

LIFE SKETCH OF HAZRAT SULTAN BAHU (RA)

GENEALOGY OF THE SAINT.

Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) is from the progeny of Hazrat Ali (RA) and is a direct descendent from Hazrat Ali (RA). Traditionally according to the law of the land he is Hashimi and belongs to the tribe of A'wan. Historically the A'wan tribe trace their descent to Ameer Shah, son of Qutub Shah whose family lineage is traced back to Hazrat Ali (RA).

PARENTAGE

The father of Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA), Hazrat Bazid Muhammed (RA) was from this A'wan tribe. He was a titleholder and an office bearer in the court of the Mughals. He was a pious and devout scholar and a strict follower of the Shariat. He later married Hazrat Bibi Rasti (RA) who belonged to the same social class of the same family. Hazrat Bibi Rasti (RA) was a devout, pious and saintly wife. Her piety had a marked influence on her husband, so much so, that the love of Allah kindled in his heart. This fire of love forced and compelled him to give up his government service, and passed the rest of his life in the service of Allah. He settled in Multan. Hazrat Bibi Rasti (RA) joined her husband in Multan. In the mean time, as a recognition of his services, the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, conferred on Hazrat Bazid Muhammed (RA) an estate in the vicinity of the small town of Shorkhote in District Jung, Punjab Province. Hazrat Bazid Muhammed (RA) and Hazrat Bibi Rasti (RA) settled and spend the rest of their lives in Shorkhote.

THE BIRTH AND YOUTH OF SULTAN BAHU (RA).

According to some sources Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) was born in the village of Shorkhote in Punjab Province in the year 1039 AD, during the reign of the great Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan.

Already as a child his Saintly qualities became apparent. He too, like Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani (RA), refuses to drink his mother's milk from Sehri to Iftaar (before sunrise to sunset). Despite showing inherent spiritual qualities his training responsibility fell in the lap of his pious, devout and saintly mother, Ma Rasti (RA). In his childhood and early days, she was responsible for both his inward and outward training, colouring his personality in the Prophetic light. In many of his writings, Sultan Bahu (RA.) refers to his saintly mother's piety and spiritual station. In one of his Persian couplets, he refers to her devotion to truth as follows

‘ Bliss of God for Rasti be
For with truth is gifted she’

Ma Rasti (RA) saw a vision that soon she will be blessed with a child with inherent spiritual qualities whose light of Faqr will benefit many a seeker till the end of time. She was instructed to name the child 'Ba Hu' - meaning - 'With Allah'. This name, most certainly suited this holy personality, for he was always drowned in the Love of Allah. Hazrat Sultan Bahu's (RA) name is incomparable and has no parallel. His very name reflects his lofty spiritual station, pure qualities and attributes.

It is narrated that in the early years of his life , whenever Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) ventured out of his house, he caused consternation and alarm because whenever his blessed sight fell onto non-believers, they (the non-believers) would involuntarily recite the Kalima - Shahaadah (declaration of Faith). The townsfolk sent a delegation to the parents of the Saint (may Allah be pleased with them), requesting that a guard or sentry be posted near their house, so that whenever 'little' Bahu would venture out a siren would be sounded so that the people would take shelter from the penetrating gaze of 'little' Sultan Bahu. This trait in his personality remained with him till the very end of his life. As he says in one of his works" ' Half gaze of Bahu is better than one hundred suns'

TRUE MEANING AND IMPLICATION OF THE NAME BAHU

The characteristic of the name has a multidimensional qualitative feature, which identifies itself with the personality of the Saint himself. In one of his poems he says:

'With one dot Ba-Hu becomes Ya-Hu....
and Bahu is always steeped in the
remembrance of Ya-Hu'.

