

Classic Poetry Series

Sultan Bahu
- poems -

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Sultan Bahu()

Sultan Bahu or Bahoo was a Muslim Sufi and saint, who founded the Sarwari Qadiri sufi order.

Sultan Bahu was born in Anga, Soon Valley, Sakesar in the Punjab Province of Pakistan. Like many other sufi saints of the South Asia, Sultan Bahu was also a prolific writer, with more than forty books on Sufism attributed to him. Most of His books are in Persian language. However, as the majority of his books deal with specialised subjects related to Islam and Islamic mysticism, it is his Punjabi poetry that has generated popular appeal and made him a household name in the region. His poetic verses are sung in many genres of sufi music, including qawaalis and kaafis. Tradition has established a particular style of singing his couplets, which is not used in any other genre of sufi music.

The Mausoleum of Sultan Bahu is located in Garh Maharaja, Punjab, Pakistan. It is a popular and frequently-visited sufi shrine, and the annual festival is celebrated with the usual fervour, which is now a distinguishing feature of what is being called a 'shrine culture' of the South Asia. Annual festival is held during the holy month of Muharram. Every year on the 9th of Muharram (Islamic calendar month) a ghusal (bath) is also taken place under the supervision of Muhammad Najeeb Sultan (Sajjada Nasheen (Chair-holder) of Sultan Bahoo shrine), in which all decedents of Sultan Bahoo wash His shrine with tones of pure rose water.

Spiritual Genealogy / Tareeqa

Sultan Bahu belonged to the Qadiri Sufi order, and later initiated his own offshoot, Sarwari Qadiri. He refers to Muhiyuddin Abdul Qadir Gilani as his spiritual Master in a number of his books and poetry, though Abdul Qadir Gilani died long before the birth of Sultan Bahu. However some Sufis maintain that Abdul Qadir Gilani has a special role in the mystic world and that all orders and saints are always indebted to him directly or indirectly in some way.

Sultan Bahu's education began with his mother, Mai Rasti, herself a saintly woman who has her own Mausoleum in Shorkot, Punjab, Pakistan. She told him to seek spiritual guidance from a wali (friend of GOD). After some time he moved to Delhi for further 'polishing' under the guidance of Sheikh Abdul Rehman al Qadari. Soon Sheikh Abdul Rehman al Qadari felt that he can not add anything to Sultan Bahu's knowledge as Sultan Bahu already knew more than Sheikh Abdul Rehman al Qadari. This did not take long, after which Sultan Bahu returned to his own, familiar surroundings.

Genealogy

Hazrat Sultan Bahu is from the progeny of Hazrat Ali and is a direct descended from Hazrat Ali (cousin of Muhammad, husband of Fatima and father of Hasan ibn Ali and Husayn ibn Ali). 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.

After the incident of Karbala, the household of Muhammad had to migrate to other lands. Many of his descendants who lived in Egypt and nearby lands departed for Turkistan and Iran due to persecution at the hands of Hujjaj bin Yusuf.

As time went by, they resettled in places such as Bukhara and Hamadan in Turkistan, and Baghdad in Iraq. Some migrated to Khurasan and others to Herat in the mountainous regions of present day Afghanistan. The ancestors of Sultan Bahu migrated and settled in South Asia, and the father of Sultan Bahu, Bazid Muhammed, became an important titleholder at the court of the Mughal emperors of South Asia.

Literary Works

The actual number of books written by Sultan Bahu is not certain. According to tradition, he is supposed to have authored over one hundred works and treatises. The following is a list of the important works of Sultan Bahu that still exist today, and can be traced back to him with credibility. Nurul Huda, Risala-e-Roohi, Aql Baidaar, Mahq-ul-Fuqar, Qurb nvnvn, Aurang-Shaahi, Jami-il-Asraar, Taufiq-Hedaayat, Kaleed Tauheed, Ainul Faqr, Shamsul Arifeen, Magzane Faiz, Ameerul Quonain, Asrare Qaderi, Kaleed Jannat, Muhqamul Fuqar, Majaalis-tun Nabi, Muftahul Arifeen, Hujjatul Asraar, Jannatul Firdaus, Kash-ful Asraar, Risaala Ruhi Shareef, Abyaat Bahu (poetry), Muhabbatul Asraar, Ganjul Asraar, Dewaan Bahu, Panj Ganj, Fazlul Laqa, Jhook Sultany, Ameerul Mumineen.

