

Personalities >> Mehboob-e-Elahi, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya

"In Allah's garden you gather roses, Being drunk with divine mysteries; Hazrat Mehboob-e-Elahi - the beloved of Allah, O, how I long for the attar of your company!"

BRIEF FACTS:

Born in: 1238 AD, in Badayun, Uttar Pradesh

Also known as: Mehboob-e-Elahi

Passed away in: 725 AH (1324 AD)

Introduction

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya represents in many ways the pinnacle of the Chishti Order (Silsila).

His spiritual guide, Hazrat Baba Fareed, said to him on appointing him as his successor, "Be like a big tree so that Allah's creation, the human beings in their vast multitudes, may find rest and solace under your shadow."

This partly explains why he admitted so many men into the Chishti order as his disciples. Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya sent his well-versed and caring disciples to far-flung areas of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, and Bengal amongst other places to spread the word of truth.

With regard to the Sufi path, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya taught the following:

"For a dervish, three things are necessary. They all begin with an 'ain' (an Arabic letter): Ishq (love), Aql (intelligence) and Ilm (knowledge)."

Let us discuss these three qualities one by one:

Love: Sufism is, in its essence, the way of love. Love is considered to be a spiritual treasure through which the baser qualities of a human being are transformed into higher ones. In this respect, it suffices to say that Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya is known as Mehboob-e-Elahi, the beloved of Allah. Of course, the spiritual status of a beloved is much higher than that of a lover.

Intelligence: Intelligence changed in the hands of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya into wisdom. His wisdom manifested itself in the shape of service to humanity. About him it has been said: "He was not a miracle-monger of the ordinary sort. He never flew in the air or walked on water with dry and motionless feet. His greatness was the greatness of a loving heart; his miracles were the miracles of a deeply sympathetic soul. He could read a man's inner heart by a glance at his face and spoke the words that brought consolation to a tortured heart."

Knowledge: About knowledge, it can be said that Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya was one of the greatest scholars of his day. He wished to become a Qazi (Islamic judge) but gave it all up in his pursuit of inner knowledge.

After becoming a Mureed (spiritual disciple) of Hazrat Baba Fareed, he lived in extremely poor circumstances. Seeing him, a former friend expressed great surprise as he remembered Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya as one who had began a very promising career as a scholar. When Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya told all of this to Hazrat Baba Fareed, his Murshid (spiritual guide) suggested that he should recite the following couplet to his friend:

"You are not my fellow traveller.

Tread your own path

May you be affluent.

And I downtrodden.”

Then Hazrat Baba Fareed ordered him to take a tray of food from the kitchen and carry it on his head to his friend. After doing so, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya recited the verse above which deeply moved his friend.

One day, someone told a story of a certain saint who passed away while slowly repeating the name of Allah. The eyes of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya, who was listening to this story, filled with tears and he recited this verse:

“I have come running to the end of Your street,

Tears are washing my face,

What else do I seek other than meeting You?

I repeat Your name as I surrender my soul to You.”

### Early Years & Education

After leaving their homeland, the city of Bukhara in Uzbekistan, the paternal grandfather of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya (Khwaja Ali) and the maternal grandfather of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya (Khwaja Arab) along with their family, moved to India.

At first they lived in Lahore, but later they took up their residence in Badayun (east of Delhi). Soon after, Khwaja Arab married his daughter Bibi Zulaikha to Khwaja Ali's son Khwaja Ahmad.

The birth of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya took place on the last Wednesday of the month of Safar (the 27th of Safar 636 AH). Up to this day, his birthday celebration takes place on which his blessed shrine is bathed and the water thereof is distributed among the visitors.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya's father passed away when Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya was five years old.

His mother took him to a school where he learned to recite the Holy Qur'an. In a short time, he mastered the seven ways of reciting the Holy Qur'an. Then he studied Arabic grammar, Ahadith (sayings of Rasulallah, commentary of the Holy Qur'an and logic. At the age of twelve, he received the "turban of excellence."

