

HAJI IMDADULLAH MUHAJIR MAKKI

(رحمه الله)

Birth

Sheikhul Mashaikh, Hiji Imdadullah was from the lineage of Syyedina Umar (ra). Haji Imdadullah was born in 1233 A.H. (1814) in Namtah, the district of Saharanpur, India. His father, Hafiz Muhammad Amin kept his name Imdad Husain. Shah Muhammad Ishaq Muhaddith Dehlwi (rh) changed this name to Imdadullah. His mother was deeply attached to him although he had three brothers and one sister. Due to this devotion, he was deprived of education. He was still only seven years old when his mother passed away. Although he began his hifz at home, he only completed it in Makkah in 1258 A.H.

Studies

At the age of sixteen, he accompanied Moulana Mamluk Ali (rh) to Delhi where he studied a few books in Persian together with a little Arabic Grammar and Morphology. He studied the Mathnawi of Maulana Rumi (rh), under Maulana Abdur Razzaq (rh). He remained attached to the Mathnawi throughout his life.

Tasawwuf

Delhi at that time was the centre of Ulama and Mashaikh. Moulana Nasirud-Din Dehlwi (rh) of the Naqshbandi school of tasawwuf was based in Delhi. He was the khalifah of Shah Muhammad Afaq (rh) and the son-in-law and student of Shah Muhammad Ishaq Sahib (rh). Haji Imdadullah became attached to him. He was eighteen at the time. After staying for a few days in his company, he was conferred with the mantle of khilafah.

After the death of Moulana Nasirud-Din (rh), he joined the company of another great saint of the time, Hadrat Miaji Nur Muhammad Jinjhanwi (rh). After spending quite some time in his company, he completed the stages of tasawwuf in the four silsilas namely, Naqshbandi, Chisti, Suharwardi and Qadri. He was subsequently conferred with the mantle of khilafah. Miaji Nur Muhammad Jinjhanwi (rh) passed away in 1259 A.H. Although he traversed all the paths of tasawwuf, he was totally against the practices of the ignorant Sufis. He conformed in totality with the laws of Shariah and the sunnah of Rasullullah (saw)

In Makkah

In 1260 A.H. he saw a dream in which Nabi (saw) was calling him. Out of extreme ecstasy, he immediately set off on the journey without taking any provisions. When his brothers became aware of this, they sent some provisions for him. The ship reached Jeddah on the 5th of Zul Ilijjah. Haji Imdadullah immediately set off for Arafah. After completing Hajj, he spent time with Hadrat Shah Muhammad Ishaq Muhaddith Dehlawi (rh). He subsequently travelled to Madinah where he recited Salawah and Salaam upon the Prophet (saw) with extreme devotion. On the return journey, he spent some time in Makkah and returned to his homeland in 1262 A.H. (1846).

Responsibilities after Khilaafah

After returning from hajj, the people began flocking to him but he was reluctant to allow anyone to take the bay'ah. Finally, at the insistence of Hafiz Damin Shahid (rh) he began accepting people as his disciples. Mufti Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (rh) was from amongst the first Ulama to become his murid. Besides the general masses, many Ulama became his disciples. Having murids of the calibre of Maulana Qasim Nanotwi (rh), Mufti Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (rh), Maulana Muhammad Yaqoob (rh) and Maulana Faydul Hasan Saharanpurri (rh) amongst others, speaks volumes about his grand status and spiritual position.

Among his disciples, he had the greatest attachment to Maulana Qasim Nanotwi (rh) Haji Imdadullah used to say that just as how Maulana Rumi (rh) was the tongue of Shams Tabrez (rh) similarly, Maulana Qasim Nanotwi (rh) was his tongue. Whatever came in Hail Imdadullah's heart, Moulana Qasim (rh) would utter it. Due to Haji Imdadullah not knowing the islamic terms, he was unable to express them.

The Revolution of 1857

The Muslims ruled India for six hundred years but they never interfered in the religious affairs of the non-Muslims. But when the British ruled, there was total oppression and they intended to make it a Christian colony. The priests had full permission to propagare and were greatly assisted by the English rulers. School and college teachers were generally priests. Bible lessons were compulsory.

