

Spiritual att of Lahore

By MR Chaudhry

Hazrat Shah Muhammad Ghaus was born at Peshawar in 1085 Hijri (1674 AD). His father Hazrat Hassan Shah himself was a saint of high calibre and status. His blessed grave, located in the outskirts of Peshawar, is frequented by visitors for paying homage to this great saint. Hazrat Shah Muhammad Ghaus became disciple of his own father in Qadiriya lineage of mysticism and he sought spiritual guidance from him during his life, who trained and groomed him in the mystic practices and exercises of that order including all-time remembrance, meditation and contemplation, saintly rituals and self-mortification practices.

He remained in isolation and kept busy spiritual exercises for six long years, during which, like God's selected persons, he abstained from worldly comforts and ease. He often observed fasts and used to take a little food and rest. He had already taken permission of his exalted father to see other dervishes and saints. When his father left this world, he travelled far and wide and met with different prominent and famous saints and sages of different mystic orders and had been fortunate enough to gain immense inspiration and benefits. In his memoirs contained in his well-known book, Risala Ghausia, he gave brief account and most relevant information of his meetings with them, about their teachings, discourses and about the benefits, which he himself accrued by acting upon them. Some of these prominent saints

were Hafiz Abdul Ghafoor Kashmiri Naqshbandi, Sheikh Yahya in Attock and Shah Zinda Pir, who had not urinated for 40 long years.

He also saw Sheikh Abdul Latif alias Bari Imam in the vicinity of Rawalpindi, Attock. He makes a special mention of his frequent miracles, some of which he personally had the opportunity to observe and experience. He also saw Hazrat Sheikh Pir Sachhiar Qadri, the distinguished caliph of Hazrat Nausho Ganj Bakhsh and Hazrat Asmat Ullah. He had been visiting Hazrat Asmat Ullah regularly for 16 years. Hazrat Shah Muhammad Ghaus makes mention of his special power of paying attention during devotional songs (Qawali), which produced wonderful effects on the hearts and minds of those attending the 'Sama' in such congregations. According to him, this spiritual attention overwhelmed his heart, mind and soul with lot of tender feeling, inspiration and warmth which used to recede on parting with the saint. Shah Muhammad Ghaus used to visit him after a year or so to get that spiritual condition restored and recharged. He also met Hazrat Shah Dola Suharwardy of Gujrat and Hazrat Bhik Shah Chishti Sabri, who graciously taught him some meditations, contemplations and exercises of Chishtia order like 'Shaghi-al-Sehpaia Hasht Pehloo' and 'Shaghl-ai Mehmood-o-Nasira', which Shah Muhammad Ghaus found very useful. According to him, the followers and disciples of Hazrat Bhik Shah used to exercise dhikr (remembrance) by vocalisation with stroking at heart (which is known as dhikr bil jihar) during the last part of the

night till the day dawned.

Briefly, Hazrat Shah Muhammad Ghaus, being a superlatively talented follower of spiritualism, had great urge and stamina to learn and acquire as much as possible. And it was for that purpose that he did not hesitate to travel and see eminent and distinguished Godly people of his time at distant places to quench his thirst. Once he paid a visit to the shrine of great saint Hazrat Mian Mir in Lahore, he requested for his favour of guidance in meditation there. As Hazrat Shah Muhammad Ghaus himself narrates, Hazrat Mian Mir made his appearance before him and asked him to make reiteration of a lesson (wazifa), which he taught him in that communication. Then he went to another saint, Hazrat Sheikh Hamid, who was then alive and used to stay near the tomb of Hazrat Data

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Ganj Bakhsh and asked for his guidance for acquisition of spiritual ascendency, to which Hazrat Sheikh Hamid (who on account of his inner light had already come to know what Hazrat Mian Mir had taught him) replied that whatsoever had been taught to him by Hazrat Mian Mir was sufficient.

Shah Muhammad Ghaus at last himself reached the heights of mysticism and spiritualism and acquired the position of a perfect spiritual guide and Godly man. He guided a good number of his followers and disciples. His "Risala Ghausia" is a very useful contribution for the followers of this path. His teachings include instructions that disciples and followers of Godly path should be steadfast, resolute and determined. They must not lose courage and determination in traversing the journey to reach the Absolute Truth (Haq). He was of the firm belief that 'dhikr bil Jaihar' (remembrance of Allah by vocalising and stroking) is more useful than silent remembrance (dhikr khafi). In this way doubts, suspicions and ill-founded thoughts are washed away, faith becomes firm and strong, and by perpetual exercise the heart gets enlightened. He further instructs that spiritual followers should not waste their precious time in idle talks, oversleeping and in the company of worldly people, except when it is very necessary. He was also in favour of observing fasts and eating to the extent of bare minimum. The travellers of this path may not be swayed away by the extraordinary discoveries and supernatural revelations as these are the obstacles on the way to the final destination and not the destination.

Many miracles are attributed to him. Once a blind man and a dumb visited him and humbly requested him to pray for their recovery. The saint felt sympathetic towards them and profoundly prayed for their recovery. Then he circumscribed his hands around the face of the blind man, who instantly started seeing and then the Sheikh addressed the dumb to recite 'Kalma' which he could do without any difficulty and hesitation. Another miracle, which is widely talked about in Punjab is regarding Kanwal Nau Nehal Singh, son of Maharaja Kharak Singh, crown prince of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh and Maharaja Kharak Singh himself. Nau Nehal Singh, being a haughty and headstrong prince ordered that all trees and constructions in the vicinity of New Lahore should be removed. For that purpose a good number of labourers and workforce were deployed. This work of desolation and destruction was commenced from Delhi Gate and when they reached the shrine of this great saint, they destroyed a part of its rear platform. The work was then suspended with the fall of the night. Prince Kharak Singh died the same night. Next day when Nau Nehal Singh was riding his horse near Royal Fort, a big stone struck his head and he and his companion, Raja Adham Singh, son of Raja Gulab Singh, were seriously injured and both of them could not see the next morning. In this way this shrine remained safe and sound from the subjugation of Sikh arrogant Sardars.

Another story is also told about Nadir Shah. Nadir Shah for invading India, reached Peshawar with his Afghan forces. There he paid a visit and homage

to a saint bearing the name of Muhammad Ghaus. Somebody told him that another saint with the name of Shah Muhammad Ghaus in Lahore was of much higher spiritual position. On hearing this he sent a message to Hazrat Shah Muhammad Ghaus to see him at Peshawar. Shah Muhammad Ghaus refused to see him, saying that paying visits to the kings and monarchs was not the way of his pirs (spiritual leaders). When this reply reached Nadir Shah, he said that he would teach him a lesson for not complying with his orders. He along with his forces started their journey towards Lahore. When they reached River Attock, it became violent and wrathful. He and his forces could not cross the river in extreme flood. For several days he waited for the floods to subside but its level did not recede. Then he thought that it might be because of his ire and ill-will against the saint for which he repented and prayed for forgiveness of Allah. At this juncture the river became normal and calm.

This great saint left this temporary abode and proceeded to heavens, his eternal destination, in the year 1177 Hijri. He was laid to rest near Delhi Gate, Lahore. It is surrounded by a boundary wall. There is a gracefully big mosque, a water-tank and a splendidly-constructed high minaret within the premises of the shrine. There are also some guest-rooms for the stay of visitors and a madrasa where students are given religious teachings. A good number of people visit his tomb every now and then to pay homage and seek blessings from the most exalted and blessed soul of this great saint.

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