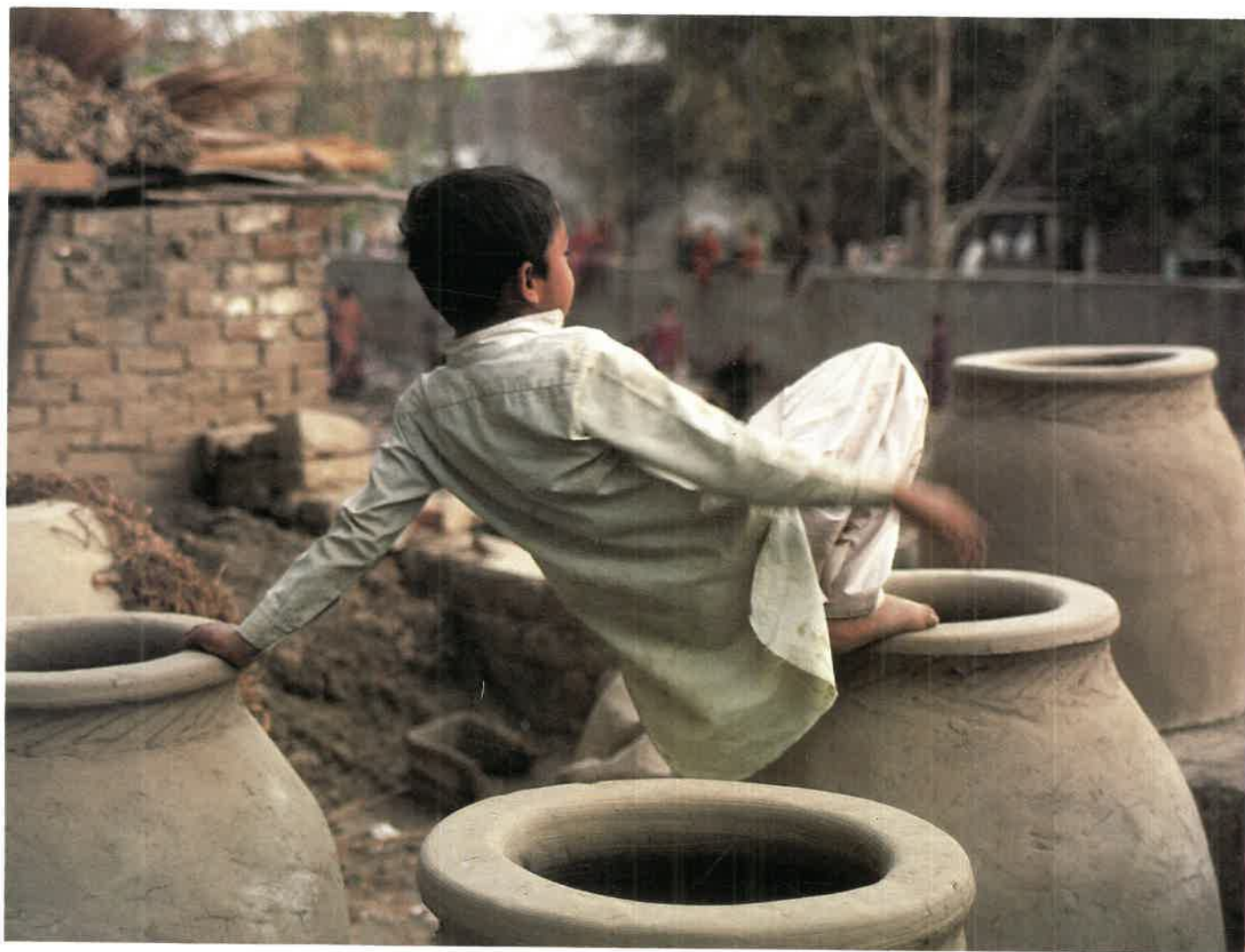
As a small boy, Nazir was allowed to help the women decorate the pottery, or attach handles. But now Nazir is almost a man, so he does man's work, travelling to find the traditional clay, digging it from the banks of the river nearby, working and cleaning it to make it pliable and free of rocks.

Other families in the village specialise in the production of parts of individual items. One family may make only cups, while another will make the handles; a third family will fit the two together. Nazir's family makes special, very beautiful pots, and whenever there is a fair or *mela*, Allah Ditta travels there with his latest collection to sell them himself, and thus avoid dealing with the middlemen who collect pots from the potters and keep the profit for themselves. The fairs and *melas* in Lahore, particularly those linked with the major *majars* (shrines), are the traditional market outlet for potters. Tea is served in their shallow clay cups, as well as *kheer*, a sweet dish made with milk, rice and nuts. The unglazed clay saucer imparts a wonderful flavour to the milky pudding.

Nazir was looking forward to accompanying his father to the *melas*, so he takes special care in helping Allah Ditta with the work for the coming fair —

Embodied in the ageless craft of the artisans, myths and folklore become real. Legends walk the streets, brought to life in the faces of their ancestors. Time forgets itself; the past is superimposed upon the present.





the 'Urs of Hujwiri, when thousands come to pay special homage at the shrine of their saint on the anniversary of his death. He has heard much of the great 'Urs and all its wonders, and he is longing to go there and see for himself. Nazir spends much of his time turning his eyes and ears to the city outside his father's shop. He is fifteen, and restless with the itching demon that plagues all young animals as they become adults.

Allah Ditta interrupts his son's daydreams with an affectionate nudge. He can remember being a young man with a glittering dream-city before him, but there is a great deal of work to be done in preparation for this trip. But Allah Ditta is also concerned by the attractions of the city for Nazir, and he lectures him, albeit gently, about resisting the temptations to be found within. He is not worried so much about the temptations of the flesh — he has raised Nazir with enough common sense for that. But so many sons leave their families every year for the lure of industry and modern business. They work in cold impersonal factories — Allah Ditta has seen them — and, worst of all, they abandon the tradition of their fathers and ancestors; this gentle art of pouring into the shapeless clay all of one's thoughts and dreams



and ideas, capturing those spirits in the shaping clay, creating an object of beauty in which others will glimpse your dreams and hear your songs.

