

HAZRAT DAATA GANJ BAKSH (MAY ALLAH HAVE MERCY ON HIM)

The 19th of Safar (March 30, 2005) marks the *Urs Mubarak* (Anniversary) of Hazrat Syed Abul Hasan Ali bin Uthman al-Hujwari رحمته اللہ علیہ, famous as Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ (Bestower of Spiritual Treasures) or lovingly called Daata Sahab رحمته اللہ علیہ. This great scholar and Sufi Saint was born in Hujwer in the town of Ghazna, Afghanistan. He lived during the 5th century Hijri / 11th century CE, and was well versed in all the Islamic Sciences such as *Tafseer* (exegesis) of the Holy Quran, *Hadeeth* (Traditions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ), *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence), and *Ilm-ul-Kalam* (Theology). Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh's رحمته اللہ علیہ spiritual lineage traces back to Hazrat Junayd al-Baghdadi رحمته اللہ علیہ (d. 910 CE).

In the course of his spiritual journey, Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ traveled physically to many countries such as Syria, Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkestan, and so forth where he met and studied with innumerable scholars and Sufi Masters. He traveled for forty years never missing a single congregational or Friday prayer. Upon the command of his Shaykh, he migrated to Lahore, Pakistan during the later part of his life where he passed onto the Realm of Divine Beatitude around 465 Hijri (1072 CE).

Among his literary masterpieces are the *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*, *Minhaj-ud-Din*, *Kitab-ul-Fana-wal-Baqa*, *Bahr-ul-Quloob*, *Ar-ri'aaya-Tahqeequl-Lah* and so forth. However other than his magnum opus, the famous "*Kashf-ul-Mahjoob*", all the other books have been lost. The *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* is an unparalleled treatise on Tasawwuf (Sufism) and the oldest text on this essential topic. Originally authored in Persian, it has been translated into many languages including Urdu and English. The great 14th century CE scholar and Saint from the Indian Subcontinent, *Mehboob-e-Ilahi* Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya رحمته اللہ علیہ states that if a seeker cannot find a Spiritual Guide (*Murshid*), reading the *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* will facilitate and expedite this search. Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami رحمته اللہ علیہ the 15th century CE classical Persian poet says about the *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* that it is one of the most reliable books in the field of Tasawwuf; all the subtleties and truths

have been compiled in it.

The *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* was written at the request of a student of Tasawwuf at that time, who had asked the Shaykh to compile a comprehensive study on this topic as a guide for spiritual aspirants. The Shaykh competently demonstrates in his illustrious book that there is no conflict between Tasawwuf and Shari'ah, which are the two eyes of Islam, the former pertaining to the internal and the latter to the external aspects of the Deen (religion). The *Kashf-ul-Mahjoob* expounds on "when Sufism was made to leave Islam," in contradistinction to the so-called modern day allegation of "when Sufism entered Islam". Hazrat Ali Hujwari رحمته اللہ علیہ also describes different kinds of Sufis. According to him, there are three types: 1) *Sufi*, 2) *Mutasawwif*, and 3) *Mustasawwif*. The *Sufi* is the one who has annihilated himself or herself and is living eternally with Allah Almighty. Such a person emerges from the human state and is united with Reality. The second kind according to Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ is the one who is constantly engaged in spiritual striving to attain a higher state and tries to follow the footsteps of the exalted Sufis. The third kind is one who dons the appearance of the Sufi merely for the sake of wealth and position. He does not have any real connection with either the Sufi or the one trying to attain this lofty station. These definitions indicate that Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ, who lived almost a 1000 years ago understood very well the artificial "Sufis" who were abusing the institution of Tasawwuf for their personal gains. Such charlatans unfortunately existed then and exist now as well. However, this does not and cannot nullify the reality of Tasawwuf, nor should it cast a shadow on it as an institution nor on the pure and pious Sufi Masters.

Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ said that the external without the internal is hypocrisy and the internal without the external is misguidance. He said that after *Iman* (faith) the most important thing is purity. Without external purity, the ritual prayer is not accepted; and without internal purity it is not possible to know Allah Almighty. Internal impurity relates to all the diseases of the heart such as envy, grudge, religious ostentation, ingratitude, etc.

Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ preceded Hazrat Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti رحمته اللہ علیہ famous as Khwaja Ghareeb Navaaz رحمته اللہ علیہ, the famous 12th century CE Sufi Saint, into the Indian Subcontinent. As a matter of fact, Hazrat Khwaja Ghareeb Navaaz رحمته اللہ علیہ spent 40 days of seclusion at the mausoleum of Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ, upon the completion of which he wrote the following famous lines of poetry:

***Ganj bakshe faize aalam
Mazhar-e-Noor-e-Khuda
NaaqisaaN raa Peer-e-Kamil
KamilaaN raa rahnuma***

*Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ benefits the worlds reflecting the Divine Light
The Perfect Guide for the imperfect people
providing direction to the perfect ones*

When Hazrat Baba Fareeduddeen Ganj Shagr رحمته اللہ علیہ, the second generation spiritual vicegerent of Hazrat Khwaja Ghareeb Navaaz رحمته اللہ علیہ, came to Lahore to pay his respects he could see so much blessing descending upon his *Darbar* (mausoleum) that he did not wish to put his foot on this blessing and therefore arrived at the *Darbar* pulling himself by his elbows! The highest honor that could be bestowed on Hazrat Daata Ganj Baksh رحمته اللہ علیہ is that Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمته اللہ علیہ said that he would have taken Hazrat Daata Sahab رحمته اللہ علیہ as his *Murshid* (Spiritual Guide), had he lived during his time. (Hazrat Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمته اللہ علیہ was born around the time that Daata Sahab رحمته اللہ علیہ passed on to the Realm of Divine Beatitude).

The Shaykh's blessed mausoleum currently stands visited by devotees from around the world, especially during the time of the annual *Urs* celebration, when people throng by the hundreds of thousands. As a matter of fact, thousands of people visit everyday and have their prayers accepted because of the blessedness of the place. May Allah Almighty give us the Guidance and Divine succor to recognize the grand station of this great *Wali* (Friend) of His and the ability to follow in his footsteps. Aameen. □