In the morphology and syntax of the language used by the Saint to express his thoughts and ideas a mere change in the movement of a dot alters the meaning of a word. So by adding a dot to the first letter of the name Ba-hu, it becomes Ya-Hu and conversely Ba-Hu becomes Wah-hab (Gods attributive Name-The Giver of abundance). Here the Saint refers to his total personality being annihilated, colored and imbued with divine attributes, a goal of a sufi

It has been seen and experienced by many a true seeker that by simply mentioning or hearing his name, the seeker has gone into ecstasy proclaiming 'Ya Hu Haqq Bahu'. The epigram indicates and signifies that Sultan Bahu (RA.) is truthful, genuinely connected, submerged and annihilated in the Name and Love of Allah the Supreme. In fact he foretells in one of his works:

'the maxim of 'Haqq' will be adjoined to Ba-Hu this attachment will manifest even from Ba-Hus grave, and of course nearly 300 years have passed, this prophesy has proved to be true to the latter. What a blessed name that it penetrates into the reaches of

the heart. For a conscious hearted Gnostic this name is a glimpse through which he perceives the higher levels of realisation'

INITIATION AND SEARCH FOR A MURSHID

Sultan Bahu (RA) belonged to the Qaderi school of Sufis. At the bottom rung of the Sufi ladder of all schools stand the mystic himself. Immediately above him stands his Murshid (Sheikhh) or master, who is more than a philosopher, guide and friend to him. Next higher is the Murshid of the mystic's Murshid and so on. At the top stands the Prophet (Peace BE UPON HIM) of Islam who is the fountain - head of all mystic experiences and orders. In his Abyat Sultan Bahu (RA) refers to the Spiritual Masters when he says:

` Joys of Union with your Allah
If you wish, your master serve
Kindly glance of his, on a rose-bud
Turns it into flowery curve
Transforms you so fully, truly
Head and heart, and bone and nerve
Here and There win success, Bahu
Serve your Murshid with full verve.'

Sultan Bahu's (RA) initiation into the spiritual world was both esoteric and exoteric. Esoterically, Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) was initiated by the Prophet Muhammed (Peace BE UPON HIM) himself. He received instructions and spiritual guidance from the fountain -head of all lights himself (PBUH) and was accepted as a child of light in the court of Hazrat Bibi Fatima (R.A), the lady of light and her husband Hazrat Ali (R.A).

Despite being initiated on the esoteric level and being a born saint it was important that Hazrat Sultan Bahu attach himself to a Kaamil (perfect) Sheikhh.

So exoterically, Sultan Bahu's (RA) request to his mother to be his Murshid, in the mystical sense, was not granted. She directed him to seek spiritual guidance and initiation from a Sufi named Hazrat Shah Habibullah Qadir (RA). Sultan Bahu's (RA) search took him to the east. On reaching a town called `Baghdad, he presented himself to Sheikhh Habibullah Qadiri (RA).

He commanded Sultan Bahu (RA) to free himself from any worldly attachment that he might still possess, as two different responsibilities cannot be shouldered at the same time. Hazrat Sultan Bahu journeyed home and got rid of any wealth which his family had possessed and left his wives under the care and attention of his beloved mother. He then returned to Sheikhh Habibullah Qadiri (RA).

When it was time the Sheikh gave his full spiritual attention (Tawajju) to him and kept on enquiring about the experiences and revelations achieved. The young saint replied, "The states experienced during your Tawajju have been accomplished by me in my childhood." Seated in his retreat Hazrat Sheikh Habibullah Qadiri(RA) said:

"What you are seeking is beyond me, however, I will guide you to a place where you can achieve your heart's desire. Go and present yourself to my Spiritual Master Hazrat Pir Abdur-Rehman Sha Dehlvi Qadiri(RA), who is the master of his time. He will guide you to stages of higher knowledge." Taking leave of his teacher he proceeded east towards Delhi.

Describing him through intuition, Hazrat Pir Sayyid Abdur- Rehman Delvi Qadiri(RA) send one of his mureeds (disciples) to receive the Faqir Sultan Bahu(RA) at the outskirts of the city. On arrival, he was immediately ushered to the presence of the Sheikh, who was expecting him in his retreat (place of seclusion). In utter silence and respect, one glance of spiritual attention from the Sheikh fulfilled Sultan Bahus(RA) hearts desire and he obtained his quest of higher knowledge.

