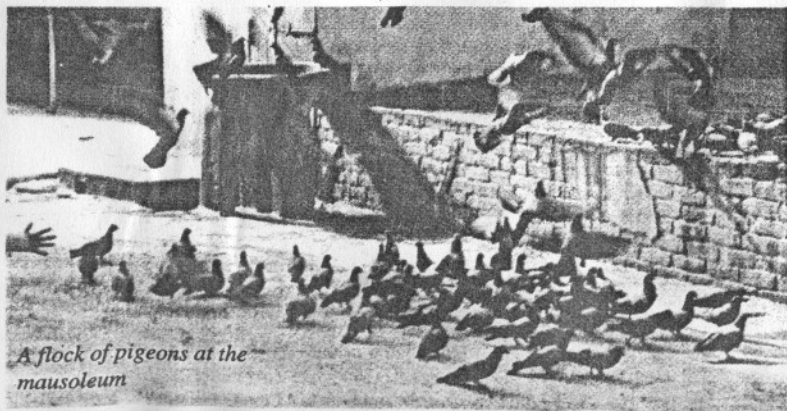


SAJID ABBAS visits a mausoleum not far from the Food Street and talks about the Saint resting over there

There is a mausoleum of a holy man in Lahore which is known for holding more than one gatherings in a year, instead of the usual one annual function. Some decades ago a gathering, the main one, was held on the anniversary of the holy person's passing away in mid Rabi-ul-Awwal, which custom still continues, the other ones were held at other times, such as, on both the Eids and another one on the Shab-e-Braat.



A flock of pigeons at the mausoleum

The occasions attract a large number of people from all over the country. Lahore has always been the centre of interest to people and is always proud to show its

many facets to everybody. While, some may see Lahore as a city of monuments and lively bazaars, its charm emanates from the activity that goes on in the city and the stories woven around such activity. The stories and accounts of its populace are both fascinating and absorbing, or could be commonplace and drab, but in any case, are keenly read or enthusiastically heard.

Walking through Beadon Road, just past McLeod Road, a short stretch of a road named Dil Muhammad Road leads northwards. This track seemed to be very busy about a fortnight ago, for less than half a kilometre further a mela or festival was in progress at that time, it was the 'Urs' of Shah Abul Mualee, the holy man who is resting in his mausoleum there. Practically, all the people of

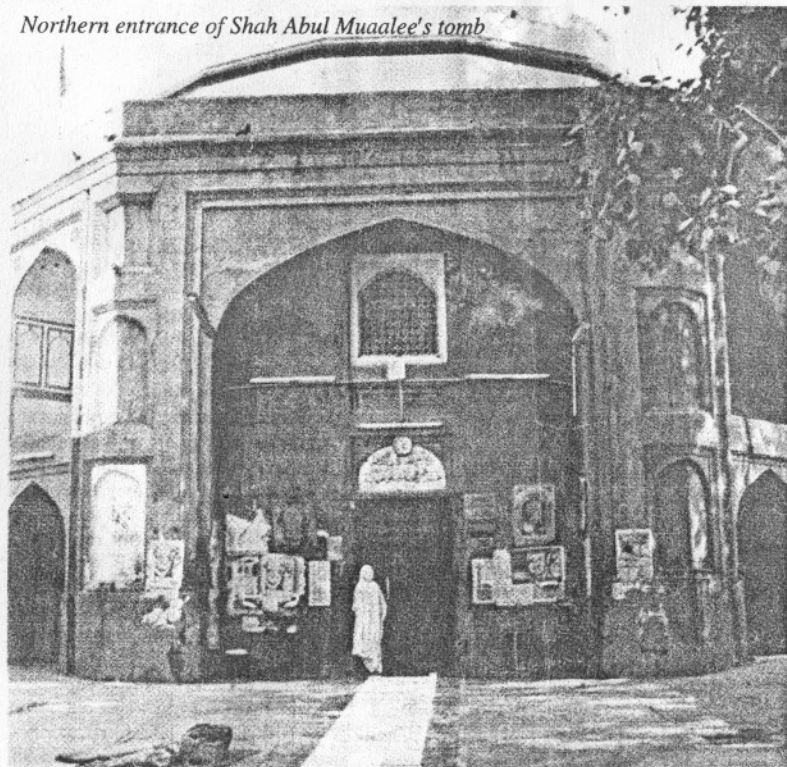
Lahore, especially ladies, seemed to be there to visit the place and pay homage to the Saint.