Of the above, Nurul Huda (Light of Guidance) and Risala-e-Roohi (Book of Soul) are the most popular, along with the poetry collection Abiyaate Bahu.

Bayit 13

Everyone seeks a perfect faith; rarely some one seeks a perfect Love (Divine Love) ,

They ask for faith but not for love, for this my heart is filled with rage,

The stage of divinity where one can reach with love, the faith is not aware of that.

O Bahoo! Keep my Love alive, I request you in the name of Faith.

Sultan Bahu

Jasmine Of Allah's Name

My Master Has Planted in My Heart the Jasmine of Allah's Name.

Both My Denial That the Creation is Real and My Embracing of God, the Only Reality, Have Nourished the Seedling Down to its Core.

-When the Buds of Mystery Unfolded Into the Blossoms of Revelation, My Entire Being Was Filled with God's Fragrance.

-May the Perfect Master Who Planted this Jasmine in My Heart Be Ever Blessed, O Bahu!

-You Have Read the Name of God Over and Over, You Have Stored the Holy Qur'an in Your Memory, But this Has Still Not Unveiled the Hidden Mystery.

-Instead, Your Learning and Scholarship Have Sharpened Your Greed for Worldly Things,

-None of the Countless Books You've Read in Your Life Has Destroyed Your Brutal Ego.

-Indeed, None But the Saints Can Kill this Inner Thief, for it Ravages the Very House in Which it Lives.

-When the One Lord Revealed Himself to Me, I Lost Myself in Him.

-Now There is Neither Nearness Nor Union. There is No Longer A Journey to Undertake, No Longer A Destination to Reach.

-Love Attachment, My Body and Soul and Even the Very Limits of Time and Space Have All Dropped From My Consciousness.

-My Separate Self Has Merged in the Whole: in That, O Bahu, Lies the Secret of the Unity That is God!

-The Moment I Realized the Oneness of God, the Flame of His Love Shone Within, to Lead Me On.

-Constantly it Burns in My Heart with Intense Heat, Revealing the Mysteries Along My Path.

-This Fire of Love Burns Inside Me with No Smoke, Fuelled by My Intense Longing for the Beloved.

-Following the Royal Vein, I Found the Lord Close By. My Love Has Brought Me Face to Face with Him.

-When, At the Time of Creation, God Separated Me From Himself, I Heard Him Say: 'am I Not Your God? ', 'indeed You Are,' Cried My Soul, Reassured. Since Then Has My Heart Flowered.

-With the Inner Urge to Return Home, Giving Me Not A Moment of Calm Here on Earth.

-May Doom Strike this World! it Robs Souls on Their Way to God.
-The World Has Never Accepted His Lovers; They Are Persecuted and Left to Cry
in Pain.

Sultan Bahu

Kalam - 1

1

These false prophets Were never disciples themselves,
But they contrive to make disciples of others.
As an act of seeming benefaction,
But they swindle their disciples Of their money and belongings;
They fear not the wrath of God,
Crooked in their ways, they lose their footing.
In the slippery game of outward love,
Say Bahu: They will regret their doings on the day of judgement

2

Accursed is life in this world;
Twice as accursed are they who are attached to it.
Those who have not dedicated their lives to God,
Shall suffer the unrelenting blows of destiny.
Abominable is this sly world -
It can even prompt a father to kill his own son.
Those who have renounced this world,
Will enjoy the delights of the garden That is eternally in bloom.

3

I have, at last, grasped the beginning and the end:
I have seen the whole spectacle of past, present and future Pass before my eyes.
Within my heart are fourteen realms,
Chambers of light - ablaze With the profusion of God's light.
Those who have not realized God will wander,
Homeless in this world, destitute in the next.
But watch the lovers dance with ecstasy,
As they merge into the oneness of God.

4

Their eyes sleepless, their faces pale,
Lovers constantly sigh in grief.
What has become of these faces,
That once beamed with youth and vivacity?
Love is like musk that cannot stay hidden:
Its fragrance cannot but reveal its presence.
Only those who abide in realms beyond space,
Deserve to be called 'faqir', O Bahu.

5

When the one Lord revealed himself to me,
I lost myself in him.
Now there is neither nearness nor union.
There is no longer a journey to undertake, No longer a destination to reach.
Love attachment, my body and soul,
And even the very limits of time and space Have all dropped from my
consciousness.
My separate self has merged in the Whole:
In that, O Bahu, lies the secret of the unity that is God!