He glances at his son, who works intently, eyes on his clay, answering softly if at all. Allah Ditta decides to tell Nazir a story, an ancient folktale that his grandfather had told him, years ago, in a hut much like this one, with his grandfather sitting here, and the young Allah Ditta sitting there, where Nazir sits. He had been of Nazir's age when he had heard this story, and Allah Ditta remembers that it struck him, like lightning running down a tree to its roots, with a vast sensation of age. He, Allah Ditta, was part of that story, centuries old as it was; and that ancient story was a living part of him, this boy, where he sat in a hut with his grandfather. They could have been the potters in that simple love story; perhaps they were. After that day, Allah Ditta felt nothing but peace with his life as a potter, and each time he worked the clay, he felt his fingers touch those of his ancestors. Allah Ditta hoped that the story might help Nazir to feel what he had felt. This is the story:

Izzat Beg, son of a Mughal chieftain, rode his horse at the head of a caravan from Samarkhand, travelling to Delhi with a message for the sultan and goods for trade. It was springtime, and the snows of Central Asia were unmelted, but here on the plains of the Punjab a golden light diffused the eastern horizon. The fields on either side of the ancient highway rippled in the breeze. The bright yellow of mustard was surrounded by tall green trees, and expanses of green edged with bushes ablaze with flowers rolled off in all directions. They rode over meadows of grass and poppies and wild roses. Izzat Beg reflected on this lush fertile land as he rode. The plains of the Punjab were different from the terrain and climate of his home in Samarkhand, but there was something compelling in the atmosphere of this new and exotic land.

The Mughal caravan crossed the Indus over the bridge recently built at Attock, and descended stage by stage to the plains and the town of Gujrat on the banks of the Chenab. The fields were ripening for the spring harvest; the Chenab River was full, fed by the early-melting snows of Kashmir. It flowed slowly, heavy with its fecund load of silt for the fields — so different from the foaming rills of the Mughal homeland. The journey for the caravan had been a long and cold one, and Izzat Beg and his companions decided to rest for a few days before proceeding on their trip. The town was — and is to this day — famous for its pottery. Izzat Beg wandered through the marketplace to buy pots.

Unimpressed with what he saw, he sneered loudly that the reputation of the Gujrati potters was undeserved. The merchants who heard him realised that they were dealing with a connoisseur and showed him their best pieces — the ones usually hidden from tourists. These proved indeed to be more pleasing to the Mughal; but he had begun to learn South Asian trade practices. He thought that if he again held out, he would be shown even



better pieces from the hands of the master potters. He was still unsatisfied, he announced cannily. The merchants, exasperated with this exceptionally fussy foreigner, sent him directly to the most famous potter of the town. This potter's place was just outside the city, on the banks of the Chenab. His name was Tulla, and he had masterful hands, a legendary reputation, and a stunningly beautiful daughter named Sohni, whose delicate hands were as skilled in the potter's craft as her father's. Sohni showed her father's wares to the Mughal prince. He looked at her beautiful hands; looking up, he met the glance of her dark eyes. As he took an urn from her, their hands touched.

The next day, Izzat Beg's caravan left for Delhi at his orders. Izzat Beg himself stayed on in Gujrat. Each day, he came to the shop of Tulla to buy, and to meet the potter's daughter. However, even the wealth of a Mughal prince is not infinite, especially far away from his land. How many pots could Izzat Beg possibly buy? And then there were the payments for his lodgings (which were rapidly becoming crowded with pots), presents for Sohni, fodder and a stable for his horses. All these things cost money, even in those times, and finally the inevitable happened: Izzat Beg was penniless. He had spent all of his cash on Gujrat's famous pottery. But still unwilling to leave, he looked for work in the city. A pauperised prince possesses few saleable skills. Izzat Beg had been educated in the crafts of a warrior; his apprenticeship had been in adjudication. What was the use of such skills to a peaceful city with no enemies and with its own elected council? In any case, the plight of this royal slant-eyed foreigner, who had spent all his money to meet an ordinary Punjabi girl, was a standing joke in the town. No one offered to employ Izzat Beg in any capacity.

It was the potter Tulla who eventually took pity on the prince. He hired the young man to look after his goats and buffalo. Izzat Beg changed his name to Mahiwal — the herdsman. But now the potter was confronted with a delicate situation. The prince had become a goatherd, and was no longer an eligible suitor for his daughter. And, as herdsman, Mahiwal's proximity to his daughter had increased; only the River Chenab separated the pasture from the potter's shed. Tulla decided that Sohni must be married off as soon as possible. Her childhood sweetheart, Dam, also a potter, had long ago asked for her hand. Sohni's father now accepted Dam's proposal.

Sohni wept bitterly at her wedding, but brides usually weep. Dam, who loved Sohni very much, did not read in this her unwillingness to marry him. On their wedding night, while Dam slept, Sohni stole out of her new home. Taking a large baked clay urn with her, she went down to the river. She crossed the Chenab, clinging to her floating urn and paddling with her feet,



to Mahiwal on the other side. In the cool darkness of night, she ran through the grass to her herdsman.

Every night after that, Sohni would make this rendezvous. All day she would lie in bed, disconsolate and fevered. She was obsessed; she thought only of her goatherd, and came to life only at night when she drenched herself in the cool black waters of the Chenab to be in his arms. Dam, who suspected but did not know, went about tense and silent. He too was suffering, suffering the humiliation of the cuckold who does not wish to know the truth. The townspeople gossiped, and their talk reached Sohni's parents. Her mother pleaded with her, but nothing could dissuade Sohni.

