

Chapter – 47

Data Ganj Bakhsh

(1010 - 1073 AD)

Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh's name is Sheikh 'Ali but he became known as Data Sahib. His father's name is 'Uthman Hajweri. He belonged to Ghazni and came to Lahore under the reign of Masood Ghaznavi, the son of Mahmood Ghaznavi. Here he participated first in the construction of a mosque. Then he remained busy with teaching for some time, and then became involved in writing and composing books.

When Data Ganj Bakhsh came to Lahore, Sufism was in the second phase of its history. Data Sahib practiced Islamic Sharia and religion flawlessly. His sayings was, "A person who goes against believing in oneness of God then he will not get anything from religion. And when anyone's religion is not really intact then how can Sufism, which is its branch, be useful to him."

With respect to the Sufi approach, the chain of Data Sahib reaches Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi with three generations up. The name of religious mentor of Data Sahib was Abul Fazl, who was from Bait al-Jin, Damascus. Data Sahib belonged to Ahl-Sunnah and the Hanafi Fiqh. He had the belief that Abu Bakr Siddique was the Imam of the Sufi approach. He loved him so much that he even told poetry in his praise.

Data Sahib was the author of several books. Kashf al-Mahjoob, Kashf al-Asrar, Minhajuddin, Al-Bayan al-ahalul Ayan, etc. are his famous books. These books were written at

the time when famous books of Sufism, such as the Awarif al-Mua'arif of Shahabuddin Suhrawardy and Fusoos al-Hikam of Ibn 'Arabi, were not yet written. Kashf al-Mahjoob is the first book on Sufism written in Persian language. As such it has a historical status too. This book keeps a major class among the Sufi people. From the time of Nizamuddin Auliya, the learned people have been the admirers of this book. Some of his writings have disappeared over the passage of time, but the Kashf al-Mahjoob is still in demand which shows its popularity. This book has also been translated in English by Professor Nicolson.

In his writings, he has advised the people that they should take less interest in the world affairs and should focus on following the religious mentor, keep on remembering Allah, and keeping hearts pure and free from pride. He was a poet as well, but not having a regular book of the poetry.

Data Sahib's whole family was characterized by knowledge and piety. His maternal uncle's title was "Taj al-Auliya". He himself was an ideal religious mentor. It is said that many people accepted Islam on his hand. Dara Shikoh (*the eldest son of Mughal King Shah Jahan*) has mentioned in his writings about Data Sahib that "Data Sahib was an extremely magical religious mentor. When he stayed at Lahore almost all the local people steadily became fond of him. He built a mosque in Ghaznain. When he listened about the dispute for the direction of Qiblah, by his religious magical power, he physically showed the Ka'bah to the people in Lahore.

A large part of Data Ganj Bakhsh's age was spent in tourism. He traveled to many places of Pakistan and India in the subcontinent. Moreover, he went to Kerman, Sistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Palestine. In addition to these areas, the journey of Harman Sherman is mentioned in his

famous book, *Kashf al-Mahjoob*. The main purpose of his whole travelling was to gain knowledge and awareness. As regards knowledge, he used to put a lot of emphasis on its research, thorough understanding and its practice.

Data Sahib spent most of his life in poverty. He loved to wear the costumes with patches. He also authored a regular book on the clothes with patches with the name "Asrar al-Kharq wal-Moffat". He spent his entire life in bachelorship. In his nature there was a mixture of piety and solitariness. He used to say, "This world is for one day only and we have our Fast in it."

The date of birth of Data Ganj Bakhsh is not found in any reliable source. But according to the estimation he was born in 400AH/1010AD. Similarly, no ultimate date for his death is available. However, it is estimated that he passed away at the age of approximately 63 years. His shrine is in Lahore. There is a constant flow of people here for the holy visits of his place.

When Hazrat Moinuddin Chisti arrived in India, he first visited the holy shrine of Syed 'Ali Hajweri and performed the Itikaf here. After spending 40 days here, he offered the following poetic verse in honor of Data Bakhsh, which later became very famous as well.

گنج بخش فیض عالم مظہر نور خدا

ناقصاں را پیر کامل، کاملان را راہنما