

Personalities >> Hazrat Bayazid Bustami

"Whoever is initiated by Us and follows Us and loves Us, whether he is near or far, wherever he is, even if he is in the East and We are in the West, We nourish from the stream of love and give him light in his daily life."

Hazrat Bahauddin Naqshband (RA) on the Awliya Allah

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY:

Birth Name: Abu Yazid Bistami or Tayfur Abu Yazid al-Bustami

Born in: Bostam, Iran

In depth:

Hazrat Bayazid Bustami , also known as Yazid Bistami or Tayfur Abu Yazid al-Bustami, was a Persian Sufi Master.

Not much is known about his childhood and youth, except that he would enjoy solitude in his house or the Masjid, and also welcomed people to his house to discuss Sufism.

Influence on Sufism

In his quest to seek unity with Almighty Allah, he renounced worldly pleasures and eventually reached the state of self-annihilation which is the only way one can be closest to Allah.

He also became known as the first 'intoxicated' Sufi, referring to his complete devotion to God, which reached such an extent that he would openly express his love for Allah. For this reason, he was controversial during his time yet extremely influential in the world of Sufism.

Before him, Sufism was mainly based on piety & obedience and he played a major role in placing the concept of Divine Love at its core.

Hazrat Bayazid Bustami was the first to speak openly of 'self-annihilation in God' (fana fillah) and 'existence through God' (baqa billah).

The 'annihilation of the self' (fana fillah) refers to disregarding everything in this world due to one's love of God. When a person enters the state of 'fana', at that time it is believed that one is closest to God.

Hazrat Bayazid Bustami's sayings gained a wide circulation and soon exerted a captivating influence over the minds of students who aspired to understand the meaning of 'wahdat al-wujud', Unity of Being.

Exile & Controversy about His Utterances

Unlike many Sufis who reserve their feelings within themselves and not allowing such expressions to be observed to the outside world, Hazrat Bayazid expressed himself openly and as a result, many shunned him. Those who opposed to his openness would accuse him of being a heretic due to his controversial sayings which they could not comprehend at the time.

Hazrat Ibn Hajar Asqalani said, in reference to Hazrat Bayazid's famous utterances, "Allah knows the secret and Allah knows the heart. Whatever Abu Yazid spoke from his Knowledge of Realities, the people of his time did not understand. They condemned him and exiled him seven times from his city. Every time he was exiled, terrible afflictions would strike the city until the people would call him back, pledge allegiance to him, and accept him as a real saint."

Hazrat Fariduddin Attar relate that Hazrat Bayazid said, when he was exiled from his city, "O Blessed city, whose refuse is Bayazid!"

Advice to His Mureeds

He urged his students (Mureeds) to put their affairs in the Hands of Allah and to accept sincerely the pure doctrine of Tawheed (the Oneness of God).

He also taught five essentials:

to follow the obligations according to the Qur'an and Sunnah,

to always speak the truth,

to keep the heart free from hatred,

to avoid forbidden food

and to shun innovations (bid`a).

Sayings & Quotes

- He said about Allah's love for His servant, "If Allah loves His servant He will grant three attributes that are the proofs of His Love: generosity like the generosity of the ocean, and favor like the favor of the Sun in its giving of light, and modesty like the modesty of the Earth. The true lover never considers any affliction too great and never decreases his worship because of his pure faith."

- He once said, ""Praise to Me, for My greatest Glory!"

This sparked much controversy, but his followers understood his sayings because they were able to comprehend something which most Sufis at the time did not; that Hazrat Bayazid had reached a stage of self-annihilation so strongly infused with the Divine Presence that there was only space for God and no room for his own existence.

- They asked him, "Describe your day and describe your night." He said, "I don't have a day and I don't have a night, because day and night are for those who have characteristics of creation. I have shed myself the way the snake sheds its skin."

Hazrat Bayazid's Shrine in Bangladesh

There is a shrine in Chittagong, Bangladesh that local people believe to also be Hazrat Bayazid's tomb.

This is unlikely but there may be explanation as to why this shrine is attributed to him:

A local legend tells that Hazrat Bayazid did indeed visit Chittagong. At the time of his return, he found that his local followers did not want him to leave. Overwhelmed by the love of his local followers, he pierced his finger and dropped a few drops of his blood on the ground and allowed his followers to build a shrine in his name where his blood drops fell.

This also explained by the traditional Sufi masters as a mash-had, or site of witnessing, where the spiritual presence of the saint has been witnessed, and is known to appear.

This is explained through the Sufi concept of a Saint's power to travel and in its spiritual form, even after death, to appear to the living. The Qur'an mentions that some of those who have proven their sincerity have achieved a life beyond the grave:

"Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord."

[Holy Qur'an 3:169]

Death & Departure of Hazrat Bayazid

When Hazrat Bayazid died, he was over seventy years old. Before he died, someone asked him his age. He said: "I am four years old. For seventy years I was veiled. I got rid of my veils only four years ago."

Bayazid died in 261 H. It is said he is buried in two places, one is Damascus and the other is Bistam in Persia.