His aspirations and needs fulfilled, he was given leave to depart by Hazrat Pir Sayyid Abdur -Rehman (RA). It was a Friday. Full of Spiritual Joy and confidence He departed for the Juma (Friday) prayers. The King Aurangzeb was also present at the Delhi Jaame Masjid, which was overflowing with worshippers. As the mosque was packed to capacity, Sultan Bahu(RA) stood right at the rear end of the mosque. Standing there he opened the doors of his inner light, giving his spiritual attention to one and all. The congregation went into a state of heavenly bliss, rapture and ecstasy, except for three people who were not touched by this extraordinary display of spiritual power, the King Aurangzeb, his Prime Minister and the Mayor of Delhi. Witnessing this phenomenon, the King and his retinue stood respectfully, with hands folded, in the presence of Sultan Bahu(RA) and queried why they were not influenced by the Saints inner light. His Holiness replied:" It was due to the hard hearted condition of your inner selves." The King implored and begged the Saint to bless him with inner light. His holiness agreed on one condition that the King will not meet him or any member of his family in the future and also not visit his home, thus keeping his family free from getting involved in matters of state. The King Aurangzeb agreed to this request. Hazrat Sultan Bahu(RA) attended to the King blessing him with inner light and baraka. The King entreated the Saint to leave him with something by which he could be remembered. Standing there his Holiness began to relate his teachings, which was immediately written down by the Kings scribe. This teaching became known as " Aurang - Shahi " and this treatise is one of the many books of Sultan Bahu(RA), which is still existent. It contains in its very brief form the teachings, advise and philosophy of the great Saint.

After this encounter with the king, Hazrat Sultan Bahu(RA) departed homewards to return to his own familiar surroundings. It was during this journey back home that a

group of Hindu sanyasies accepted Islam at the hands of the saint. It is narrated that one of the sanyasies had disturbed a resting Bahu asking for the right way .The saint replied " La Ilaha Illallah Muhammedur Rasululla is the way" .On hearing this the group went into a state of rapture, embraced Islam and through the blessings of the Saint, all of them reached the stage of being an `Abdal' (hierarchy of Muslim saints). This famous and renown happening, has been narrated from generation to generation.

HAZRAT SULTAN BAHU'S FAMILY

The Saint had four wives. The first wife was from the family of Hazrat Makhdoom Bahu (RA), who was one of the `Khalifas of the great Sufi, Hazrat Sheikh-ul Islam, Sheikh Bahauddin Muhammed Zakarya Multani (RA). His second and third wife was from his own tribe and family. His fourth wife belonged to a Hindu family of Multan and was given in `niaaz' (marriage) to the saint by Hazrat Sheikh Bahauddin Zakaria(RA). Sultan Bahu(RA) had renounced all worldly pleasures in his early years, yet he was obliged to marry more than one time ,to honour the `Sunna' of the Holy Prophet Muhammed(PEACE BE UPON HIM).

Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) had eight children, all boys

HAZRAT SULTAN BAHU AND WORLDLY ATTACHMENTS.

It is not clear with reference to the Saint whether he adopted or assumed any worldly trade or business or for that matter any other worldly occupation. Yes, this much is known, that on two occasions he sponsored himself by purchasing two bullocks each time to help cultivate the land. Even this he could not sustain because on both occasions the Saint abandoned his notion of cultivating the land. This was due to the intense luster of Divine Light, which perfumed his inward and outward personality and a strong yearning for Allah the Beloved. He was a wandering dervish and sometimes passed his time in jungles in remembrance of Allah.