The gossip also reached the ears of Dam's sister, who had never liked Sohni. One night she followed Sohni and confirmed what she had heard. Triumphantly, she went to her brother and told him all she had seen: the crossing on the floating urn, the dark silhouette on the other bank, the moonlight picking out the distinctive features of Mahiwal. To her astonishment, the disconsolate Dam refused to do or say anything, and ordered his sister into silence on the matter.

In the meantime, Sohni's parents had given up argument and resorted to subterfuge. That evening, they came quietly to Dam's house and stole the large urn she used for her river crossings, thinking that she would not be able to cross without it. Dam's sister, emerging stung by her brother's reprimand, saw them take the urn. Deciding on revenge, she put an identical urn in its place; identical, except that the clay was still unbaked.

The daughter of a potter should have been able to tell the difference. Moreover, she would have known that unbaked clay will crumble in the water. But Sohni, when she slipped out that night, was hardly sane. Her mind and senses were distracted by her passion for Mahiwal and her strife at home. Her hands and eyes noticed nothing unusual about the urn as she placed it on the water and began to paddle out. It rained that night, heavy rains that swelled the river to a torrent. The clay of the urn melted out in the river. Mahiwal heard Sohni's screams as she began to drown. The Mughal prince had been trained as a warrior: lightning-fast reflexes, fearless in the face of his own imminent death. The skills that the townspeople had laughed at did not fail him now, and he charged into the seething, muddy torrent in the height of the storm. For a moment he could see nothing in the blackness of the stormy night, with the cold raging water filling his head; then, in the dark water, he felt her warm, slender body brush against him, and Sohni felt his strong arms in the roaring darkness pull her tightly against his chest. Wrapped together in an embrace, perhaps they did not hear or feel the raging river carry them away into the darkness.

That was the potter's story that Allah Ditta tells to Nazir. He glances again at his son. Perhaps hearing it would make Nazir feel, as he did, the endless chain of which they were a part. For Allah Ditta, this chain is almost visible; fathers and sons, fathers and sons, stretching back endlessly to the horizon. They were all at their wheels, just as he was now, just as Nazir was, spinning with their feet and moulding with their hands, using their fingers to send their emotions, intuitions, humours, and fantasies into the shapes before them. It was an ancient line that went back so far behind them, and it should go on long after them as well.

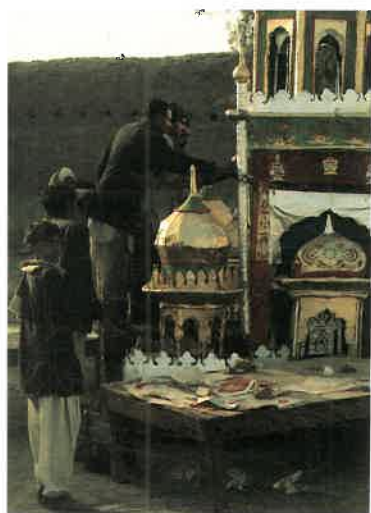
He glances sideways at his son. Nazir, listening, answers softly, almost inaudibly; his hands intently shaping and working the clay in front of him, his eyes impossible to read.







Muharram



Muharram is an annual mourning ritual for the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, who was slain in the struggle for the leadership of Islam in 600 AD. After the Prophet's death, several of his followers were elected caliphs of Islam in succession; the fourth caliph was his son-in-law, Hazrat Ali, a man of renowned piety and learning. This was not an easy time for Muslims; an angry debate between factions erupted, with one side claiming that Ali should have been the first caliph, from the beginning. Before Ali's death, he extracted a promise from Muaviya, the political ruler in Damascus, that Ali's spiritual authority would pass on to his sons, the Imam Hussain and the Imam Hassan, the grandsons of the Prophet.

