

## TOMB OF PIR ADIL AND HIS SON IN DISTRICT DERA GHAZI KHAN

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The Tomb of Hazrat Pir Adil is situated in Mauza Pir Adil at a distance of 2 miles on the east side of Sadr-ud-Din bus stop on Dera Ghazi Khan-Taunsa Road. The real name of the saint was Syed Sultan Ghayas-ud-Din. His ancestors came from Baghdad in this area in 439 A.H./1048 A.D.<sup>1</sup> According to the "*Gazetteer of the Dera Ghazi Khan District*", the saint came from Mashhad in the ninth century A.H.<sup>2</sup> The stories about his miraculus dead and battles with the unbelievers are related by the *Sajjada Nasheens*.

The saint is known as Pir Adil (The Just Saint) because of his justice. Once his son, Syed Au, went to the forest for hunting. He asked a shepherd to give him a goat, which the shepherd denied to give. The companions of Syed Ali forcefully killed a goat. The shepherd shoot an arrow at Syed Ali. Syed Ali killed the shepherd with a weapon. The mother of the shepherd went to Syed Sultan for grievance. Syed Sultan handed his son over to the lady and requested her that he had the only son so she should spare him by taking some money in lieu of the murder. He further asked the lady that her son cannot be enlivened by killing his (i.e. Syed Sultan's) son. But the lady refused to entertain his request. The heirs of the shepherd finally killed Syed Ali, the son of the saint. Thence onwards Syed Sultan was called as Pir Adil (The Just Saint)<sup>3</sup>.

Syed Sultan died in 465 A.H./1072 A.D. one year after his son's death and was buried here<sup>4</sup>. The Nawab of Dera Ghazi Khan became his follower. He built the tomb. It is said that an amount of one lac rupees was spent on this building. The construction work, started in 814 A.H./1411 A.D., was completed in 819 A.H./1416 AD<sup>5</sup>.

### Architectural Features

#### *First Storey* [Plate I, Fig (i)]

The tomb was built in three receding storeys as its sores high. The first storey is rectangular in plan with sloping turrets at four corners on the exterior. Turrets on the south east and north east corner are semi-circular and conical while the rest are circular on plan ending domelets and finials. The turrets have been added to strengthen the structure as well as to enhance volume and grandeur of the building.

The first storey, measuring 45'x34'-6" externally and 26'x22' internally, is 27 feet high upto the top of parapet. The entrance doors have been provided in the eastern and southern walls while a *mehrab* is situated in the western wall. The wooden doors have long been covered with a thick layer of paint.

The whole surface of the first storey on its exterior is finished with designs of cut and dressed bricks, also decorated with glazed tiles laid in a variety of patterns.

The entrance door and its surrounding frame in the east wall on its exterior is slightly projected from the rest of the wall. It is interesting to note that the entrance door is not provided in the centre of the wall, but rather off centred towards left side. The stairs to reach the roof of the building are provided in the south east corner. There is an *ante* room in the southern wall.

The projected rectangular frame is decorated with recessed arched panels enclosed within rectangular frame. The spandrels and space below arch of each panel is decorated with glazed tile depicting geometrical designs. Above the spandrel is a frieze of dentil pattern executed in cut brick and occasional glazed tiles.

Above the rectangular frame is a projected moulding course further decorated with eleven complete glazed merlons and one half on each end. A wooden ornamental cave (*chhajja*) is provided for the protection of door. Over the gate, there is a panel of glazed work in the form of an arch, which is decorated with glazed tiles in geometrical pattern. The spandrels are ornamented with glazed tiles in floral design. Above the spandrel is a row of glazed dentil design in Persian blue colour. The whole space on both sides of the door is decorated with Persian blue glazed terra-cotta plugs laid diagonally on both sides, thus creating squares. *Seh-khani* (three square) pattern is provided in the centre of each square thus created by diagonal lines. The central square is glazed in white colour and side ones in Persian blue colour (Plate II).

