

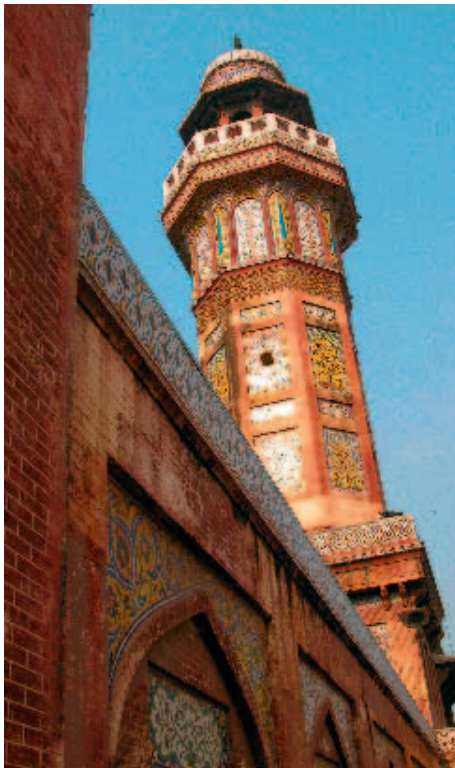
Wazir Khan's Mosque

An embellishment is manifest!

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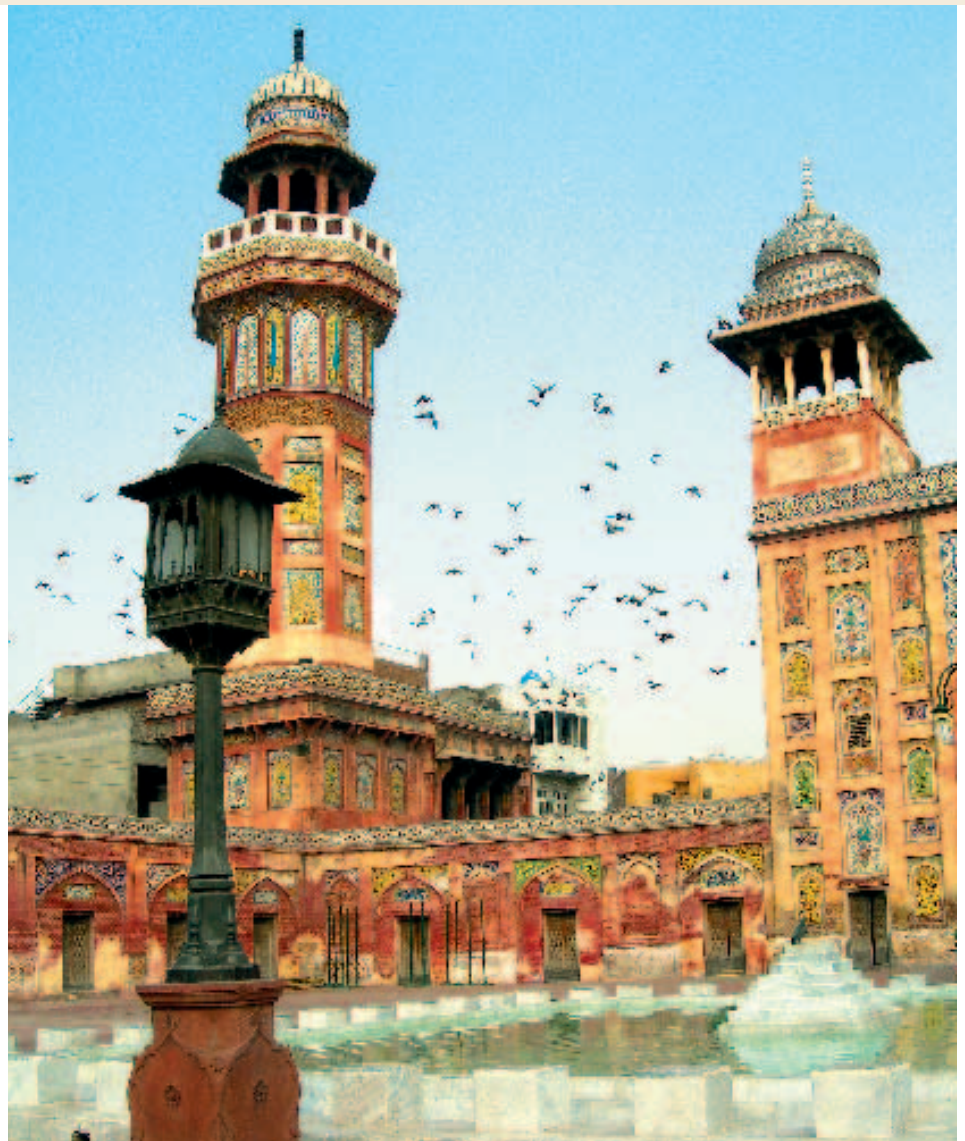
Located near Delhi gate of the old walled city of Lahore in Pakistan, Masjid Wazir Khan (Wazir Khan's Mosque) is an exquisite example of Mogul architecture. Compared with other mosques of its class, it is smaller and not so well known, yet Masjid Wazir Khan occupies a unique place in typical Mogul architecture on account of its eye catching and absorbing display of Islamic art, which is not restricted to the interior but is unusually displayed lavishly on the exterior walls as well.

