Balhī Šāh Qādirī Šatarī

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Bulleh Shah

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This article is part of a series on:

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Bulleh Shah, sometimes **Bulla(h) Shah** (1680–1757) (Punjabi: شاہ بلہا, ਬੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਸ਼ਾਹ) was a Punjabi Sufi poet, humanist and philosopher. His full name was **Abdullah Shah**[1]

Life

A large amount of what is believed to be known about Bulleh Shah comes through legends, and is subjective; to the point that there isn't even agreement among historians concerning his precise date and place of birth. Some information about his life has been pieced together from his own writings. Other "facts" seem to have been passed down through oral traditions.

Bulleh Shah is believed to have been born in 1680 in the small village of Uch, Punjab, in present-day Pakistan.[2] His father, Shah Muhammad Darwaish, was a teacher and preacher in a village mosque. Little is known about Bulleh Shah's ancestry except that his family claimed direct descent from the Islamic Prophet Muhammad.

When he was six months old, his parents relocated to Malakwal. His father later got a job in Pandoke, about 50 miles south-east of Kasur. Bulleh Shah received his early schooling in Pandoke and moved to Kasur for higher education. He also received education from Maulana Mohiyuddin. His spiritual teacher was the Qadiri Sufi Shah Inayat Qadiri, who was a member of the Arain tribe of Lahore.

Bulleh Shah's time was marked with communal strife between Muslims and Sikhs. But in that age Baba Bulleh Shah was a beacon of hope and peace for the citizens of Punjab. While Bulleh Shah was in Pandoke, Muslims killed a young Sikh man who was riding through their village in retaliation for murder of some Muslims by Sikhs. Baba Bulleh Shah denounced the murder of an innocent Sikh and was censured by the mullas and muftis of Pandoke. Bulleh Shah maintained that violence was not the answer to violence. Bulleh Shah also hailed the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur as a Ghazi, or "religious warrior", which caused controversy among Muslims of that time. [*citation needed*]

Bulleh Shah died in 1757 in Kasur. Tradition has it that Islamic scholars of the time forbade local imams to carry out Bulleh Shah's funeral, considering him an infidel. However, after he was buried outside of the city, his tomb started attracting thousands of pilgrims from the region, and soon the center of Kasur moved to that place. Today, a large festival (urs) is celebrated at the tomb every year.

Bulleh Shah's shrine in Kasur, Punjab, Pakistan

Poetry

Bulleh Shah lived in the same period as the Sindhi Sufi poet Shah Abdul Latif Bhatai (1689–1752). His lifespan also overlapped with the Punjabi poet Waris Shah (1722–1798), of *Heer Ranjha* fame, and the Sindhi Sufi poet Abdul Wahab (1739–1829), better known by his pen name Sachal Sarmast. Amongst Urdu poets, Bulleh Shah lived 400 miles away from Mir Taqi Mir (1723–1810) of Agra.

Bulleh Shah practiced the Sufi tradition of Punjabi poetry established by poets like Shah Hussain (1538–1599), Sultan Bahu (1629–1691), and Shah Sharaf (1640–1724).

The verse form Bulleh Shah primarily employed is called the Kafi, a style of Punjabi, Sindhi and Saraiki poetry used not only by the Sufis of Sindh and Punjab, but also by Sikh gurus.

Bulleh Shah's poetry and philosophy questioned the Islamic religious orthodoxy of his day.[*citation needed*]

Bulleh Shah's writings represent him as a humanist, someone providing solutions to the sociological problems of the world around him as he lives through it, describing the turbulence his motherland of Punjab is passing through, while concurrently searching for God. His poetry highlights his mystical spiritual voyage through the four stages of Sufism: Shariat (Path), Tariqat (Observance), Haqiqat (Truth) and Marfat (Union). The simplicity with which Bulleh Shah has been able to address the complex fundamental issues of life and humanity is a large part of his appeal. Thus, many people have put his kafis to music, from humble street-singers to renowned Sufi singers like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Pathanay Khan, Abida Parveen, the Waddali Brothers and Sain Zahoor, from the synthesized techno

qawwali remixes of UK-based Asian artists to the Pakistani rock band Junoon.

Modern renderings

In the 1990s Junoon, a rock band from Pakistan, rendered his poems *Bullah Ki Jaana* and *Aleph* (*Ilmon Bas Kareen O Yaar*). In 2004, Rabbi Shergill turned the abstruse metaphysical poem *Bullah Ki Jaana* into a rock/fusion song that gained popularity in India and Pakistan. The Wadali Bandhu, a Punjabi Sufi group from India, have also released a version of *Bullah Ki Jaana* in their album *Aa Mil Yaar... Call of the Beloved*. Another version was performed by Lakhwinder Wadali and entitled *Bullah*. Dama Dam Mast Qalandar, a *qawwali* composed in honour of Shahbaz Qalandar, has been one of Bulleh Shah's most popular poems and has been frequently rendered by many Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi singers including Noor Jehan, Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Abida Parveen, Sabri Brothers, Wadali brothers, Reshman, Runa Laila, and Arieb Azhar. Other qawwali song by Shah, include *Sade Vehre Aya Kar* and *Mera Piya Ghar Aaya*.