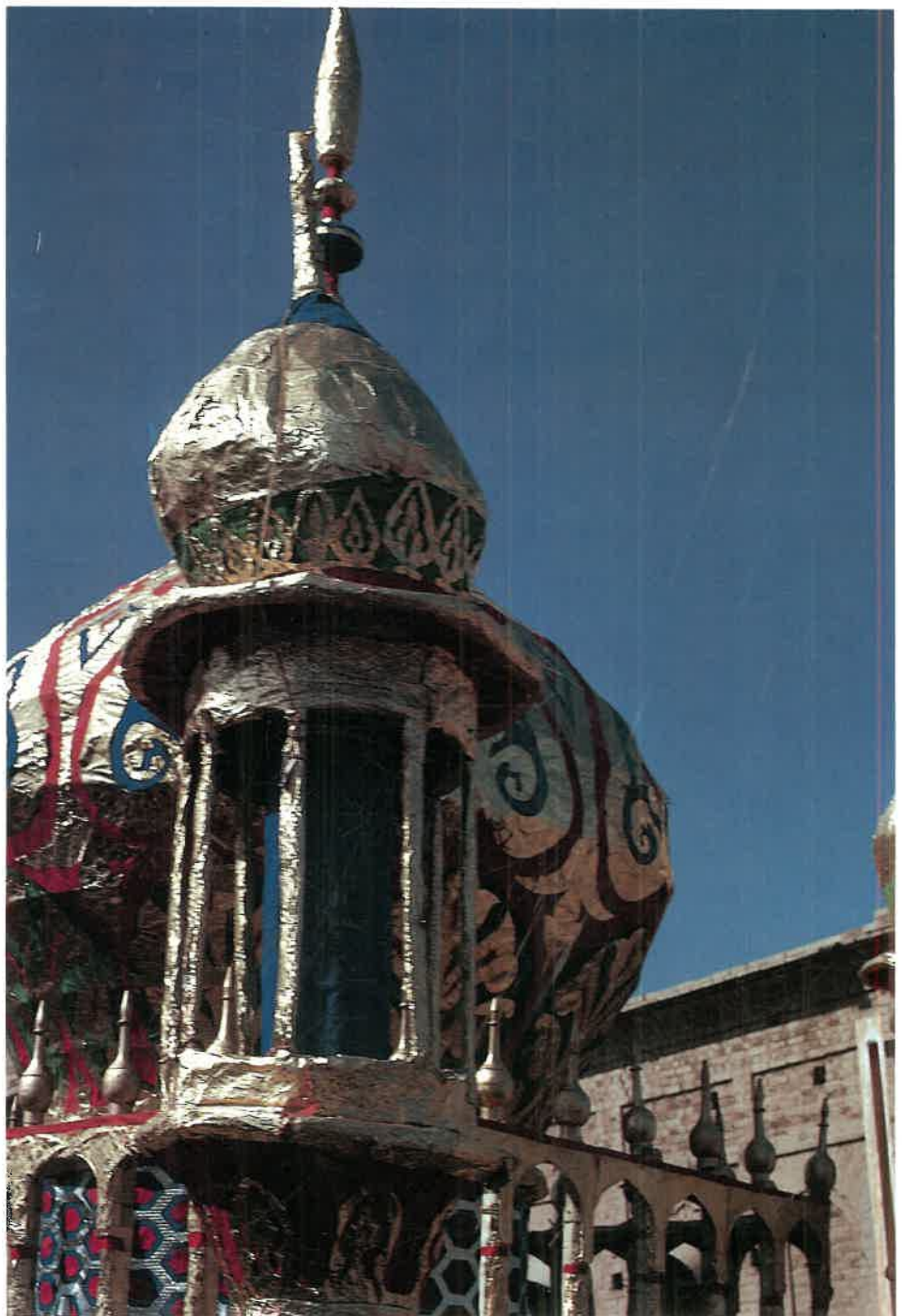
But during Ali's reign, a schism had appeared between the two Muslim sects. Hassan did succeed to the Imamate of Mecca, and Hussain after him, but by then Muaviya was dead, and his son Yezid — known to all future Muslims as a debauchee, a murderer, and an epic villain — was not disposed to acknowledge anyone's authority, spiritual or otherwise. He set out to destroy Hussain. Hussain set off, with his twenty-seven family members and a few hundred followers, to rally support in the Iraqi city of Kufa. On the plains of Karbala he came face to face with Yezid's army of thousands. On the first of Muharram and for ten days thereafter, Hussain tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with Yezid. Finally, on the tenth of Muharram, the battle of Karbala took place. Imam Hussain and his family were murdered; only Imam Hassan's Imam Zainul Abedeen survived to continue spreading the message of Islam.

All Muslims begin each new year by reliving the tragic martyrdom that split the Muslim world in half. The Shia sect broke away, proclaiming that if Ali had been the first caliph, the seeds of this tragedy would never have been sown. The Sunni majority, while mourning the slaughter at Karbala, held the order of succession as legitimate and blamed Hussain's death on the villainy of Yezid; and so it has gone, to this day.

'Tazias' are elaborate papier-mâché effigies of the tombs of Hassan and Hussain. Painstakingly detailed and requiring hours of labour, they are carried through the streets for the 'Tazion Ka Mela' on the tenth of Muharram, to commemorate the bloody events of the Karbala.