Above the diagonal square pattern, there are a number of horizontal friezes in glazed blue tiles. The first frieze is in arabesque design with Persian blue colour, next third course is executed in glazed decorated geometrical pattern. The second frieze is decorated with alternate stepped lozenge pattern and a shape of cruciform design resembling *yantra* pattern similar to the ones used on Shah Rukn-i-Alam's mausoleum in Multan. The fourth frieze is decorated with *Sat-khani* (seven square) design arranged horizontally at intervals and the fifth frieze is in glazed tile in crenellation pattern. The parapet is embellished with ornamental glazed merlons. Below the parapet is a projected cornice made with partially glazed bricks laid in dental design.

The southern side has another entrance door. The south entrance is designed with an enframed arched and surmounted by rectangular panels inside one another. The spandrels of the arch are decorated with glazed tiles in geometrical pattern. Below the arch is a rectangular recessed panel decorated with glazed tiles. The outer projected rectangular frame is decorated with glazed square plugs laid diagonal on both directions thus making squares. Above the projected frame are situated a projected decorative moulding or cornice, then embellished with ornamental glazed blind pointed merlons, seven full and two half on each end.

The space on both sides of the gate is decorated with three recessed arched panels enclosed by rectangular frames placed one above the other. The spandrels of each arched panel is ornamented with glazed tiles in floral design. The surface below the arch in the panels except the central one has recessed rectangular panel of glazed tiles in floral pattern, while the central one is ornamented with *Punj-khani* (five square) design and stepped lozenge pattern. On the both sides of the arched recessed panels, the surface is ornamented from bottom to top with *Punj-khani* (five square) design, decorative pattern in intarsia, *shamsa* (lotiform), stepped lozenge pattern and eight pointed star.

Above the merlons on projected rectangular frame, of the door, there are friezes running horizontally. The first frieze is made of glazed tiles with arabesque design, which is bordered by a strip of glazed tiles of Persian blue colour in a single row.

The second frieze is in stepped lozenge pattern and interlaced motif arranged alternatively at intervals. The third frieze is glazed having geometrical design and bordered by Persian blue strips. The fourth one is in stepped lozenge pattern. The fifth frieze is glazed having crenellation pattern. This frieze is bordered by a single glazed course in Persian blue colour on below and cut brick course on top. The parapet is embellished with glazed bold and pointed merlons ornamented with floral pattern. Below the parapet is projected glazed string course in dentil design.

The western side has a projection indicating the *mehrab*. The top of the *mehrab* is embellished with glazed blind pointed merlons on a projected glazed moulding. The whole surface is decorated in ornamental friezes. The first frieze consists of a series of stepped-lozenge pattern and *Punj-khani* (five square) design arranged alternately. The second frieze is in *Punj-khani* design arranged at intervals. The third frieze is in *Sat-khani* (seven square) and interlaced decorative motifs arranged alternately at intervals. The fourth frieze is in *Shamsa* (or lotiform) pattern arranged at intervals. The fifth frieze is in stepped lozenge pattern. The sixth frieze is in decorative eight-corner star. There are four arched recessed panels enclosed by regular frames decorated with glazed tiles. Above it, the wall has ornamentation like the southern sides. The south-western and north-western turrets are decorated with the same type of ornamentation. The northern side has the same decoration as southern side except for a variation of the entrance door. Here instead of entrance door, the recessed arched niche is provided.

#### *Second Storey* [Plate III, Fig (ii)]

Above the first storey is placed the second storey not exactly octagonal in plan leaving a narrow passage all round the top of the lower storey. It is treated with more elaborate ornamentation. Each side possesses a projected recessed arched panels which is enclosed by a projected regular frame with a broad panel filled with an intricate design executed on enamelled tiles. Above the projected border is crenellation design over a projected moulding. The space on either side of the frame is covered with two vertical panels faced with enamelled tiles in geometrical pattern and stepped-lozenge pattern. Above the crenellation design there is a frieze of stepped-lozenge pattern arranged at intervals. Above this frieze is a crenellation design bordered with glazed ornamental courses on top and below, then a frieze in stepped lozenge pattern arranged at intervals. Above it is a horizontal frieze in crenellation design on enamelled tiles. The parapet is embellished with glazed bold pointed merlons over a projected cornice in beaded design. On the corners of the octagonal drum are small minarets surmounted with fluted domelets and finial.