The Saint resting in the mausoleum

A well-versed spiritual scholar

*Shah Nadeem
16-6-02
Lahore*

Northern entrance of Shah Abul Mualee's tomb



happens to be Syed Khair-ud-Din alias Shah Abul Mualee. Since he belonged to Kirman before settling in this part of the world he is called Kirmani by some chroniclers. The Rauza or mausoleum of Syed Khair-ud-Din alias Shah Abul Mualee is situated towards the south-east of the crossing where the Dil Muhammad Road crosses the road named after the Saint himself, the Shah Abul Mualee Road. The mausoleum is situated on a platform a couple of metres higher than the street level and is

accessible by a flight of steps. The grave of the saint is on a platform still higher by another half a metre or so and is protected by a dome. The platform and the mausoleum itself is surrounded by a number of graves, making it difficult to come close to the rauza.

An old account of some what more than a hundred years ago says that the mausoleum was located in comparatively more open surroundings. The land around was not that congested, as it has obviously become now. Over the

The mosque near the mausoleum



decades, since the construction of the rauza, great changes have taken place in the surroundings but not in the actual structure. The original edifice seems to have been saved from vanishing, though, what one sees today may be something quite different on the outside from what it used to be when built initially, its basic lines seem to have been preserved. The place was said to have been plastered inside and out, with lime and chalk instead of portland as it has been done in the present times.

The structure is more of a design by Shah Abul Mualee himself, for, he is said to have started the construction of his resting place in his life time, later on after the Saint had passed away, his son Shah Muhammad Baqir, continued to carry on the construction till completion. The lines of the structure are said to resemble that of the mausoleum of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gillani.

There is a small mosque west of the tomb. The original is said to have been built by Shah Abul Mualee himself. It was later reconstructed by a certain Ghause Khan, a Gunner or an Officer of the Artillery of the days of the Sikh Era. Perhaps that is why some traditionally beautiful classical lines have been

preserved in some portions otherwise it seems that the rest of the mosque is in the process of being vandalised, for, unsightly construction has been added to its structure.

Shah Abul Muaalee is said to have passed away in 1616 in the days of Jehangir. He had settled in Lahore when he moved to this city from Bhera. The saint was a prominent celebrity of his times and was well respected by the people of this land, he was a well read and cultivated person and guide, well versed in both spiritual and temporal scholarship. Shah Abul Muaalee belonged to the Qadiraia order and the group of talented teachers and men of letters of his days.

Shah Abul Muaalee was a talented scholar. A number of works, in Arabic and Persian, are credited and attributed to him. Amongst these are works on the teachings of Sheikh Abdul Qadir of Gillan. There are works on the life of the Holy Prophet(PBUH). The Library of the University of the Punjab is said to be in possession of a manuscript "Hasht Mehfil" a collection of his writings, collected and compiled by his son Muhammad Baqir. Besides, Dara Shikoh the author of Safinat-ul-Aulia notes that Shah Abul Muaalee was an accomplished architect too and had built a number of edifices, wells and water tanks in many places between Shergarh and Lahore.

There is something interesting and out of the ordinary that one comes across at the mausoleum. It is a large flock of pigeons outside the northern entrance of the tomb busy picking grain and seeds scattered there by visitors to the mausoleum, who either bring it along with themselves or buy it from the stalls just outside. according to legend, it was Shah Muhammad Dervesh son of Shah Abul Muaalee who kept some pigeons there in the days of Jehangir and the present ones happen to be the offspring of the original pets. What ever the veracity of the story be, the scene that the pigeons create by their flights has a certain attraction. ■