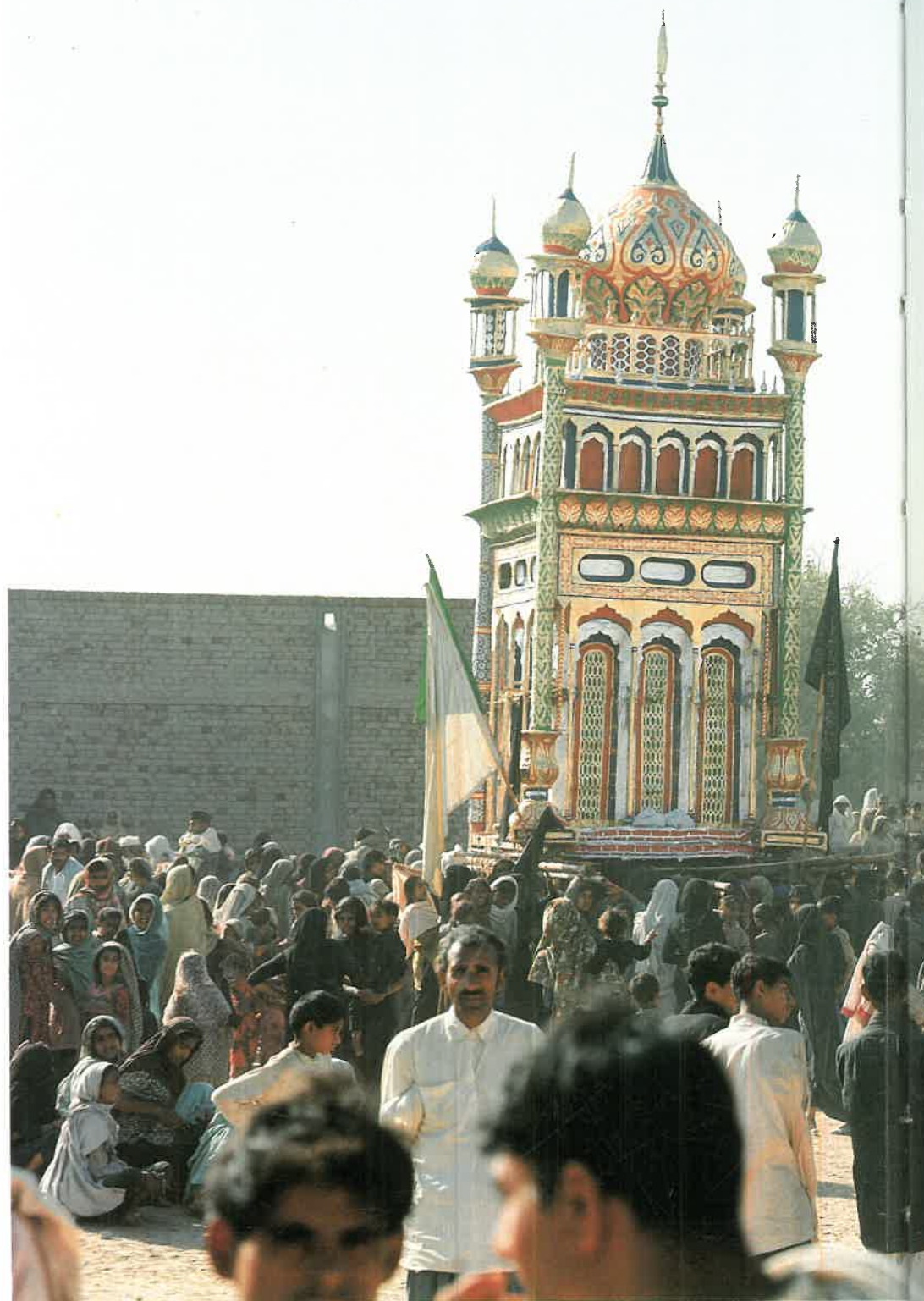


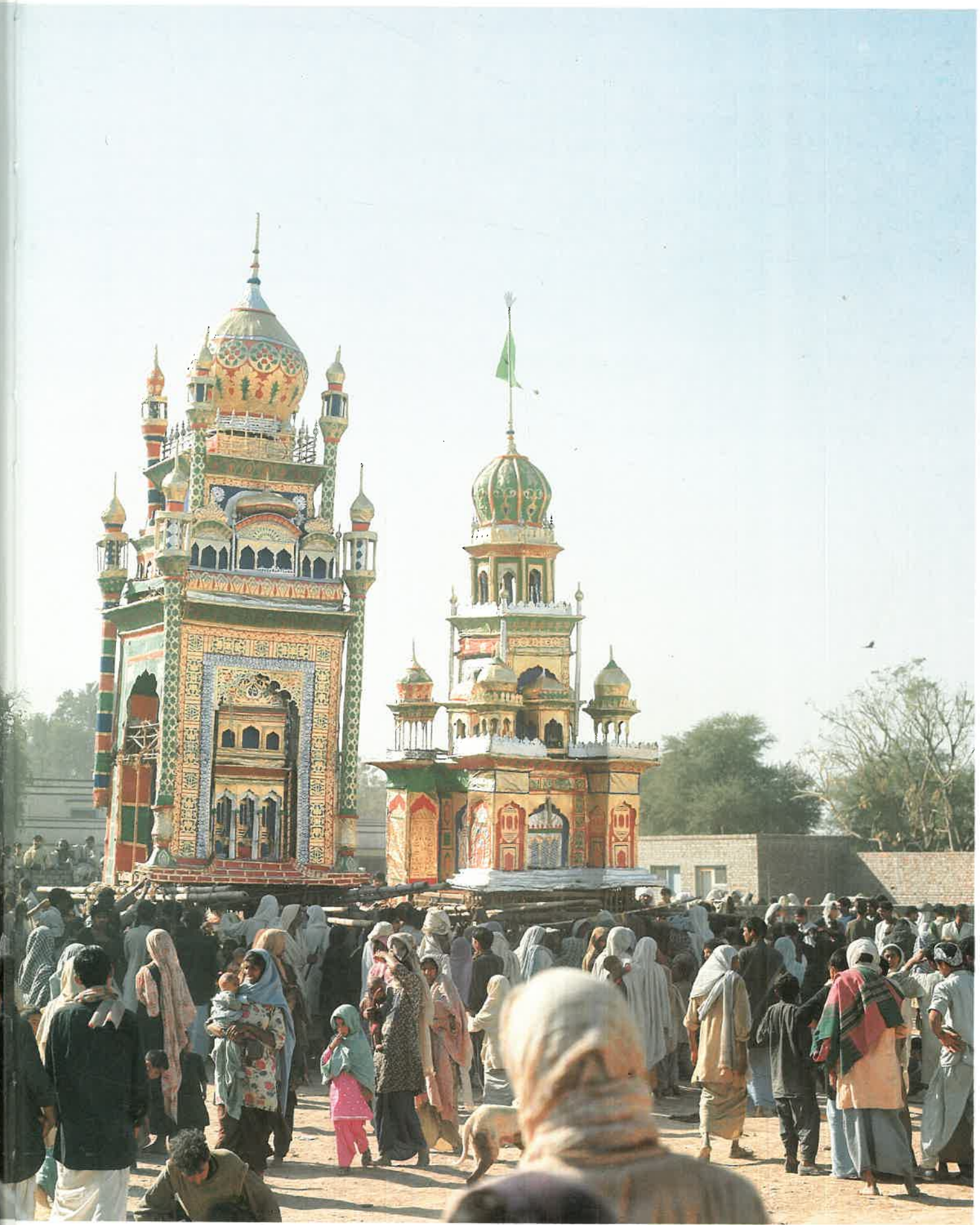
According to legend, Imam Hussain's followers knew that he had been killed when his white steed returned to his camp, riderless. During Muharram a white horse is saddled and garlanded with flowers and ribbons. A turban is placed in the saddle and blood is smeared on the horse's face and neck; the mourners wail and grieve as the horse is led through the streets, reenacting the tragic event. On the night of the tenth of Muharram — Shabi-i Shahadat, or Night of Murderers — the 'Tazias' are paraded through the streets, followed by a procession of mourners beating their breasts and reciting elegies. Bare feet stamp the ground, and the constantly repeated cry of "Hussain ... Hussain ..." becomes an ecstatic frenzy. Some of the men strip to the waist and flail themselves with thongs and chains. The dusty streets become spattered with blood.