During this revolution, jihad was announced and Haji Imdadullah was appointed the Amir (leader) of the jihad. The Ulama fought the British bravely in Shamli where Hafiz Damin Shahid (rh) was martyred. The British gradually gained control of Thana Bhawan and other places. They killed any scholar that was to be found and burnt his house. The Khanqah Imdadiyah was also burnt to the ground. Mufti Gangohi (rh) was arrested and a warrant of arrest was issued for Maulana Qasim Nanotwi (rh). Haji Imdadullah (rh) went into hiding until 1276 A.H. (1859) when he emigrated to Makkah at the age of 43. His escape was miraculous in that he spent more than two years by some of his murids before reaching Arabia. He went via Sindh and Karachi to Makkah.

He had performed his first Hajj in 1261 A.H. Allah put him through a very tough test in Makkah. At one stage he had to go nine days without food. Even acquaintances would not lend him any money. He managed to survive on Zamzam water and realized that this was a test from Allah. Thereafter help from the unseen would arrive, every month somehow, he would receive 100 riyals.

Marriage

In 1281 A.H. he married Bibi Khadijah when he was 48 years old. After her death, he married a widow but due to being blind, she was unable to serve him. He married Bibi Amatullah at her request so that she could serve him. None of his wives bore him any children.

Haji Imdadullah had a very accommodating attitude. All kinds of people from different schools of thought were his disciples. He never rebuked anyone for belonging to a particular sect. His aim was merely to reform them. Once a ghayr muqallid became his murid and soon thereafter stopped reciting Amin loudly and raising his hands at the time of ruku (raf'ul yadain). Haji Imdadullah asked him, "Have you done it out of your own desire or due to me? If you have done it for my sake, then don't do so. Why should I become a cause for the abandoning of a sunnah. This is also sunnah and that is also a sunnah. And if you have done it of your own free will, then it is okay." He replied that he did it from his own free will. This incident clearly indicates his broad-mindedness and this was the reason why all kinds of people turned to him for reformation.

Achievements

People from many countries benefited from his company while he was in Makkah. He used to deliver lessons on Diya-ul Qulub, a book of tasawwuf and on the Mathnawi of Maulana Rumi (rh). Although Haji Imdadullah (rh) had very little formal education, due to his sincerity and practice on Shariah, he was granted divine knowledge (ilm ladunni). Allah had opened the secrets of Shariah for him. He could solve intricate issues very easily. Anyone wanting to understand the depth of his knowledge merely has to read some of his books like Sharh Mathnawi, Maktubaat and Malfuldhaat.

Many distinguished Ulama came into his service. There were approximately seven to eight hundred Ulama who

were his disciples. Very few Mashaikh have had such a large number of Ulama as disciples in the entire history of Islam. Hadhrat Thanwi (rh) used to say that the Ulama were non-entities in front of Haji Imdadullah. Such was his knowledge. He was thus rightfully given the title of `Sheikhul Mashaikh' (the mentor of all mentors). All Arabs and non-Arabs regarded him unanimously as a saint.

Miracles

People witnessed many miracles during the life of Haji Imdadullah. While the British were arresting the Ulama during the revolution of 1857, a warrant of arrest was also issued for Haji Imdadullah. Someone reported to the collector of Ambalah that Hail Imdadullah was hiding in the stable of Rau Abdullah, the head of Pinjlasah. The British collector himself went to Rau Abdullah's house and requested to see his horses telling him that he heard of their great pedigree. The people were terrified as Haji Imdadullah was in the stable and there was no way of informing him. The stable doors were opened. When the collector entered, he saw a bed, a musalla and a jug of water for wuda. The ground was still wet with the water that had been used for wudu. However, Haji Imdadullah was nowhere to be seen. The collector had to return disappointed. After the Englishman had gone, the people found Haji Imdadullah once more there.

There were many such incidents like this that took place during Haji Imdadullah's life. Although many miracles were manifested by him, he never regarded a karamah as proof of tasawwuf and asceticism.

Demise

Haji Imdadullah became so weak in his final illness that he could not even turn on his side. He passed away on 13 Jumadal Ukhra 1317 A.H. (1896) at the age of 84. He had spent approximately forty years of his life in Makkah. He was buried in the graveyard of Makkah, Jannatul Mala, adjacent to Moulana Rahmatulah Kiranwi (rh)