He was so sharp-witted, wise and understanding that he was given the title "Debater, capable of defeating the congregation." He became distinguished in the science of Tafsir (commentary on the Qur'an), in the knowledge of Ahadith, in Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), mathematics and astronomy. Khwaja Shamsul Malik was among his most learned teachers. He received a testimony of knowledge of Ahadith from Mawlana Kamaluddin.

Although Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya used to sit among the Ulema (scholars of Islam) during that time, he was more interested in the inner life. He often used to say, "In the days of youth, I used to live in the company of the Ulema, but in my heart the thought used to come that I should go away from their company and turn my face to the Divine Teacher."

Hazrat Baba Fareed

One day, a certain Qawwal (Sufi musician) with the name of Abu Bakr, came from Multan to visit Hazrat Nizamuddin's teacher. The teacher asked for information about the Sufi Sheikhs of Multan.

Abu Bakr answered thus, "I have lived in the company of Hazrat Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan and I have sung mystical couplets for him. In his Khanqa (Sufi institution), the worship of Allah is very devoted, so much so that even the girls who knead the flour, while doing so, are occupied with the Zikr (remembrance of Allah). From there I went to Ajodhan (Pak Pattan). There I was given the privilege of meeting Hazrat Baba Fareeduddin Ganj-e-Shakar. That sovereign of love of God has conquered the world and the light of his moon has illuminated that area."

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya says, "When I heard these words of praise in regard to Baba Fareeduddin Ganj-e-Shakar, I developed a sudden and intense love for him and I began to repeat his name after every Namaz (prayer)."

The Qawwal started his concert with this line, "The living serpent of love has bitten my heart." But then Abu Bakr could not recollect the second line. Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya helped him to do so, and seeing this, the Qawwal became very attentive towards him. From that day, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya became very much attached to Baba Fareed.

Arriving in Delhi

"When my eighteenth year began," Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya narrates, "I travelled from Badayun to Delhi."

Musamma Ayuz accompanied him in this journey. Ayuz was a staunch believer in the spiritual greatness of Hazrat Baba Fareed. Whenever he saw the slightest danger of robbers or wild beasts, he would cry out, "O, Pir! Come! I need your protection."

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya continues, "I asked him the name of that Pir and Ayuz said, "It is the one who has caught your heart and got you enamoured," meaning Baba Fareed. Thus, from that day my faith in the Sheikh increased."

"When in Delhi, I stayed by chance near Hazrat Baba Fareeduddin's brother and Caliph, Hazrat Sheikh Najibuddin Mutawakkil. My mother and sister were also with me. We rented a house in the neighbourhood of the great Sheikh, whose company was very valuable to me. In his presence, the qualities of Baba Fareeduddin Ganj-e-Shakar used to be discussed. On hearing them, I felt the desire of kissing his blessed feet. For approximately three years, I stayed in Delhi."

Meeting Hazrat Baba Fareed

One day Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya asked Sheikh Najibuddin Mutawakkil to pray to God that he (Hazrat Nizamuddin) may become a Qazi & be able to spread justice among the creatures of God. The Sheikh remained silent. When Hazrat Nizamuddin repeated his question, he answered thus, "God forbid that you be a Qazi; be something else!"

In those days, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya used to spend the nights at the Jama Masjid. One morning, the Muazzin (the one who announces the Azan, call to prayer) recited the following verse from the minaret:

"Has not the time come

For the faithful

That their hearts should bend

For the remembrance of Allah."

[Qur'an 57:16]

Hearing this, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya's condition changed. It was as if he received spiritual illumination from every direction. And, without any food, he left Delhi in order to present himself to Baba Fareed.