Masjid" literally means a place for prostration and this word stands for mosque, the Muslims' place of worship. Sajida, an essential posture of prostration in Muslim prayers, is the humblest expression of submission to Allah, the omnipotent. To express this connection between man and his creator, Islamic art, at times seems to serve as a functional language. ▶



Minaret

المنارة



Internal view

منظر داخلي

A receptive heart cannot escape without being touched and wholly absorbed into the eye catching and intricate designs of Masjid Wazir Khan. These designs contain all the characteristics of typical Islamic art: they are geometrical patterns, symmetrical, and floral and contain hexagonal or octagonal stars and curvilinear intertwined decorations.

Made of bricks, the red plastered walls of the mosque bear Persian inscriptions or Arabic calligraphy in fresco of an excellent durability. Powdered stones like lapis lazuli and minerals were used in the fresco. Calligraphy in blue on glazed panels with white and a grass green background leaves an unforgettable impression.

Piety is the foundation of all mosques which have a trust status and are not owned by anyone, but those who laid the foundation stone are remembered. Masjid Wazir Khan was founded in 1639 A.D. by Ilmudin Ansari



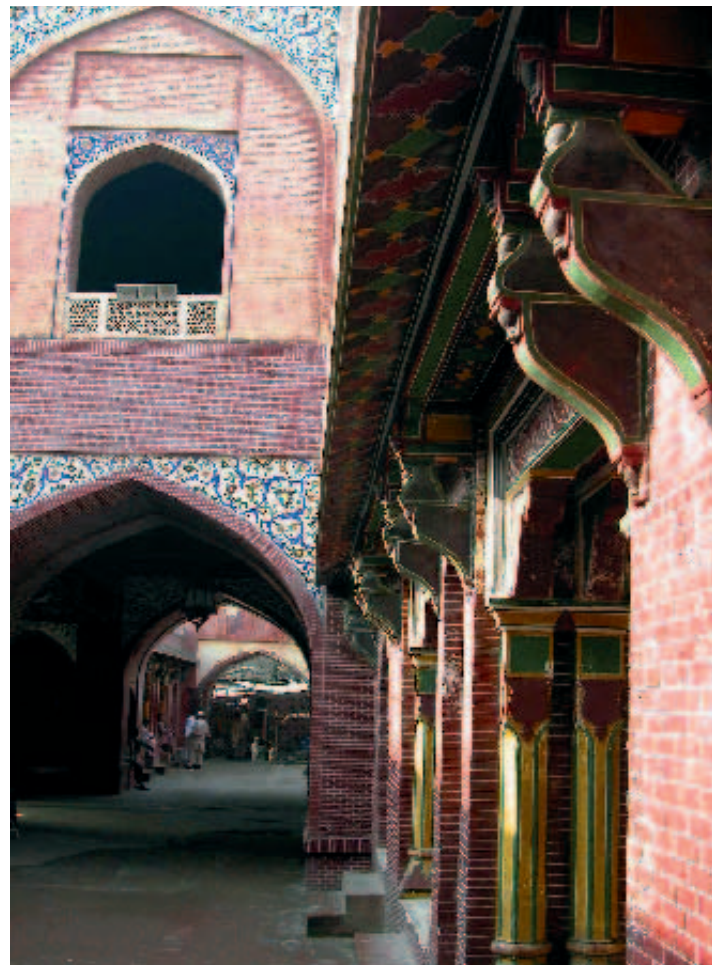
Minarets and dome

المنارة والقبعة



Entrance

المدخل



The old shops

الدكاكين القديمة

(also known as Nawab Wazir Khan) who was the Governor of Lahore during the reign of the Mughal Emperor, Shahjehan. The total area of Masjid Wazir Khan is around 4128 square meters and 512 square meters form the prayer area. There are five domes: the central dome is 7 meters in diameter and 9.5 meters in height while the diameter of the rest of the domes is 5.8 meters, with a height of 6.4 meters. There are four octagonal corner minarets, 32 meters high. In the centre of the uncovered area is a big water pool where a number of people intending to offer prayers, can simultaneously fulfill the prerequisite to perform ablutions. In addition to the ablution tank another non praying area is the tomb of a saint known as Meeran Shah. An important feature of Masjid Wazir Khan is the provision of twenty two cubicles