#### *Third Storey* [Plate 111, Fig (iii)]

On the top of the second storey is placed the base of the dome surmounted with a hemispherical dome with a high neck. The surface of the dome was finished with glazed lime plaster. The painting on the dome is later addition. The dome is crowned with typical lantern and finial.

### *Interior (Plate IV)*

The interior of the shrine is 22'x26' having entrance in the east and south walls. There is a *mehrab* in the western wall in shape of recessed niche not exactly in the centre but off centred towards north. The plan of the ground storey is not symmetrical like the other tombs of the Multan style. Each side has arched panels decorated with leaf design in fresco painting. The arched panel is enclosed by a regular frame. The *mehrab* is embellished with glazed tiles in geometrical and floral pattern. According to epigraphical evidence over *mehrab*, the interior renovation was executed in 1343 A.H./1925 A.D. The modern renovation has left little of original decoration. Above the square, it is converted into octagon by providing squinches in the corners supporting on carbelled brick work. Each side is decorated with arched panels enclosed by regular frame on top and sides. Above the arch is dental design. Then the octagon is converted into 16 sides by providing squinches in the corners having the same decoration. Above it is a continuous frieze in crenellation design in glazed tiles. It is further converted into 32 sides. Each side has arched panels with rectangular frame. Recessed panels are decorated with glazed tiles in geometrical pattern. Above it is projected glazed course in dental design. There is a frieze in glazed tiles at spring level of the dome. Above it is a decorative pendentive course. Above the pendentive there are three friezes in paintings and a *Shamsa* at the apex.

### *Tomb of Syed Ali (Plate V Fig.iv)*

Syed Ali was the son of Pir Adil. The tomb is rectangular in plan measuring 32'x27' externally and 26'-6"x21' internally having flat roof. The height of the tomb including parapet is 19 feet.

Circular turrets are provided at four corners to strengthen the structure, which taper sharply towards the top and are crowned with cupola and finial.

The exterior of the building is finished with naked bricks except the parapet, which is lime plastered.

The entrance door lies in the eastern wall, while the *mehrab* in the western wall. Below the parapet runs a decorative frieze in dentil design. The northern, southern and western sides have three arched recessed panels in rectangular frames measuring 3'x4'. The ventilators are provided in these panels.

The roof of the tomb is flat composed of wooden beams and battens system supported by four vertical wooden columns. The ceiling of the roof is painted in floral design. The walls on its interior are finished with glazed lime plaster. No glazed tiles decoration is found on this tomb. To me, it is the only tomb in Pakistan having rectangular plan with corner turrets and flat roof. According to epigraphical evidence over door the repair of the tomb was carried out in 1288 A.H. No epigraphic evidence and written record is available about the construction of the tomb. I think it was built in 16th century A.D.

### **Conclusion**

The ground floor of the tomb of Pir Adil is rectangular in plan with semi-circular and conical turrets on front side corners and circular on back side corners. The second storey is almost octagonal, surmounted with hemispherical dome. This makes the building a unique in the Multan Style of tomb

architecture. It is also the only example in Pakistan due to its semi circular and conical plan of turrets. The tomb of Syed Ali is rectangular in plan with turrets on corners. It has flat roof having beams and battens system supported by wooden columns. I think, it is the only tomb in Pakistan having such unique style of tomb architecture

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Munshi Hukam Chand: *Tawarikh Dera Ghazi Khan* (Urdu), 1876, reprint 1992, Karachi, p.46.
- <sup>2</sup> *Punjab Government: Gazetteer of the Dera Ghazi Khan District (1893-97)*, 1898, reprint 1990, Lahore, p.55.
- <sup>3</sup> Munshi Hukam Chand: *Tawarikh Dera Ghazi Khan* (Urdu), 1876, reprint 1992, Karachi, p.47.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p.47.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p.47.



