

## **Mian Mir: The Mystic Saint of Lahore**

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Mysticism transcends religious barriers. Mian Mir was a Muslim saint of great renown. He lived a pure life. Being a man of God, no barriers of caste or creed marked his thought. He loved those who loved God. He was a Pir to millions of Muslims and was a close friend of Guru Arjun, the Guru of Sikhs as well as countless Hindus, in 16th century.

At the instance of Guru Arjun, Hazrat Mian Mir laid the foundation stone Harmandir of Amritsar, the most sacred temple of Sikhs. The Harmandir is held in equally great esteem and reverence by all communities. To maintain the dignity of this holy spot many Sikhs later paid heavily with their lives.

Never before and, for that matter, never after, has the foundation stone of the highest religious seat of one faith been laid by the head of another religion. This remains the unique privilege of the prime Sikh shrine.

Mian Mir was a friend of God-loving people and he would shun worldly, selfish men, covetous amirs and ambitious nawabs who ran after fakirs to get their blessings for successful continuation of acts of aggression against others. To stop such people from coming to see him, Mian Mir posted his followers at the gate of his house.

Once Jahangir, the Mughal emperor, with all his retinue, came to pay homage to the great fakir. He came with the pomp and show of a great king. Mian Mir's sentinels stopped the emperor at the gate and requested him to wait until their master had given him permission to enter. Jahangir felt slighted. No one had ever dared delay, or question, his entry to any place in his kingdom. Yet he controlled his temper and composed himself. He waited for permission.

After a little while emperor Jahangir was ushered into the presence of the fakir. Unable to hide his wounded vanity, Jahangir, as soon as he entered the holy presence of Mian Mir, asked him in Persian: "*Ba dare-darvis darbane nalbayd?*" - Why should there be a sentry at the gate of a fakir?

Pir Mian Mir, who was one with the great Allah, caring little for the emperor's angst, replied in Persian: "*Babayd keh sage dunia na ayad*" - So that selfish men may not enter.

The emperor was ashamed and asked forgiveness. Then, with folded hands Jahangir requested Mian Mir to pray for the success of the campaign which he intended to launch for the conquest of the Deccan.

Meanwhile, a poor Muslim entered and, bowing his head to Mian Mir, made an offering of a rupee before him. Mian Mir asked the devotee to pick up the rupee and give it to the poorest, most needy person in the audience. The devotee went from one dervish (disciple) to another but none accepted the rupee. The devotee returned to Mian Mir with the rupee saying: "Lord, none of the dervishes will accept the rupee. None is in the need, it seems".

"Go and give this rupee to him," said the fakir, pointing to Jahangir. "He is the poorest and most needy of the lot. Not content with a big kingdom, he covets the kingdom of the Deccan. For that he has come all the way from Delhi to beg. His hunger is like a fire

that burns all the more furiously with more wood. It has made him needy, greedy and grim. Go and give him the rupee to him".  
Who was the emperor? Jahangir or Mian Mir?