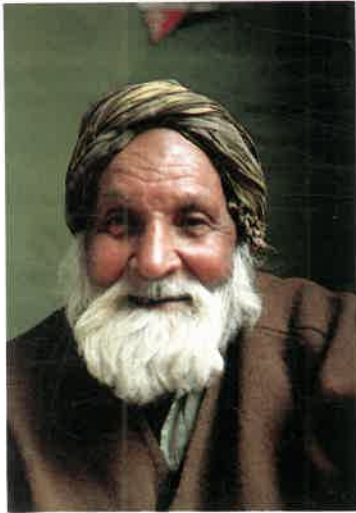
*The procession passes through the
Lahori Gate, to end on the banks of
the Ravi, where the 'Tazias' are laid
to rest. The mourners wash
themselves in the river and emerge
purged and cleansed. The catharsis is
over; the new year has begun.*







The 'Urs



The tomb of Data Ganj Bakhsh. He was a great author in his time; among other works he wrote the well-known book, 'The Revelation of the Hidden.'

Punjabi is a strong, expressive language and, as such, is an excellent means of expressing mystical feelings. The Sufi songs which attempt to capture and convey these feelings usually centre around a burning dynamic love (or *ishq*), born of a yearning of the soul for an unattainable union with the divine beloved (God), an unremitting yearning which may, in turn, give expression to the pain of separation in beautiful verse. Even with little or no understanding of the language, one can easily feel the passion and intensity with which the participants in the 'Urs, specifically, express their devotion.

Zehra was an educated woman from the city of Rawalpindi, absorbed in the bustle of busy, productive days, swept up in her intellectual battles in the noise and chaos of modern life. And one year, her reasons unclear even to herself, she decided to experience this religious devotion for herself. Thus she remembers her own personal pilgrimage to the 'Urs of Hujwiri.

The sky was a hard dark blue with the moon in one corner. The pervading pale orange radiance of the evening sun was reflected evenly through the air by the distant mountains. The straight stretch of the Grand Trunk Road from Rawalpindi to Lahore with rich green fields on either side, normally easily travelled, was chaotically congested on the day of the 'Urs with traffic heading for Lahore. Camel caravans beside the road, bullock carts, rickshaws, jeeps, Suzuki vans, busloads and truckloads of pilgrims, and some very obstinate donkey carts dotted the jumbled scene.

Her driver was a nervous wreck when they were still sixty miles out of Lahore. He kept asking 'How much further?' But of course the road markers did not offer any comprehensible answer. Once they stopped and peered at one of them for guidance, only to find a message there that had been written for someone's long-lost relative. The message obliterated the original figures telling the distance.

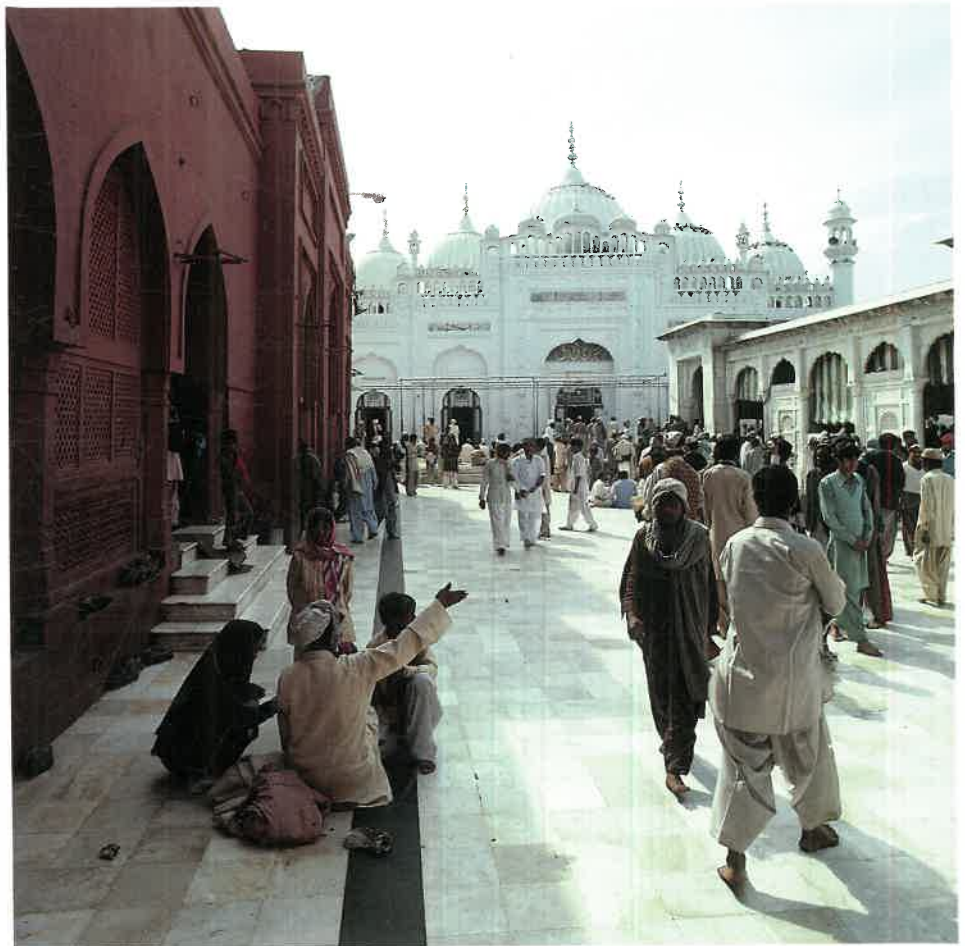
And yet in the seemingly motionless line of conveyances there was movement ... immense thronging movement. Tens of thousands of black and bobbing heads filled the surrounding fields and all the available space on the road between the vehicles and carts. Everywhere people disembarked from buses and trucks and carts, poured in on foot from nearby villages and the little towns of Kasur and Baghbanpura, and removed their sandals to walk the last stretch barefoot over the saint's own soil.

