

Personalities >> Hazrat Shahbaz Qalandar

"Grant me the bliss of eternal life, O Lord, And mine will be the ecstasy of eternal love."

Hazrat Allamah Iqbal

Introduction

Hazrat Shahbaz Qalandar was a Persian Sufi saint, philosopher, poet and Qalandar, born in 1143 in Marwand near Tabraiz, Iran.

Hazrat Shahbaz Qalandar 's real name is thought to be Muhammad Usman - however others claim it was either Shamsuddin Abdullah, Syed Shah Hussain or Syed Usman Shah Marwandi.

He is known widely across the world as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. He was titled 'Lal' (red) for his usual red attire; 'Shahbaz' due to his noble and divine spirit that soared like a falcon higher and higher in the boundless heavens; and 'Qalandar' for his saintly attitude and love for God.

He was a direct descendent of Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq, and also a Syed (descendant of Sayyidina Rasulallah).

Hazrat Shahbaz 's father was a pious dervish whose name was Syed Ibrahim Kabiruddin, and his mother was a high-ranking princess.

His ancestors had migrated from Baghdad and settled down in Mashhad, a center of learning and civilization, before migrating again to Marwand.

Spiritual Life

Even as a young boy, Hazrat Shahbaz Qalandar showed strong religious characteristics. He memorized the entire Holy Qur'an at the young age of seven, and at twenty he embraced the Qalandar order of Sufism.

Qalandar is a type of dervish who lives & dresses like a poor person, admires poverty & austerity and has no permanent dwelling.

Qalandars have such a high rank in the world of Sufism that it is said of them, "Neither the power of crowns and kings nor the might of armies equals the force of a Qalandar."

The legend goes that the incumbent Faqirs in Sehwan sent him a bowl of milk filled to the brim indicating that there was no room for anything more. But surprisingly, he returned the bowl with a beautiful flower floating on the top. This legend spread far and wide, and served as a message to all.

After completing his education, Hazrat Shahbaz left for Baghdad where he met Baba Ibrahim Karbalai and became his disciple (Mureed). Baba Ibrahim was the spiritual follower of Jamal Mujarrad (Mujarrad - the celibate).

After some time, Hazrat Shahbaz received Khilafat (to become a spiritual deputy of a Saint) from his Sheikh and other sacred gifts including a stone, which was attributed to Imam Zainul Abideen. It is said to be the same stone that hangs on his tomb in Sehwan.

Following instructions from his Sheikh, Hazrat Shahbaz then left Baghdad for Sindh via Balkh and Khurasan.

Events on his Journeys

In Balkh, the childless King had asked him to pray for him so that he could have an heir to his throne. Hazrat Shahbaz prayed for the birth of the King's son, but later told the King that his son would be working for him (Hazrat Shahbaz). That Prince is well known in history as Abu Bin Adham (Abu Ibrahim Bin Adham) who after ruling the Balkh State for some years, abdicated his throne to become a dervish.

In Khurasan, he stayed at the Panjgur valley of Makran, Baluchistan. Here, due to his blessings & respectable nature, he became renowned and people started to know of his presence, of which many became Mureeds.

That place honours him even today, and the name of the town is also now known as "Dasht-e-Shahbaz".

During his time in Panjgur, many people became enlightened and embraced Islam by his teachings and his way of life.

On his way from Baluchistan to Sindh, he also stayed in present day Karachi's Manghopir area for muraqaba (meditation), and it is said that Manghopir's natural warm fountain is a miracle of Hazrat Shahbaz Qalandar. This warm fountain started to flow from beneath the hill, on which Hazrat Shahbaz sat for muraqaba (meditation). After hundreds of years, that warm fountain is still flowing continuously and is said to have miraculous healing power especially for asthma sufferers.

In Multan, Hazrat Shahbaz met Bahauddin Zakariya Multani of the Sohrwardia order, Baba Fareeduddin Ganj Shakar of the Chishtiya order, and Makhdoom Jahanian Surkh Bukhari. The attachment was so cordial and spiritual that their friendship became legendary. According to some historians, the four friends visited various parts of Sindh and Punjab, in present day Pakistan.

The people of Multan besought him to stay but he continued his journey southward and eventually settled down in Sehwan, then a famous center of learning and popular place of worship for Hindus, in the southern part of Sindh. Here, he lived in the trunk of a tree on the outskirts of the town for six years and during this period he disseminated the light of Islam, providing guidance to thousands of people.

He also established his Khanqah in Sehwan and started teaching in Fuqhai Islam Madrassa; during this period, he wrote his treatises Mizna-e-Sart, Kism-e-Doyum, Aqd and Zubdah.

It is reported that while he was on his way to Sehwan in Sukkur, he was travelling by means of his miracle of flying in the air (Parwaaz), and came across the shrine of Hazrat Sadruddin Badshah .

Hazrat Sadruddin was a holy saint and his shrine is situated between Sukkur and Rohri in Sindh. Hazrat Shahbaz was then spiritually ordered by Allah () to stay sometime at this holy shrine. Some people believe that he was about to fly over the holy shrine, but because of the high spiritual rank of Hazrat Sadruddin, Allah () ordered Hazrat Shahbaz to meditate there.

He immediately stopped there, and stayed at the holy shrine for 40 days by the will of Allah () before continuing his journey to Sehwan.

The place where Hazrat Shahbaz meditated is still preserved as a holy place; people visit it specifically and make Dua there.

Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar passed away in 1240, at the ripe age of 97 years.

Annual Urs Mubarak

The shrine around his tomb, built in 1356 has a dazzling look with its Sindhi Kaashi tiles, mirror work and two gold-plated doors - one donated by the late Shah of Iran, the other by the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The inner sanctum is about 100 yards square with the silver canopied grave in the middle.

On one side of the marble floor is a row of about 12 inch high folding wooden stands on which are set copies of Qur'an for devotees to read. On the other side, beside a bundle of burning agarbattis (joss sticks/incense), are rows of diyas (small oil lamps) lighted by Hindu devotees. The Hindus regarded him as the incarnation of Bhartihari who is believed to have worshipped Shiva at the venue where Hazrat Shahbaz's shrine is situated.

Thousands of devotees flock to the tomb, and every Thursday their numbers multiply. This is especially true at the time of his Urs Mubarak (death anniversary) which is celebrated every year on the 18th day of Shaban.

At this time, Sehwan springs to life and becomes the focal point of more than half a million pilgrims from all over Pakistan.

On each morning of the three day feast, the narrow lanes of Sewhan are packed out as thousands and thousands of pilgrims, Faqirs and devotees make their way to the shrine to commune with the great saint, offer their tributes and make a prayer.

Most of the people present garlands and a green chaadar (a piece of cloth used to cover the Tomb) with Qur'anic inscriptions in silver or gold thread. The recitation of verses, and praise of the saint continues till late at night.

Tourists and foreigners alike are enthralled at this fascinating scene and aspire to enjoy it time and time again.

Hazrat Shahbaz Qalandar's famous Persian verses showing his love and honour for Hazrat Ali are engraved on his shrine:

Haiderium Qalandram Mastam

Banda e Murtaza Ali Hastam

Peshwa e tamam Rindanam

Ke Sag e Koo e Sher e Yazdanam!

Translation:

I am Haideri (Haider - a second name for Hazrat Ali), Qalandar and Mast (intoxicated with inspiration)

I am a slave of Ali Murtaza

I am the leader of all saints

Because I am a dog of the City of Allah's Lion (referring to Hazrat Ali)