

The Shrine of Fatima Masumeh (Persian: حرم فاطمه معصومه translit. haram-e fateme-ye masumeh) is located in Qom, which is considered by Shia Muslims to be the second most sacred city in Iran after Mashhad.

Fatima Masumeh was the sister of the eighth Imam Reza and the daughter of the seventh Imam Musa al-Kadhim (Tabari 60). In Shia Islam, women are often revered as saints if they are close relatives to one of the Twelver Imams. Fatima Masumeh is therefore honored as a saint, and her shrine in Qom is considered one of the most significant Shi'i shrines in Iran. Every year, thousands of Shi'i Muslims travel to Qom to honor Fatima Masumeh and ask her for blessings.

Also buried within the shrine are three daughters of the ninth Twelver Shī'ah Imām Muhammad al-Taqī.[1]

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Specifications[edit]

The mosque consists of a burial chamber, three courtyards and three large prayer halls, totalling an area of 38,000 m2 (410,000 sq ft). The three prayer halls are named: Tabātabā'i, Bālā Sar, and A'dham.[2][3]

Visiting the Shrine[edit]

Though Shi'i theology formally states that the relatives of the Imams, or imamzadehs, hold a lower status than the Imams, popular Shi'ism still strongly venerates imamzadehs.[4] In Iran, there are many more burial places of the Imams' relatives than there are for the Imams themselves.[4] Imamzadehs are considered to be close to God and religiously pious because of their close relation to Imams.[5] Shi'is commonly travel on pilgrimages to shrines of imamzadehs, such as the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh, the sister of the 8th Imam 'Ali al-Rida, in Qom, Iran. Men and women seek cures to ailments, solutions to problems, and forgiveness of sins at these sites.[5] Many hadiths, or teachings, are recorded from Shi'i Imams praising the veneration of Fatima Masumeh, and proclaiming that those who make a pilgrimage to her Shrine will "certainly be admitted to heaven." [2]

Fatima Masumeh's Shrine in Qom is crowded every day of the year with Shi'i men, women, and children from all around the world. Some stay for hours or days praying at the mosque

and circumambulating her tomb. The economy of Qom has become reliant on this pilgrimage for the tourism it brings.[6] In turn, Qom has remained conservative and traditional to maintain a pious environment for pilgrims.[7] Many miracles have been recorded as taking place at this shrine, and they are documented in a special office within the shrine complex. Some are published in the shrines monthly newspaper, the Payam-e Astan.[2]

Pilgrims at the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh follow rituals that have been passed down for centuries. Imam Ali al-Rida, Fatima Masumeh's brother, outlined these ritual acts as he described the way he visited her Shrine. The prayer Imam al-Rida dictated to his sister continues to be part of the pilgrimage.[4] Since the Safavid period, additional rituals have been added that are now typical for many Shi'i pilgrimages including ritual washing beforehand, dressing in perfumed clothing, and entering the site with one's right foot.[4] History of the Shrine[edit]

Early history[edit]

Since the beginning of Qom's history in the 7th century, the city has been associated with Shi'ism and set apart from the Sunni caliphate.[4] Many Shi'i hadiths referred to Qom as a "place of refuge for believers," calling it a deeply religious place. After Fatima Masumeh's death in Qom and the construction of her Shrine, scholars began to gather in Qom and the city gained its reputation for religious learning. Today, Qom is still noted for its religious seminaries and organizations.[2]

Fatima Masumeh died in Qom in 201 A.H. as she travelled to join her brother, Imam Ali al-Rida in Khorasan.[2] The caravan she travelled in was attacked in Saveh by the Abbasid Sunnis, and 23 of Fatima Masumeh's family and friends were killed (Jaffer). Fatima Masumeh was then poisoned by a woman from the Sunni enemies, fell ill, and asked to be taken to Qom, where she died.[2] Fatima Masumeh's host in Qom buried her in his plot of land.[4]

The style of Fatima Masumeh's Shrine has developed over many centuries.[8] At first, her tomb was covered with a bamboo canopy.[4] Fifty years later, this was replaced by a more durable domed building, at the request of the daughter of Imam Muhammad at-Taqi, Sayyida Zaynab.[4][2] The family of Sayyida Zainab later added a further two domes to the Shrine.[4] These architectural projects marked the beginning of female patronage of the tomb of Fatima Masumeh.