Once she reached their destination of Hujwiri's Shrine itself, Zehra found the inner courtyard to be also incredibly crowded. Yet this was not the hubbub and bustle of the fair outside. This was a place for reverence, and for the music and poetry which express such reverence. A row of pilgrims shuffled slowly forward toward the Data Sahib's sarcophagus, each pausing for a moment, muttering a prayer, placing his votive offering and then moving on again. The chamber was brilliant in the blaze of burning candles;

the sarcophagus was half-buried under a hundred million flower petals piled on top and all around it.

Brown feet — bared as they always are in this land for prayer, for respect, or just plain comfort — padded slowly up to and past Data Sahib's flower-smothered tomb. Within the huge square formed by a row of shuffling pilgrims, ten thousand others sat upon the floor. The white marble of the courtyard was covered with men and women, some sitting quietly cross-legged, others lying down, all listening to musicians who had come to make their musical offering to the master teacher of Sufism. So it had been in the days of the Ghaznavids; so it was that day, Zehra lit a candle and, being prayerless at the moment, placed a sheet of interwoven roses and jasmine on the tomb. She walked a few steps and squatted on the marble floor in the first place she could find. Next to her, a young village couple, who had obviously arrived early enough to have found space to lie down, snored softly under a cotton quilt. Everyone was silently listening to the musicians. This silence, this rapt musical attention was also an act of devotion.

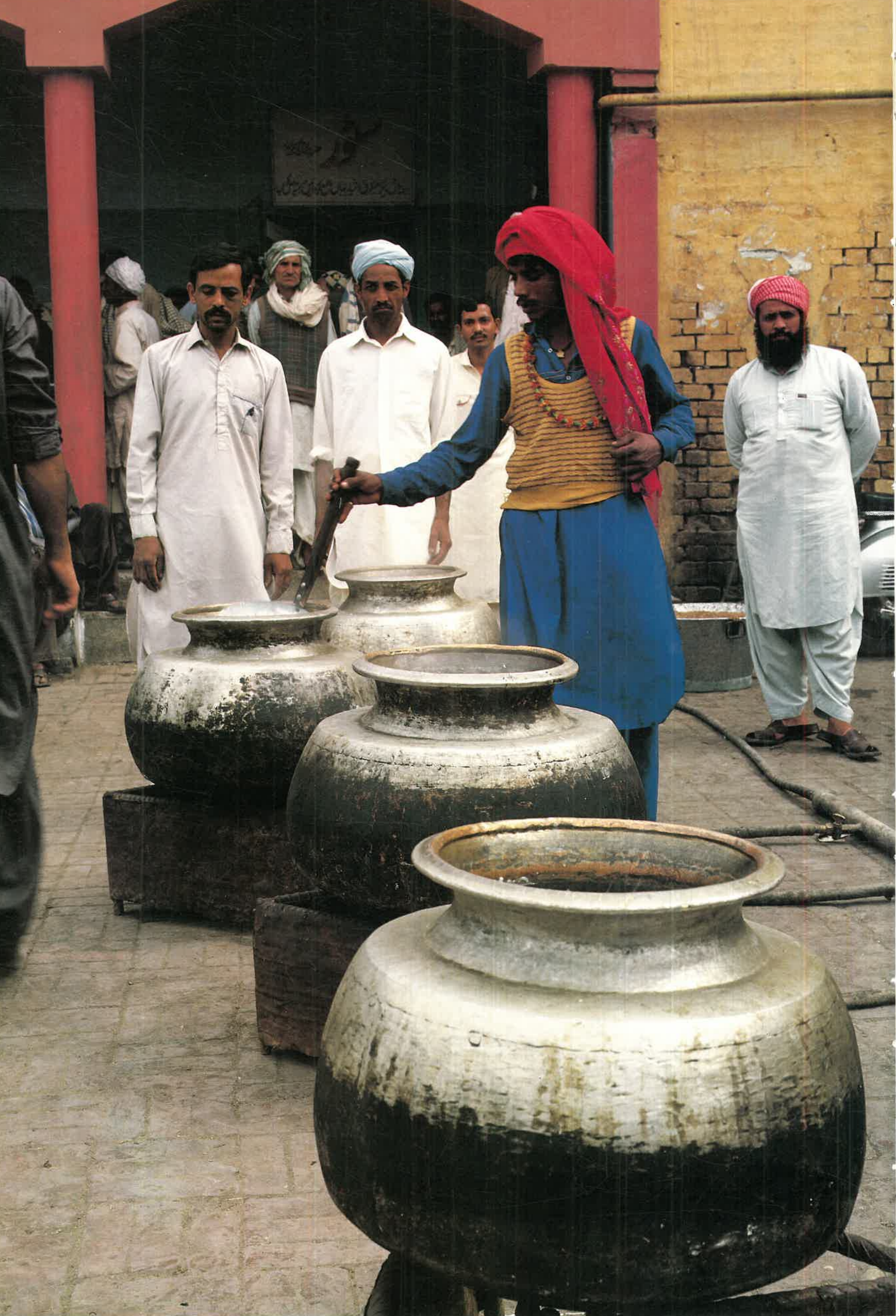
The fair is held at the tomb each Friday; it is frequently attended by Hindus as well as Muslims.





To the north of the tomb there is a small receptacle, filled with water. The faithful consider this water to be sacred, and apply it to their eyes, to benefit their souls.