Plate I: Tomb of Pir Adil in District Dera Ghazi Khan – south side elevation

Plate II: Tomb of Pir Adil in District Dera Ghazi Khan showing tile decoration on eastern facade





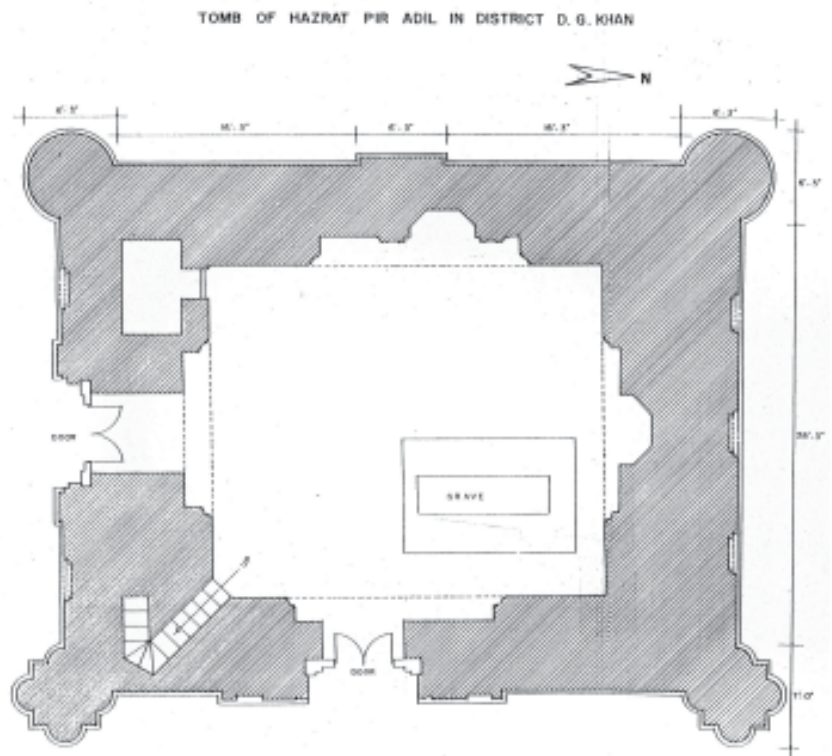
Plate III: Tomb of Pir Adil in District Dera Ghazi Khan showing second and third storey from west side

Plate IV: Tomb of Pir Adil in District Dera Ghazi Khan showing zone of transition





Plate V: Tomb of Pir Adil in District Dera Ghazi Khan showing view from south west side