Bulleh Shah's verses like *Tere Ishq Nachaya* have also been adapted and used in Bollywood film songs including *Chaiyya Chaiyya* and *Thayya Thayya* in the 1998 film *Dil Se..*, and "Ranjha Ranjha" in the 2010 film *Raavan*. Released in 2004, Rabbi Shergill's debut album *Rabbi* featured *Bulla Ki Jana*; the song was a chart-topper in 2005, helping the album to eventually sell over 100,00 copies. The 2007 Pakistani movie *Khuda Kay Liye* includes Bulleh Shah's poetry in the song *Bandeya Ho*. The 2008 film *A Wednesday*, included a song titled *Bulle Shah, O Yaar Mere*. In 2009, the first episode of the second season of Pakistan's Coke Studio featured *Aik Alif* performed by Sain Zahoor and Noori, while a year later, the first episode of the third season featured *Na Raindee Hai* and *Makke Gayaan Gal Mukdi Nahi* performed by Arieb Azhar. In 2013, Rabbi Shergill performed his composition of *Bulla Ki Jana* (originally released on his debut album in 2004) at the Hum TV Awards in Karachi, Pakistan.

Bulleh Shah's verses have been an inspiration to painters as well, as in the two series of paintings (*Jogia Dhoop* and *Shah Shabad*) by an Indian painter Geeta Vadhera inspired by the poetry of Bulleh Shah and other Sufi poets and saints.

Further reading

- *Bulleh Shah: the love-intoxicated iconoclast*, by J. R. Puri, Tilaka Raj Shangri. Radha Soami Satsang Beas, 1986
- *Great Sufi Poets of The Punjab*, by R. M. Chopra, Iran Society, Kolkata, 1999.

Works online

- Bulleh Shah poetry [3]
- Articles on Bulleh Shah's life and poetry (apna.org) [4]
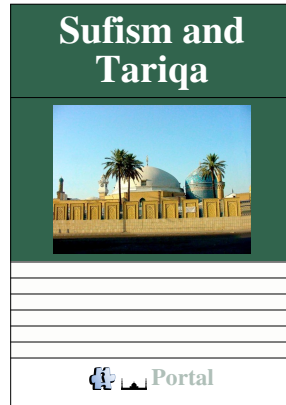- Bulleh Shah: Poems (English translations) and Biography (poetry-chaikhana.com) [5]

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[1] The Life of Bulleh Shah (http://www.apnaorg.com/poetry/bullahn/)
[2] Bulleh Shah Biography (http://www.poetseers.org/spiritual_and_devotional_poets/sufi/bulleh_shah)
[3] http://onetruename.com/bullehshah.htm
[4] http://www.apnaorg.com/poetry/bullahn/
[5] http://www.poetry-chaikhana.com/B/BullehShah/index.htm

External links

- Short biography of Bulleh Shah (http://www.indo-pak.org/content/view/69/58/)
- Biography of Bulleh Shah (http://www.wichaar.com/news/239/ARTICLE/7115/2008-05-18.html)
- Littérateurs of the Punjabi language (http://www.sikhspectrum.com/082004/punjabi.htm)

- Complete poetry of Bulleh Shah in Shahmukhi (http://www.scribd.com/doc/67768216/
  kalam-e-Bulleh-Shah-complete-in-Shahmukhi/complete)

Sufism and Tariqa

ℹ️ 🔖 **Portal**

Shah Inayat Qadiri

Shah Inayat Qadiri Shatari (Punjabi: شاه عنایت قادري , also called *Enayat Shah*) was a Sufi saint of the Qadiri-Shatari lineage (*silsila*) who lived in Qasur, in the Punjab region of present-day Pakistan. Shah Inayat Qadiri is famous as the spiritual guide of the Punjabi poet Bulleh Shah.

Shah Inayat belonged to Arain tribe. He earned a living through agriculture or gardening. He also lived in Kasur for some time but, due to the animosity of the ruler of Kasur, moved to Lahore and remained there until the end of his life.[citation needed] His mausoleum is situated near Lahore.

Poetic references

In the "Song of the Saints of India" (*Bang-i-Auliya-i-Hind*) occurs the following reference;

> From the tribe of gardeners was brother Shah Inayat,
>
> He received honor from Shah Raza Wali Allah.
>
> He earned his living in the small town of Qasur Pathana.
>
> The ruler Husein Khan of this town was his arch enemy.
>
> From there Inayat Shah came to the city of Lahore;
>
> Two miles to the south of the city he made his habitation.
>
> It is at this place that we find his tomb.
>
> In 1141 he departed from this world.

Bulleh Shah says about his beloved teacher Enayat Shah:

> Bullah has fallen in love with the Lord. He has given his life and body as earnest. His Lord and Master is Shah Inayat who has captivated his heart.

Shah Inayat wrote "Dasdtur al-Amal" in which he describes various methods Hindus employed for attainment of salvation in ancient times. According to him, this knowledge was acquired and carried by the Greeks after Alexander's invasion of India, from where it was borrowed by ancient Iranians and subsequently adopted by the mystics of Islamic countries. [citation needed]

Quoting from R. M. Chopra's "Great Sufi Poets of the Punjab": " The Wazai-i-Kalaan" gives the year of his death as 1735 AD, during the time of Emperor Muhammad Shah. He had acquired a good knowledge of Persian and Arabic. As he was born with a mystic disposition, he became a disciple of the famous Sufi scholar Muhammad Ali Raza

Shattari." He further goes on to say , Shah Inayat "migrated to Lahore where he established an institution of his own. In this institution came men of education for advanced learning in philosophy, Sufism and other spiritual sciences of the time."

"Shah Inayat wrote considerably on Sufism and its developments. His writings were mostly in Persian. He was an erudite scholar whom Bulleh Shah made his Hadi or Guru."

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- Great Sufi Poets of The Punjab", by R. M. Chopra, Iran Society, Calcutta, 1999.

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