As mentioned earlier, the then Mogul Emperor had conferred on the saint's forefathers an estate in the vicinity of Shorkhote. Hazrat sultan Bahu (RA) had inherited this estate. It was a vast estate comprising a well-built brick fort and hundreds of acres of well developed agricultural land. In the vicissitude of life he remained indifferent to the demands of this huge estate and did not concern himself or even inclined towards its responsibility. He chose and concerned himself with the pure and unalloyed state of `Faqri-Muhammadi' (SAW) (a spiritual state of renunciation and contentment given to a few selected and noble souls). Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) is of the opinion that a Faqir should imitate the Prophet Muhammed (peace be on him) and the ahle-bait in matters of worldly attachments. He is of the view that a Faqir's poverty and wants are the building blocks of a spiritual mi'raj and that this 'Faqr' projects him to the proximity of Allah. Hazrat Sultan Bahu(RA) obeyed, followed and copied the `Faqiri lifestyle of the Prophet of Islam (Peace be on him) and his household. He kept his person clean from the

slothfulness of the world. His dislike and aversion to `worldly attachments is well documented. He refers to this dislike in his famous book of prose, the `Abyat' where he says:

`Ah! This worldly life polluted
Washing, bathing all in vain
For its sake the doctors, scholars,
Crouch in corners, cry in pain
For its sake these worldly people
rest not, sleep not. Ah! their bane!
Hermits, mystics, ascetics, Bahu!
Burn their boats-the wise, the sane!

CONTEMPORARIES OF HAZRAT SULTAN BAHU (RA).

Sheikhh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Delvi Qadiri (RA) was a contemporary of the Saint. He was a scholar of great repute. From the Shuhrawardi Silsila Sheikhh Muhammed Ismail (RA) was his contemporary. From the Chisti Silsila Hazrat Kwaja Gesu Deraz (RA) and from the Naqshabandi Silsila Kwaja Muhammed Masum (RA), son of Hazrat Mujaddid Alphi-Thani Sheikhh Ahmed Sirhindi (RA). There is no record of Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) meeting any of them.

SULTAN BAHU AS AN AUTHOR AND ESTEEMED POET

Sultan Bahu (R.A.) is acknowledged as one of the most prominent Sufi poets of the Indo Pak subcontinent. He is known to be the author of over 140 books in Persian and Arabic dealing with a variety of religious and mystic subjects.

The poems of Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA.) are coloured by the consciousness of Faqr and mystical leanings. He is the leader amongst Punjabi Sufi Poets. For centuries now, the people of the Indo Pak sub continent have been captivated by his poems and books on Spiritual Knowledge. His Poems contain extreme impressions of spiritual reality and facts of life rooted in human existence.

To class the poetry of Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA.) within the boundary of normal poetry is a great error for it sinks into the depths of the heart and soul. Whosoever listens or studies his works is effected and transported into higher realms of spiritual truths. The joy and ecstasy is such that even a casual reading produces spiritual attraction. His writings give a clear insight into the reality and the realm of Sharia, Tariqat, Haqiqat, and Marifat of Allah. In fact, his works are a true means of gaining access and entrance into the court of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

MIRACLES OF SULTAN BAHU (RA).

As Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) himself says in one of his works;

` Prophet Jesus (Peace be on him), use to make the `dead' `alive'. The ` dead ' use to live for a few days and expire again. But when we, the Fuqara and Aulia (saints) of the followers of the Prophet Muhammed (Peace be on him), give one `tawajju' (spiritual attention) to anyone, we make his `dead' heart into a `living' heart and this heart never dies again in this world or the hereafter and always remains in a state of celestial splendor. We thus make him alive forever.'

THE MIRACLE OF THE SAYYID AND THE GOLD

It is narrated that a poor but respectable Sayed was advised by a dervish to seek Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) for his material needs. Going from village to village the Sayed finally found Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) working in one of the fields under intense heat. It must be mentioned here that this was the only time during which the Saint had been occupied in any sort of worldly occupation and this too he had discarded after some time. The Sayed was disappointed that what can this Faqir give me when he himself seems in want and dressed in tattered clothes. Disappointed, the Sayed decided to return to his village. As he was turning back, Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) called out " Sayed Sahib, why are you turning back.... speak what do you seek ?" Taken aback by this sudden forte and calling, the Sayed lamented his material needs to the Saint. Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) asked the Sayed to excuse him while he attended to the call of nature. Returning from the call of nature, the Saint threw the stone with which he dried himself in anger at the direction of the Sayed. Wherever the stone made contact with the clay ground where they were standing turned into gold ingots. The Sayed was told to take the gold for his needs and depart immediately so that nobody could be aware of what had taken place. It is said that this gold in the form of jewelry is still extent in the same family for several generations. This writer himself, during his journey to the tomb of Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) in 1982 met a person at the tomb who had a friend who had personally seen the jewelry at the home of the said family.