At the age of twenty, on Wednesday 11th Rajab 655 AH (1257 AD), he reached Ajodhan. Upon meeting Hazrat Baba Fareed for the first time, he unsuccessfully tried to summon up courage to explain how eager he was to see him. He could not do so, due to the awe of the great Sheikh's presence. Baba Fareed then said, "Every newcomer is nervous."

Thereafter Baba Fareed recited this verse:

"O, the fire of separation of Thee,

Has made the hearts like roasted meat;

The flood of the fondness of Thee,

Has made the lives morose."

Then Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya was honoured to be accepted as the Mureed (spiritual disciple) of Baba Fareed.

Then Hazrat Baba Fareed remarked, "O, Nizamuddin! I wanted to entrust the domain of Delhi to someone else. When you were on your way, I heard a voice instructing that I should wait as Nizamuddin is coming; he is fit for this domain and it should be entrusted to him. So stay in our company so that after completing your inner training, we will appoint you as our Caliph and as the Wali-e-Hindustan (the saint of India)."

Hazrat Nizamuddin lived in the company of his Pir-o-Murshid (spiritual guide) for seven months and a few days. In this short period, he became even more deserving of the Khilafat of the great Sufi, Hazrat Baba Fareed.

On 2nd Rabi'ul Awwal 656 AH (1258 AD), Baba Fareed bestowed Khilafat and Wilayat to Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya by giving him the special turban, which came to Baba Sahib from Chisht (Afghanistan). After arriving in Delhi, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya ascended the throne of Khilafat-e-Peeran-e-Chisht, i.e. he became a Caliph/successor of the Chishti saints.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya came ten times to Ajodhan: three times in the life of Baba Fareed and seven times after his death.

After residing in Delhi for a few days, he disdained the crowds of people and desired to withdraw himself to the desert. He then received a Divine inspiration that his place of residence should be Ghyaspur, a small village outside the city of Delhi.

First he had built a temporary shed with a straw roof for himself and all his companions. After some time, a better place was constructed for him by one of his disciples, Ziauddin Wakil Mulk. Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya lived here for more than sixty years and never changed his place of residence. The Khanqah is still there and is visited by many people up to this day.



## Death of the Great Mehboob-e-Ilaahi

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya passed away in 725 AH (1324 AD), after an illness of about four months. He was buried in Ghyaspur and the locality is named after him today.

## Unique Nature & Characteristics

After passing the spiritual status of Ghawsiyat (reaching the status of a Ghaws), Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya reached the status of Mehboob (beloved). His personality was a container of divine secrets and his intentions were in harmony with those of Allah.

One of his miracles was that he would emit a very fine fragrance. Qazi Hamiduddin Kashani once became fragrant with this scent and unsuccessfully tried to wash it away. He narrated the incident to Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya, who explained it thus: "Qazi, this fragrance is of the Love of Allah, which He gives to His lovers."

In the early period of his life, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya experienced great poverty. In Sultan Ghyasuddin Balban's time, one could buy melons for very little money, however the greater part of the season would pass without Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya eating a single slice. One day a pious lady brought some barley flour and presented it to him. He asked Sheikh Kamaluddin Yaqub to boil it in a cauldron. At that moment, a faqir with a patched frock arrived and with a loud voice said, "O Nizamuddin! Bring whatever is present." Then Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya gave all the food to him. The faqir ate it all and then broke the cauldron. Hereafter he said, "O Nizamuddin! You have received the bounties of the invisible world from Baba Fareed, and the bowl of visible poverty I have broken. Now you have become the Sultan of both the visible and invisible world." From that day on, countless gifts started arriving and free food was distributed to hundreds of visitors every day.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya was very generous as demonstrated in the following narration, which can be found in Hazrat Abdur Rahman Jami's Nafhatul Uns.

A merchant of Multan lost all his possessions to a band of thieves. He told Sheikh Sadruddin, the son of the famous Suhrawardi saint (Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan), that he intended to go to Delhi and asked for a letter of recommendation to Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya. Then he was told by the great saint that he would receive all the gifts that would be given from the morning to the Chasht (forenoon) prayers. About 12,000 golden and silver coins were received. All these were given to the merchant.