6

When, at the time of Creation,
God separated me from himself,
I heard him say: "Am I not your God?"
"Indeed you are," cried my soul, reassured. Since then has my heart
flowered.
With the inner urge to return Home,
Giving me not a moment of calm here on earth.
May doom strike this world!
It robs souls on their way to God.
The world has never accepted his lovers;
They are persecuted and left to cry in pain.

7

My master has sown in my heart,
The jasmine of God's Name.
He has taught me how to captivate,
The heart of my charming Beloved.
He keeps me in his thoughts eternally,
He always makes me do his will.
He himself grants me his wisdom, O Bahu,
He himself moulds me into his own real Self.

8

My Master(Spiritual Guide) has planted in my heart,
The jasmine of Allah's Name.
Both my denial that the Creation is real And my embracing of God,
the only reality, Have nourished the seedling down to its core.
When the buds of mystery unfolded Into the blossoms of revelation,
My entire being was filled with God's Fragrance.

May the perfect Master Who planted this jasmine in my heart,
Be ever blessed, O Bahu!

9

The moment I realized the oneness of God,
the flame of his love shone within, to lead me on.
Constantly it burns in my heart with intense heat,
Revealing the mysteries along my path.
This fire of love burns inside me with no smoke,
Fueled by my intense longing for the Beloved.
Following the Royal Vein,* I found the Lord close by.
My love has brought me face to face with him.

10

You have read the name of God over and over,
You have stored the holy Qur'an in your memory,
But this has still not unveiled the hidden mystery.
Instead, your learning and scholarship,
Have sharpened your greed for worldly things.
None of the countless books you've read in your life,
Has destroyed your brutal ego.
Indeed, none but the Saints can kill this inner thief,
For it ravages the very house in which it lives.

Sultan Bahu

My Master Taught Me A Lesson

My Master taught me a lesson:

'Any moment you are negligent in remembrance of God is a moment spent in denial of God.'

These words opened my eyes to reality,
And I fixed my attention on the Lord.

I then placed my soul in his protection-
Such was the love I cultivated in my heart.

Having thus bequeathed my soul to him, I died before death - to live in him.
Only then did I attain the goal of life, O Bahu!

Sultan Bahu

Rise, O Moon, And Spread Your Light Across The Heavens

Rise, O moon, And spread your light across the heavens;
The stars remember you in silent prayers, Their hearts glimmering with hope.

Now like beggars, We roam the alleyways of earthly life,
When once in our own Homeland, We were merchants of rubies.

O, may no one ever have to leave his own home,
For one is not worth a piece of straw In this alien land!

They need not clap their hands To startle us out of this world,
O Bahu; We are already disposed to fly back To our long-lost Home.

Sultan Bahu

The City Of Baghdad

The city of Baghdad* is graced With tall,
elegant cypresses,
My fond memories of that fair city.

Tear my heart to shreds,
Like waste cloth in a tailor's shop.

Wearing a cloak made with these shreds,
I will join the beggars in the lanes of Baghdad

And beg for alms, calling out:
'O Meeran, Meeran, my beloved Master! ' **

Sultan Bahu

The Heart Is Deeper Than The Ocean

The heart is deeper than the ocean -
Who can fathom its mysteries?

Storms come and go on its surface,
While fleets sail through it, Their crews wielding their oars.

Inside the heart are the fourteen realms,
Stretched like canvas tents.

Only the one who knows These deeper secrets of the heart,
Can know the Creator, O Bahu!

Sultan Bahu

Were My Whole Body Festooned With Eyes

Were my whole body festooned with eyes,
I would gaze at my Master with untiring zeal.

O, how I wish that every pore of my body
Would turn into a million eyes -
Then, as some closed to blink, others would open to see!

But even then my thirst to see him,
Might remain unquenched. What else am I to do?

To me, O Bahu, a glimpse of my Master,
Is worth millions of pilgrimages to the holy Ka'ba!

Sultan Bahu

Within Me Are Five Great Mansions

Within me are five great mansions- All five brightly lit;
What need have I of another lamp?

I am no longer accountable To the five lords and tax collectors,
Who barricade the inner path.

Five prayer leaders call the faithful To the five mosques within.
What need have I of another mosque?

IF the Lord calls for your head,
O Bahu, do not hesitate; offer it at once.

Sultan Bahu