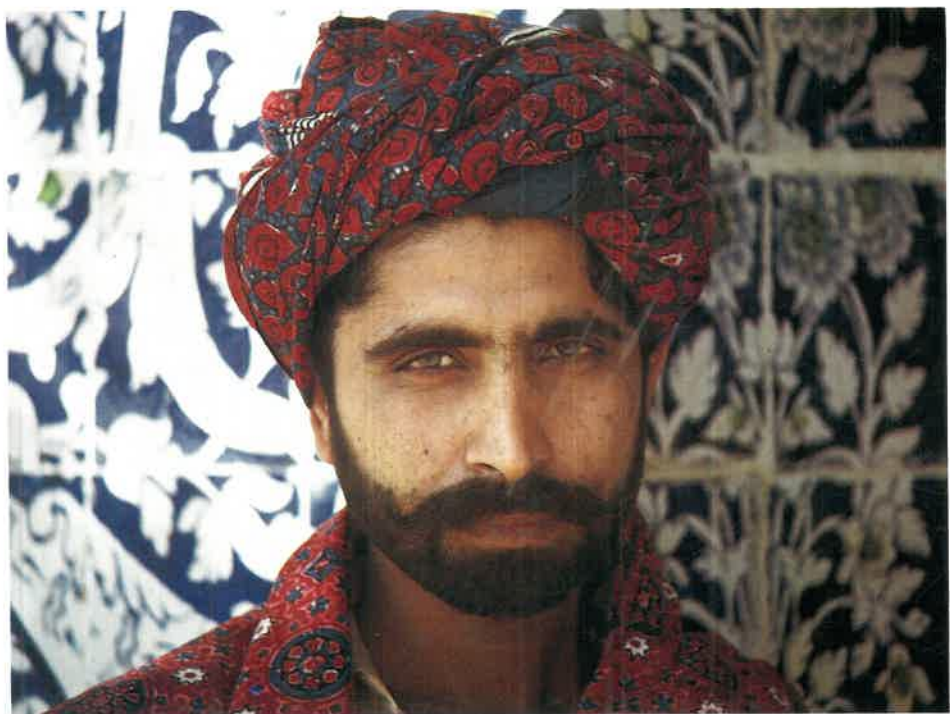




An important part of the fairs is the preparation and serving of food, which is cooked in great quantities in the courtyard outside the tomb, and used to feed the poor and needy.

Five devotees were garbed in green robes that left their chest bare. Wild eyed and heavy-bearded, their hair and beards were long and plaited. They played and sang in the chords of the *Raga Kalyan*. The sounds of the flute, tabla, harmonium and sarangi wove around one another in intricate syncopations and unpredictable harmonies. And rising from within the coiling sounds was the hoarse, commanding voice of the singer. Sometimes he crooned softly, as if to himself. Sometimes he rose on a long tenor flight, and at other times he gurgled deep in his throat. He threw back his head and uttered a sudden falsetto wail that hung tone by tone on the air. Powerful soul pourings and sudden swoops and floods of sound meandered strangely, as the flow of the Indus itself. Whimpers and cries and deep ullulations, primal ecstasies. The music seemed to pour from a cave, as of winds somewhere in the desert, and then wind itself into the perfectly disciplined structures of the Flower *Raga*.

She sat as a stranger among a million barefoot devotees and contemplated her own more complex gods. The singer touched upon an excruciatingly poignant phrase, and a young Punjabi near her wept: 'There is no more brotherliness in the world. Data Sahib is dead, and men in boots are walking all over his earth.' A gypsy woman, who had been sitting wrapped cocoon-like in her cotton shawl, clambered to her feet and broke into a jerky possessed dance. She tore open her shirt and offered her breasts to the saint. Nobody ogled her.



It has been said that to truly know a country's soul one should listen to its music. The devotional songs of the temples are impassioned pleas to the Divine to grant the heart's desire, or to declare the intense devotion of the singer.

The single, extraordinary *raga* wound on through the night, until the darkness began to wane and the eastern horizon grew a thin line of pearl. Just as the first light kindled the golden spires of minarets on the shrine, the singer achieved an incredible, soul-wrenching climax of frenzy — and suddenly, unbelievably, slid without pause into the *Alap* of *Ragani Purbhati*, to welcome the morning sun. In the crisp cleanness of morning light, the 'Urs continued its celebration of a special, ancient power, and Zehra walked in a shower of all the lives she had lived, cleansed of her demons. She sat on the roof of her host's home and asked no questions of the breaking sunlight. In the middle of the afternoon they all went back to the shrine, and she danced the *Dhammal* with the other pilgrims. That night, they sat again at the tomb and listened as a clear voice recited the prayer of the great Sufi master, from the beginning of *Uncovering of that What Is Veiled*:

Praise be to God, Who has revealed the secrets of His kingdom to his friends, and has disclosed the mysteries of His power to His intimate friends, and has shed the blood of those who love Him with the sword of His glory, and has let the heart of those who know Him taste the joy of union with Him.

He is it who brings dead hearts to life by the radiance of the perception of His eternity and His Majesty ...









سبزہ سبزہ سوکھ رہی ہے مھیکی زرد دوپہر
 دیواروں کو چاٹ رہا ہے تنہائی کا زہر
 دُور اُفق تک گھٹتی بڑھتی، اُٹھتی، گر جاتی رہتی ہے
 کمر کی صورت بے رونق درووں کی گدلی لہر
 بٹا ہے اس کمر کے پیچھے روشنیوں کا شہر
 اے روشنیوں کے شہر

کون کہے کس سمت ہے تیری روشنیوں کی راہ
 ہر جانب بے نور کھڑی ہے ہجر کی شہرِ پناہ
 تھک کر ہر سو بیٹھ رہی ہے شوق کی ناندِ پناہ

Greenish patches, the pallid yellow noon has dried up
 Loneliness licks the walls with poisonous tongue;
 Far, to the horizon, dwindles, swells, rises, sinks
 Foglike the lusterless misery's turbid tide
 And behind this fog there lies the City of Lights ...
 Oh City of Lights ...
 Who knows how to reach your light, and from which direction?
 Everywhere the unlighted ramparts of separation
 And the exhausted army of longing, weary, sits everywhere.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz



خدا پنجاب را معمور دارد
به خاک ادیب منظور دارد
بود آباد دایم شهر لاهور
وبا و قحط ز بنجادور دارد

May God keep the Punjab all flourishing!
May He preserve the country of the saints!
Oh, may Lahore be always full of bliss!
May plague and death be always far from it!

Dara Shikoh



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