EPISODE OF THE SAINT SHER SHAH (RA).

This fact is well known that Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) passed most of his life in travelling from one place to another. This helped him in concealing his real identity. Many of the miracles wrought by the hands of this great saint have been manifested during his travels. It was during one of these travels that Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) came to a village where a Sufi saint Hazrat Sher Shah (RA) was well known. At the border area of the village Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) retired to a little hillock where he sat in a state of deep meditation. Immersed in Divine light the saint became oblivious of his surroundings. At that moment some disciples of Hazrat Sher Shah (RA) were on their daily errands of collecting firewood for the kitchen. One of them came close to Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) and offered salaams. Once again Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) demonstrates to us the power

of the gaze of a true Faqir of ALLAH. Returning the greeting the saint's `eyes of elixir' irradiated the inward of the disciple, whose heart became alive with the zikr (remembrance) of ALLAH. Crying in ecstasy he fell at the feet of the saint. Noticing this spectacle the second disciple hurried to inquire the condition of his friend. Seeing the saint he too fell into ecstasy. The third disciple raced off to his master, Hazrat Sher Shah (RA) to report on the incident. Sher Shah (RA), together with some of his disciples and dervishes hastened to confront the enchanter 'who had cast a spell over his disciple. He confronted Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) : "Many a Spiritual court have I attended, including the Holy Court of his Holiness Prophet Muhammed (peace be on him). In none of these Courts have I seen you present. You must be an illusionist or trickster and have cast a spell over my disciple. Cease and desist from such action and bring my disciples to their original state or else I will complain about you in the court of his Holiness (peace be on him)." Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) responded " Shah Sahib, you be present in the court of his Holiness and I too will try to be present in the august court of his Holiness (peace be on him). Tomorrow we will meet at this same place and decide on the outcome." Shah Sahib departed promising to meet the next morning.

That same evening, Shah Sahib was blessed to be present in the spiritual court of his Holiness, Prophet Muhammed (peace be on him). Respectfully he looked around the assembly to see if he could see the `enchanter' dervish who had cast a spell over his disciple. Not seeing him in the assembly he thought to himself that tomorrow in the morning we will deal with him. For the moment let me be respectful in this august court.

Suddenly from behind a spiritual curtain (a place which is reserved for the Prophets (peace be on him) household) a beautiful child appeared. The child went straight to the Prophet (peace be on him) and sat on his Holiness lap. The Prophet (peace be on him) of Allah very lovingly and affectionately embraced this beautiful child, stroking him with his blessed hands. The child was similarly blessed by Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq, Hazrat Omar, Hazrat Othman Gann, Hazrat Ali, Imam Hassen and Hussein, various Prophets present in the court, Hazrat Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jilani and other believers (peace be on them all). Finally the child came to rest in the lap of Sher Shah (RA) who also embraced the child lovingly. Playfully the child pulled at the beard of Sher Shah (RA) with his little hands pulling out two pieces of hair. Thereafter the child of light again returned to the blessed lap of the Prophet (peace be on him) from whence he disappeared behind the curtain from which he had entered.

The next morning Hazrat Sher Shah (RA) accompanied by his companion dervishes went to the agreed meeting place. On meeting Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) he said angrily " Oh dervish, I did not see you present in the blessed court of the Prophet (peace be on him). I looked all around but you could not be seen. So you must be an enchanter and juggler. I once again warn you to give up this trickery otherwise the end will be not good for you."

