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Lal Shahbaz Qalandar

(1177 - 1274 AD)

The real name of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar is Sheikh 'Uthman. Father's name is Syed Kabir. About 12 or 13 steps above his chain reaches to the lineage of Imam Ja'far Sadiq. He was born in Merwand. However, he was from the city of Tabriz, Iran. He was educated in Merwand. As he grew up, he pledged allegiance to the religious mentor Baba Ibrahim. He lived with him and served him. When the Khilafat was granted to him, he came to India. Here, he met with Sheikh Farid Ganj Shaker, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya and Sheikh Sadruddin and got benifited by them.

On his way, Sheikh 'Uthman reached Panipat to the service of Hazrat Bu Ali Qalandar. He advised him to go to Sindh. Sheikh, therefore, came to Sindh and settled in Sehwan. Here he got great popularity, and over the time his reputation had enhanced further. Even today, after passing eight centuries, he is recognized as an elderly Qalandar, not only in Sindh but all over the country. His mentor gave him the tiltle of "Shahbaz". Since he often used to wear red clothes so he was intimately called as "Lal Shahbaz". In the beginning, Lal Shahbaz was very particular about the Sharia. Like common scholars of that era, his dressed used to be a cloak and special cap. But it is said that when he became mystic then he was released from all bindings and he remained in the absorbed and succumbed condition. That is why he is now called as "Lal Shahbaz Qalandar".

Sheikh Sahib was, in fact, a learned personality. He was known as a specialist in linguistics and syntax. It is mentioned that around the year 1850AD, books of syntax written by Sheikh Sahib were introduced in the schools of Sindh. Sheikh Sahib reached to Multan and Ajodhan from Merwand, there he became a master with distinct in terms of knowledge and mysticism. A well known book named "تحفة الکرام" has grouped together the then four scholars in one bond and given them a name of "چار بار" (*Four fast friends*). These scholars are: Sheikh Farid Ganj Shaker, Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya, Syed Jalaluddin Bukhari and Sheikh 'Uthman Merwandi.

In those days, Ghiyasuddin Balban's son, Prince Muhammad Sultan Quan Malik was made the caretaker of the Multan and Sindh government by his father. This prince was a great patron of knowledge and literature. Thus, Prince Sultan had greatly acknowledge Sheikh 'Uthman Merwandi as well.

Lal Shahbaz died in 1274AD. In those days Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq was the ruler of that place. At the behest of this King. Malik Ikhtiaruddin, the governor of the province had built a magnificent shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan, The shrine of 'Uthman Merwandi (*Makhdoom Lal Shahbaz Qalandar*) is located in Sehwan, Sindh. Even today, people are rushing to visit his shrine. In the mountain of Haji Mangha, there is a canal named Kandri (*Bairagan*), has been named after Shahbaz Qalandar, on which both beautiful gardens are existing.