Safavid period[edit]

In 1519, Tajlu Khanum, the wife of Shah Isma'il I, led a project to improve the drainage around the Shrine, embellish the Shrine with an iwan and two minarets, and reconstruct the tomb chamber as a domed octagon. During the Safavid dynasty, the women of this family were very active in embellishing the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh. In times of war, Safavid royal women found refuge in Qom, and likely compared their situation to that of Fatima Masumeh. These women donated beautiful fabrics and other items to the Shrine. Shah Abbas I of the Safavids did not patronize the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh as much as he did other shrines of Imams, but he did offer books to the Shrine's seminary library.[4] Over the years, many Safavids of royal birth were buried close to the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh.

Modern history[edit]

From 1795–1796, Fath-Ali Shah Qajar converted two Safavid sahn or courtyards into one large courtyard and, in 1803, fixed the golden dome. In 1883, Amin al-Sultan added the new sahn e-jadid or "New Court" to the Shrine complex.[8]

During Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 Iranian Revolution, Qom was named "the birthplace" of this movement. Khomeini studied in Qom and lived there at the beginning and end of the Revolution. Aspects of the culture of Qom, including the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh, were used to unite the Iranian people over significant historical and mythical events.[9] Khomeini used images of the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh in posters, money, and stamps created during the Revolution.[8] Khomeini also constructed an addition to the Shrine of Fatima Masumeh and added more space for pilgrims.[2] In addition, the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini utilizes architectural elements that are similar to Fatima Masumeh's Shrine, such as the golden dome.[8] See Mausoleum of Khomeini.

Notable burials[edit]

Fatemeh Masumeh (790–816) – daughter of Musa al-Kadhim

Royalty[edit]

Kheyr al-Nesa Begum (1548–1579) – Safavid princess

Shah Safi (1611–1642) – Shahanshah of Persia (1629–42)

Shah Abbas II (1632–1666) – Shahanshah of Persia (1642–66)

Shah Suleiman I (1647–1694) – Shahanshah of Persia (1666–94)

Shah Sultan Hossein (1668–1726) – Shahanshah of Persia (1694–1722)

Shah Abbas III (d. 1739) – Shahanshah of Persia (1732–36)

Qahraman Mirza (fa) (d. 1840) – Qajar prince

Fath-Ali Shah (1772–1834) – Shahanshah of Persia (1797–1834)

Mohammad Shah (1808–1848) – Shahanshah of Persia (1834–48)

Galin Khanom (fa) (d. 1857) – Qajar princess

Malek Jahan Khanom Mahd-e Olia (1805–1873) – mother of Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar

Fakhr od-Dowleh (it) (1861–1893) – Qajar princess

Afsar od-Dowleh (fa) (1859–1901) – Qajar princess

Ali-Naghi Mirza (fa) (1860–1917) – Qajar prince

Malek-Mansour Mirza (1880–1922) – Qajar prince

Abdolsamad Mirza (fa) (1845–1929) – Qajar prince

Kamran Mirza (1856–1929) – Qajar prince and governor of Tehran

Political figures[edit]

Hassan Khan Mostowfi ol-Mamalek Ashtiani (fa) (1781–1845) – politician

Manouchehr Khan Gorji Mo'tamed od-Dowleh (d. 1847) – politician

Ali Khan Hajeb od-Dowleh (fa) (d. 1867) – politician

Anoushirvan Khan Etehad od-Dowleh (d. 1868) – politician

Farrokh Khan Amin od-Dowleh (1812–1871) – Persian ambassador to France and Great Britain

Asadollah Nazem od-Dowleh (fa) (d. 1900) – politician

Ali-Asghar Khan Amin os-Sultan (1843–1907) – prime minister (1887–96) and (1907)