Sultanul Arifeen Sultan Bahu (RA) replied: " Oh Sher Shah. How many witnesses do you need according to the Sharia that I was present in the court of his Holiness." Sher Shah

retorted " two witnesses." Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) took out the two pieces of hair which belonged to Shar Shah (RA) saying: " here is my proof of me being present in the august court of the Prophet (peace be on him)." Recognising the hair of his beard, Sher Shah (RA) immediately apologised to the great saint. Thereafter they both retired into seclusion to discuss the deeper secrets and meanings of the spiritual path. On the request of Sher Shah (RA), Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) blessed him with higher realms of spiritual knowledge and some say that he was blessed with khilafat also. Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) further counselled him to carry on his work by bringing people to the reality of the truth.

THE BABY WHO BECAME A MAJZUBA SAINT.

It was during one of these travels nearby a town called Fateh Khan, they decided to rest for an afternoon meal. Some companions approached a lady cook who was attending to her crying baby, to bake some bread for them. She refused as her baby girl was crying profusely due to pain in her eyes caused by an infection. Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) requested that the lady cook put her baby in a cradle for him to look after while his companions assist her in sifting the flour and preparing a fire to bake the bread.

Reluctantly the lady agreed to this request. No sooner had she left the baby with the Saint, the child stopped crying. This was due to the spiritual attention that Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) had given to the child. Once again the Saint exhibits his extraordinary powers of spiritual 'baraka' and gives the spiritual aspirant an insight into what is called 'eyes of elixir'. No sooner had the spiritual energy reach and envelop the little heart of the baby, it sprang into the commemoration and remembrance of Allah. Every follicle on the baby became alive with the remembrance of Allah. Becoming aware of the child's silence, she ran to enquire about her baby's well-being. Hazrat Sultan Bahu (RA) informed her that he had made her child 'alive' forever, in this world and the hereafter. Not being satisfied, she removed the baby's face covering. At that moment the 'little' heart was spiritually energised and immersed in the remembrance of Allah. On seeing her baby and witnessing this marvel, this audible display of 'zikr' of Allah emanating from her child, the mother also went into ecstasy exclaiming Allah! Allah! Blissfully she fell at the feet of the Saint displaying her euphoria and delight.

The duration of time transformed this 'little' girl into a majdhuba Saint. She became renowned as Ma Fatima Mastooien. Mastooien indicating a state of majdubiyat (majdhub --- a person who is mad-in-the-Divine. A spiritual condition which in itself has an elevated capacity to teach wisdom and sometimes it also reflects as a spiritual condition of complete absorption in divine light cutting off contact from body function i.e. eating and sleeping). Even today her tomb stands as a beacon of light and hope, illuminating the hearts and minds of the people. Her tomb stands as a reminder to seekers after truth 'that where there is hope, there is a way'.

SULTAN BAHU (RA) AND THE BRAHMAN PHYSICIAN.

As has been mentioned earlier that whenever his sight fell onto a non Muslim, they would involuntarily recite the Kalima-the Islamic declaration of faith. This trait in the Saints

character use to cause mayhem and consternation among the populace. One day the Saint fell ill, and the town physician (who was a Brahman) was summoned to attend to the Saint. Realizing and knowing of this quality of Sultan Bahu (RA), he refused to go and attend to him. The physician asked instead that they bring a sample of the Saints urine for diagnoses. The disciples brought the urine in a bottle like container to the physician. On seeing the bottle the physician immediately recited the Kalima (declaration of Islamic faith). This well-known and famous miracle is still talked about in the vicinity, near and around.

THE DEMISE OF HAZRAT SULTAN BAHU (RA).

The blessed soul of Hazrat Sayyidi-Murshidi, Sheikhhul-MaSheikh, Maulana-Murshidina, Sutanul-Arifeen Hazrat Sheikh Sultan Bahu (RA), departed in a blissful state to its Lord on a Thursday evening, on the 1st of Jamadu-Thani, in the year 1102 AD/1693 at the blessed age of 63.

HIS TOMB.

Three centuries later, the tomb of Sultan Bahu (RA) is like a beacon of light, attracting thousands of true seekers, radiating their inward with his spiritual attraction. Many a dead hearted persons first sight of the Saints tomb produces in him an involuntary and spontaneous outburst of zikr (remembrance) of Allah.