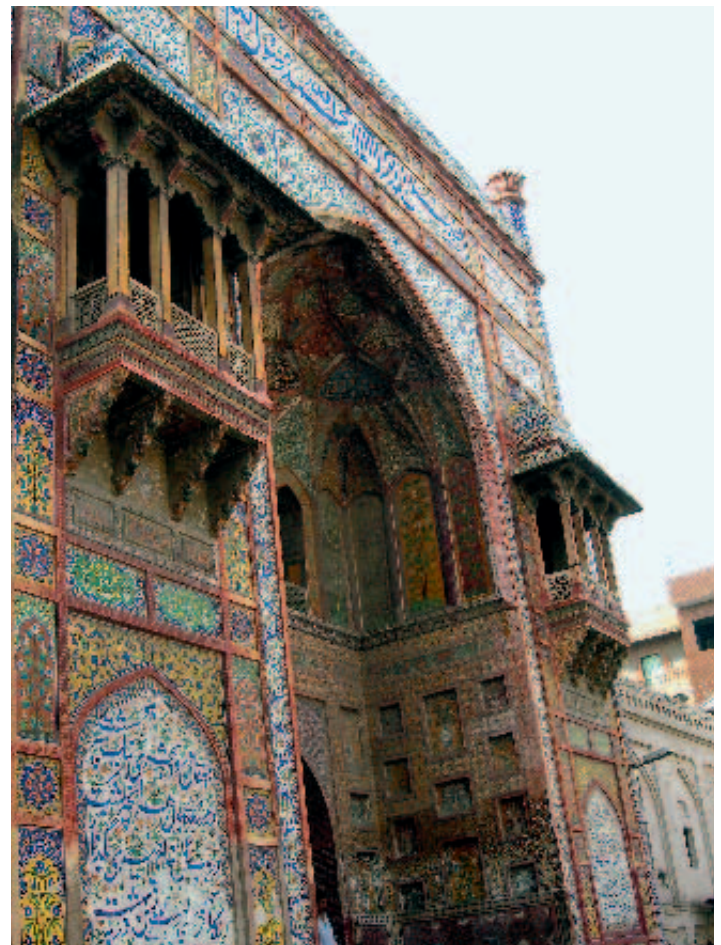
known as “Hujra” adjacent to the praying area and the provision of thirty six attached shops opening towards the exterior. They have split doors fixed in an arched façade and are decorated with arabesque just like the other parts of the Masjid. These provisions need to be explained. Islam does not encourage a monastic life style. Neither does it rule out the few who opt to detach themselves from worldly attractions in order to find the ultimate truth. A society with many skilled professionals and a few poets is a sustainable mix. The teachings of Islam therefore accommodate all segments of society in their optimal proportion. An in depth review of Masjid Wazir Khan is a personification of a well balanced Islamic society. Islamic mystics during the Mughal regime greatly influenced the multi-cultural society of the sub continent and spread Islam by example rather than words.

These mystics were in fact the Islamic tourists who wandered from place to place in search of the truth and bartered truth - their only commodity. Mughal emperors too could not remain uninfluenced by them and considered due allowances for their upkeep. This explains the ample provision of “hujras” in the mosques. These cubicles served as a meeting place for contemporary scholars and learners to accumulate and share their knowledge and mystical experiences and also to act as a transient place for rest. The immediate vicinity of the mosque continues to be a vibrant shopping centre. It is known as “Chaowk Wazir Khan” and is to the mosque, what a body is to the soul. People offer seeds to the flocks of pigeons on the roof top of the mosque and these pigeons keep circling around the central dome as if continually in a state of ecstasy! ■



Pulpit

مكان الخطيب



External view

منظر خارجي للمسجد