



Words of Wisdom - Nizamuddin Auliya

INTRODUCTION

Nizamuddin Auliya was born in the year 1238 in Badayun, Uttar Pradesh. When he was five years, his father passed away, his mother Bibi Zulaitaikha took care of his education. He was taught the Quran and Arabic grammar. Since Nizamuddin was a good learner he was quick to grasp the Quran and by the age of twelve. He had become distinguished in the commentary of Quran, Islamic jurisprudence, astronomy and mathematics.

In the year 1257, he went to Pakpattan Sharif now in Pakistan; here was the famous Dargah of Baba Farid, a famous Sufi saint, whose disciple he eventually became. He stayed there for seven months, after the death of Baba Farid; the latter became the head of the Chisti order.

Nizamuddin taught his followers that in order to embrace god, one needs to overcome his ego and free his soul of the jealousy and malice. He emphasised on the practical aspects of Sufi thought, such as having complete faith in God, making no distinction on the basis of socio- religious differences, being kind to the oppressed and the needy and intolerance towards social and religious oppression of any kind. His dargah was open to people of all religions and as stated earlier, he made no distinction on the basis of religion or caste.

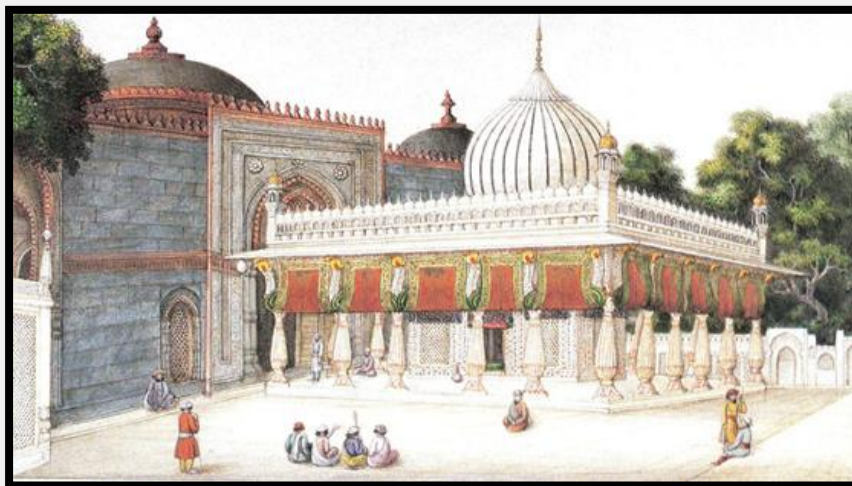
This Sufi Saint, is known for his wisdom, kindness and hospitality, he was a great mystic of his time and was revered far and wide and was known for many miracles that he had performed in his lifetime. His khanqah was a home to many a distinguished people such as the famous poet, his favourite disciple Amir Khusrau.

There are many stories and legends that revolve around this popular saint and his lifetime, which give us an insight into the enigma around this saint.

When Saint Nizamuddin Auliya was getting the baoli near his dargah constructed, the Tughlaqabad fort was also under construction and emperor Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq had forbidden the labourers of Delhi to work anywhere else and thus the labourers worked for the saint at night, by burning oil lamps, which was said to have used the water of the Baoli, since the emperor had banned the sale of oil.

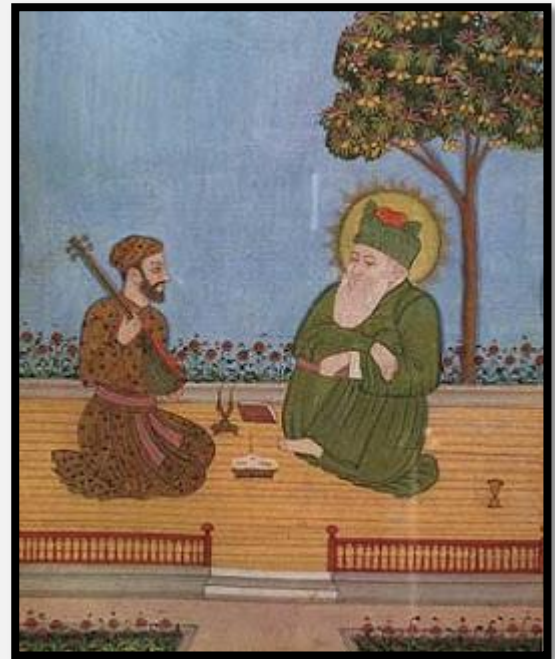


Shaikh Nizamuddin was known for his simple life, he fasted often and ate less. While eating he would take a small portions of bread, during iftar. From his paltry meal of some vegetables and bread, he would offer food to people around him. He was known to not eat meat, and while he accepted food items as gifts he gave it all away for the benefit of his Khanqah. He was in true sense a pious man, who loved and cared for his disciples.



Another story, which is on similar lines, reveals the magnanimity of the Saint, it is said that one day, a follower of the saint visited him and asked his help to solemnise the marriage of his daughter. The Saint readily agreed to help him and said that whatever offerings he would get in the next three days he would give all of it to him so that he could meet the expenses of his daughter's marriage. Auliya asked the man to stay at the dargah for 3 days. However for the next three days no one came with any offerings to the saint. The man was really saddened by this, seeing his disciple's problem, the saint gave him his

shoes and said to him – that these were his only possessions, and that he should sell it as it will fetch him some money for his expenses, the man took the shoes and was on his way to his house, while he was on his way back home, the man happened to encounter a caravan loaded with gifts and riches, the owner of the caravan stopped the man, and enquired with him about the shoes he was carrying to which the man replied that these shoes were given to him by the Sufi Saint Auliya, the owner of the caravan offered to buy the shoes and he paid the man handsomely with all the goods and animals in his caravan. The owner of the caravan was Amir Khusro who was returning from the court of the ruler in Kabul, he had apparently smelled the fragrance of his master's shoe and thus bought it back and took the shoes to his master, who congratulated his disciple. Auliya is said to have been so touched by the gesture, he ordained Khusro and said that Khusro's grave should be next to his and that he should not be buried anywhere else and thus this is the reason why the devotees first enter the dargah and pay their homage to Khusro's grave and then proceed to the grave of the Sufi Saint.



A painting of Amir Khusrau and Auliya, dated to the 17th century.

Thus we can say that through the life stories of Auliya, we learn about his exemplary and selfless love towards one and all. His life is a message in brotherhood and peace for all, and his good deeds make him a revered Saint till date.

Activity

1. List any 5 teachings of Sufism.

- 2. Write down two values (or more) that have you have learnt, by reading this life story of the Sufi Saint Nizamuddin Auliya.**

References

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