Every day large numbers of gifts used to be received, but they were distributed before the evening. More than three thousand needy people used to live on the Langar (food distributed openly to all who visit).

Shortly before his death, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya called Khadim Iqbal and said, "Whatever cash is present, bring it so that I may distribute it to the deserving." Iqbal replied, "Whatever gifts come, they are spent on the same day. But there are a few thousand tons of grains in our storeroom." "Bring it out and distribute it to the deserving," said Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya had great love for sama (Sufi music). His friends, disciples and students used to perform such Qawwali (music) in his presence that even animals used to stop and listen to it. One day he was out for a walk, when he saw a person who was pulling water out of a well and was saying in a loud voice to his companions, "Remain outside today, brother!" Hazrat Nizamuddin, after hearing this, started weeping, and his Khuddam (servants) repeated that line until they reached home again.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya remained a bachelor all his life. Once his kamarband (a rope used to fasten a pair of trousers) got away from his hand. Baba Fareed then said, "Tighten the kamarband properly." Hazrat Nizamuddin asked, "How should I do it?" Hazrat Baba Fareed answered, "Tighten it in such a way that except the Hooris (Hoori – a lady creation of Jannat) of heaven, nobody is capable of opening it." Hearing that Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya put his head on the floor and did not marry.

## Writing and Sayings

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya collected the speech of his Pir-o-Murshid in a book called Rahatul Quloob.

Some of the sayings of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya:

1. The Wilayat (domain) of gnosis and faith can suffer decay. The Wilayat of compassion can not.
2. The love of Awliya (saints) is stronger than their reason.
3. The lock of spiritual perfection has many keys. All those keys are to be possessed. If one does not open it, others can.
4. He who has knowledge, reason, and love deserves to become a caliph of the Sufi sheikhs.
5. As long as is possible, give relief to your heart, because the heart of a good Muslim is the palace of the manifestations of Allah.

## Miracles [Karamat]

Once, the King Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah asked Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya to visit him on the last day of every month. Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya responded, "It is against the tradition of my Sheikhs. I will never go to meet the King." His friends advised him to turn for help to his Sheikh Baba Fareed, so that the problem would be solved. Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya refused to do so, saying, "The tasks of religion alone are many. I feel ashamed to give pain to the Sheikh for a worldly affair." He then said, "The king will not be victorious over me for I have had a certain dream. I saw that an animal with horns was attacking me. Upon it coming closer, I took hold of its horns and threw the animal on the earth in such a way that it was killed."

That day, after the noon prayers, he declined to visit the king. When two hours of the day remained, he was asked again to visit the king. He gave no reply. But it so happened that upon that very night, the king was murdered by a certain Khusru Khan.

Another Sultan, by the name of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, wanted Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya to leave Ghyaspur before the Sultan's visit to Delhi. Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya was saddened by this and remarked, "Delhi is still far away." Then just before the arrival of the king in Delhi, the palace of Tughlaqabad collapsed over him and he was killed.

Sultan Alauddin had the fear in his heart that Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya wished to rule the kingdom himself and that he was only waiting for the proper time and chance to overthrow him. As a test, he sent some complicated matters related to state affairs to Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya and asked for its solution.

Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya reacted thus, "What have the dervishes, seated on rugs, to do with the affairs of kings seated on thrones? It is better that the time of the dervish is not wasted and conscience of the faqura is not put to test." When the king respectfully invited Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya to visit him, the latter answered thus, "The affections of a dervish should be seen as a bird to which distress is caused by the hawk of kingly shows. It is better and enough to keep acquaintance through greetings."

Khwaja Hassan, who had lived in the company of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya when he was much younger, along with all his friends, was involved in the drinking of wine. One day, near the mausoleum of Hazrat Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, they met again. Khwaja Hassan then recited this verse:

"For years we have been in each others' company,

But your company did me no good.