Mohammad-Baqer Khan Saad os-Saltaneh (fa) (d. 1907) – politician

Ebrahim Motamed os-Saltaneh (fa) (d. 1917) – politician
Ahmad Khan Moshir os-Saltaneh (1844–1919) – prime minister (1907–08)
Mohammad Eqbal od-Dowleh (fa) (1848–1924) – politician
Yahya Diba Nazem od-Dowleh (fa) (1886–1940) – politician
Hassan Vosough Vosough od-Dowleh (1873–1950) – prime minister (1909–10, 1911 and 1916–17)
Abdollah Vosough Motamed os-Saltaneh (fa) (1884–1952) – politician
Ahmad Qavam Qavam os-Saltaneh (1876–1955) – prime minister (1921, 1922–23, 1942–43, 1946–47 and 1952)
Faramarz Asadi (1869–1969) – politician
Hossein Dadgar Adl ol-Molk (1881–1971) – speaker of the Majles (1928–35)
Mohammad-Vali Gharani (1913–1979) – army general
Mehdi Eraqi (1930–1979) – a founder of Fadayan-e Islam
Mehdi Bazargan (1907–1995) – prime minister (1979)
Scholars[edit]
Aghabeyim Javanshir (1780–1832) – poet
Yusef Etesami Ashtiani (1874–1938) – writer and translator
Parvin Etesami (1907–1941) – poet
Mohammad Meshkat (fa) (1900–1980) – scholar
Ali Davani (1929–2007) – author
Clerics[edit]
Qotbeddin Ravandi (fa) (d. 1177) – medieval cleric
Fazlollah Nouri (1843–1909) – cleric
Abdolkarim Haeri Yazdi (1859–1937) – cleric
Mehdi Ashtiani (1888–1952) – cleric
Mohammad-Taghi Khansari (fa) (1888–1952) – cleric
Sadreddin Sadr (1882–1954) – cleric
Hossein Borujerdi (1875–1961) – cleric
Soltan ol-Vaezin Shirazi (1894–1971) – cleric
Morteza Motahhari (1920–1979) – cleric
Mohammad Mofatteh (1928–1979) – cleric
Mohammad-Hossein Tabatabaei (1904–1981) – cleric
Asadollah Madani (1914–1981) – cleric
Ali Qoddusi (1927–1981) – cleric
Mohammad Montazeri (1944–1981) – cleric
Khalil Kamarei (1898–1984) – cleric
Reza Zanjani (1902–1984) – cleric
Ahmad Khonsari (1887–1985) – cleric
Morteza Haeri Yazdi (1916–1986) – cleric
Shahabeddin Marashi Najafi (1897–1990) – cleric
Mohammad-Reza Golpaygani (1898–1993) – cleric
Hashem Amoli (1899–1993) – cleric
Mohammad-Ali Araki (1894–1994) – cleric

Mohammad-Jafar Moravej (1902–1999) – cleric
Ahmad Azari Qomi (1925–1999) – cleric
Mohammad Shirazi (1928–2001) – cleric
Esmail Mousavi Zanjani (1928–2002) – cleric
Sadegh Khalkhali (1926–2003) – cleric ("Eichmann of Iran")
Mohammad Vaez Abaee Khorasani (1940–2004) – cleric
Javad Tabrizi (1926–2006) – cleric
Ali Meshkini (1921–2007) – cleric and chairman of Assembly of Experts (1983–2007)
Mohammad Fazel Lankarani (1931–2007) – cleric
Ahmad Mojtahedi Tehrani (1923–2008) – cleric
Mohammad-Taqi Behjat Fumani (1913–2009) – cleric
Hossein-Ali Montazeri (1922–2009) – cleric
Mohammad Mofti al-Shia Mousavi (1928–2010) – cleric
Abbas Hosseini Kashani (1931–2010) – cleric
Mohammad-Hassan Ahmadi Faqih (1951–2010) – cleric
Yusef Madani Tabrizi (1928–2013) – cleric
Moslem Malakouti (1924–2014) – cleric
Abdol-Karim Mousavi Ardabili (1926–2016) – cleric and chief justice (1981–89)
Ahmad Ahmadi (1933–2018) – cleric
Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi (1948–2018) – cleric and chief justice (1999–2009)
Mohammad Hossaini Shahroudi (1925–2019) – cleric
Qorban-Ali Mohaqeq Kaboli (1927–2019) – cleric
Mohammad Momen (1938–2019) – cleric
Ebrahim Amini (1925–2020) – cleric
Mohammad Yazdi (1931–2020) - cleric and chief justice (1989–1999)
Mohammad-Taqi Mesbah-Yazdi (1935–2021) - cleric
See also[edit]
Holiest sites in Islam (Shia)
Imām Ridhā Mosque
Shāh Abdol Azīm Mosque
Iranian architecture
Islamic architecture
Seyyed Mohammad Saeedi, the shrine trustee