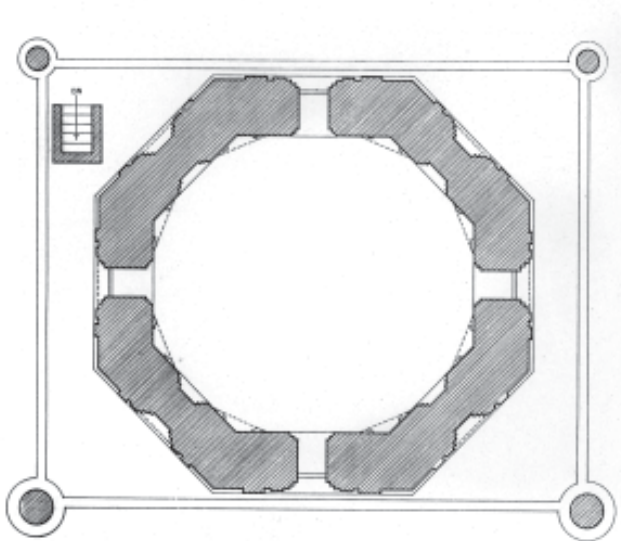


Fig(1) GROUND FLOOR PLAN





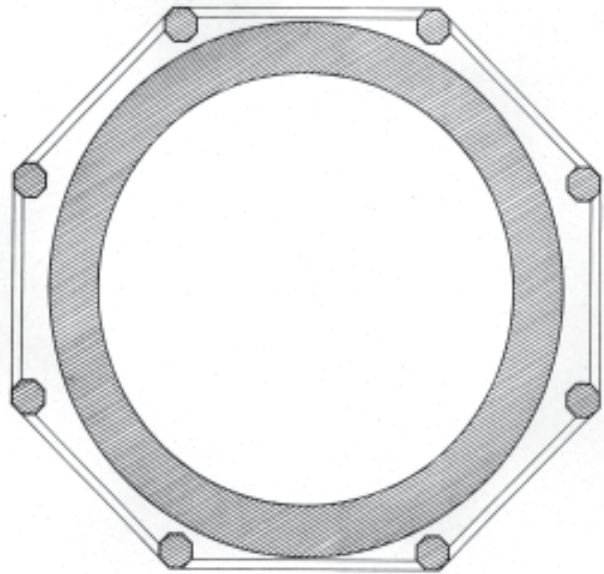
TOMB OF HAZRAT PIR ADIL IN DISTRICT D. G. KHAN



Fig(111) 1st FLOOR PLAN



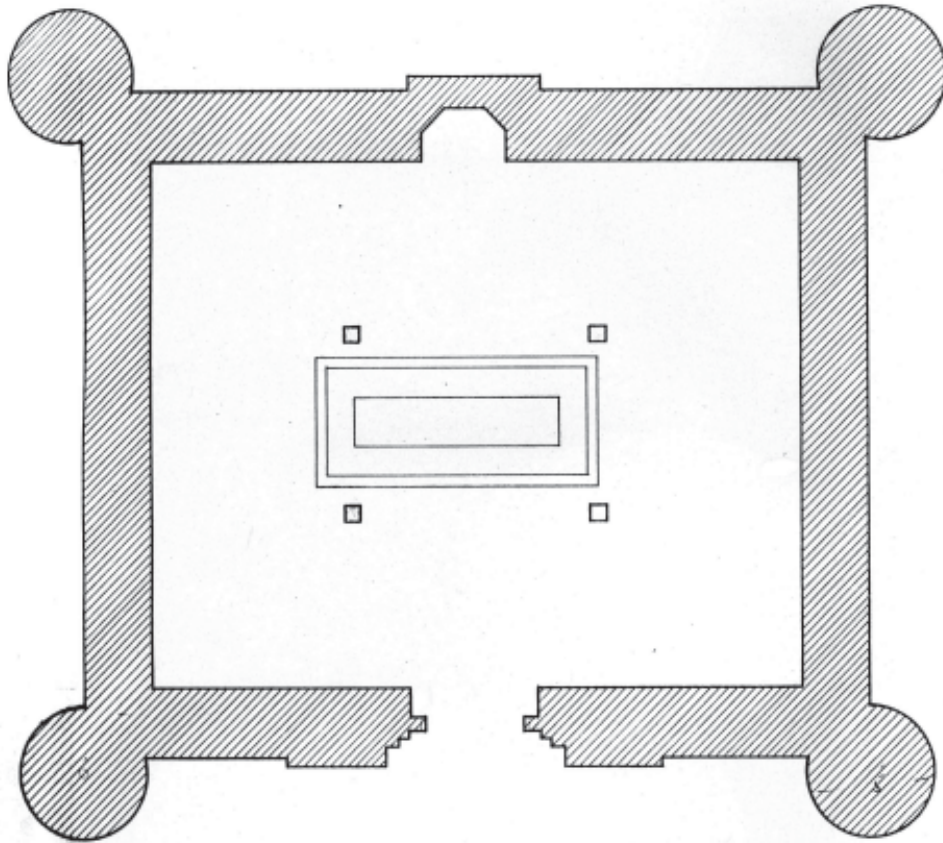
TOMB OF HAZRAT PIR ADIL IN DISTRICT D. G. KHAN



Fig(111) 2nd FLOOR PLAN



TOMB OF HAZRAT SYED ALI IN DISTRICT D. G. KHAN



Fig(iv) GROUND FLOOR PLAN