Your piety could not correct my sinful life.

My sinful life is therefore stronger than your piety."

After hearing this verse, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya simply said, "There are different effects of company on different men." At once, Khwaja Hassan fell down at the feet of Hazrat Nizamuddin and along with his friends became a Mureed (spiritual disciple) of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya.

Hazrat Sheikh Nasiruddin of Oudh related that he used to receive worldly knowledge from Qazi Muhiuddin Kashani. He suddenly became ill and no hope of life remained. Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya visited Sheikh Nasiruddin when he was unconscious and wiped his blessed hand over Sheikh Nasiruddin's face. Immediately Sheikh Nasiruddin regained consciousness and put his head on the feet of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya.

One day a Mureed of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya prepared a feast for him. Qawwals were also called and food was prepared. But when the sama (music) started, thousands of people joined in. The host became worried because of the shortage of food and that it would not be enough for so many unexpected guests. Feeling this, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya said to his Khadim (servant), "Wash the hands of the people and let ten people sit at one place. Start giving the food after saying 'Bismillah'

(in the Name of Allah)."

These instructions were followed, and it so happened that everyone had enough food and there was a great deal of food left over.

It is narrated that a certain Shamsuddin was a very rich man and had no faith in the spirituality of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya. Instead, he would speak ill of him in his absence.

One day, he was drinking wine with his friends and suddenly he saw Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya appear in front of him, who made a prohibiting sign with his finger. Shamsuddin then threw the wine in the water and started towards the house of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya after performing the ritual ablutions. Seeing him, Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya said, "Whoever is blessed by Allah, he abstains from sins like this."

Hearing this, Shamsuddin became very astonished and with complete faith became his Mureed. He distributed all his money to the dervishes and in a short time became a Wali (saint) himself.

#### A Story of Love

One day Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya was listening to Qawwali and in ecstasy, waved his handkerchief and said, "We regret, we have not become equal to the washermans' son even."

At that moment, no one dared to ask what he meant, but some days afterwards he was asked about it by Hazrat Amir Khusru.

The explanation of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya was like this: "The son of the washerman of the king, without seeing the princess, was in love with her. He used to wash her clothes with utmost care, and

even mended and improved them by various means. Without seeing her, he used to moan and weep in the memory of her beauty. His parents became very worried. To speak about it is a problem and to not speak about it is a problem. We are washers and she is a princess. How can the dust of the earth be compared with the sky?

So they tricked him in order to try and change their son's thoughts. One day his mother came to him with a grief-stricken face. He asked what the matter was with her. Then she explained, "Today was the soym (the third day after the death) of the Princess whose clothes you used to wash. The boy asked three times, "Has she died?" and then with a shriek, he died.

On the fourth day, the washerwoman brought the clothes back to the princess. She asked, "Who has washed these clothes today? They do not look as clean as they used to be. Their neatness used to look as if love had been involved." Hearing this, the washerwoman became sad and started to weep. On being forced by the princess, she explained everything. The princess then wished to visit his grave. At once, when she was there, the grave cracked and the princess said, "It cracked at places. Ah! Whose grave is this? Probably a restless heart is buried in it." Then the princess fell down and passed away.

Poetry in Honour of the Beloved

The following is a translation of Hazrat Nizamuddin Awliya's famous poem in honour of the Prophet:

O breeze! turn towards Madinah (and) from this well-wisher recite the Salaam.

Turn to the King of the Prophets (and) with the utmost humility recite the Salaam.

Sometimes pass the gate of mercy (and) with the gate of Gabriel rule the forehead.

Salaam to the Prophet of God (and) sometimes recite Salaam at the gate of peace.

Put with all respect the head of faith on the dust there.

Be one with the sweet melody of David and be acquainted with the cry of anguish.

In the assembly of the Prophet's recite verses from the humble being 'Nizam'.