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Ghāzī Miyān, Sālār Mas'ūd

Ghāzī Miyān (404–24/1014–33), also known as **Sayyid Sālār Mas'ūd Ghāzī** is the earliest and most popular Indo-Muslim martyr (*shahīd*) in northern India and Nepalese Terai. Every year his shrine (*dargāh sharīf*), in the town of Bahraich (in today's Uttar Pradesh) attracts several hundred thousand Muslim and Hindu pilgrims from northern India and Nepal, who come to seek the protection and the benefactions he dispenses by means of a limitless thaumaturgy. He is worshipped under several names (Bāle Pīr, “Young Master”; Bāle Bādshāh, “Young King”; Ghāzī Dulhā, “Warrior Bridegroom”;

Gajnā Dulhā, “Happiness of the Bridegroom”; and so forth); these titles stress his youth, his conquests, and his state of being newlywed. The most famous of these names is Ghāzī Miyān (“Sir Victorious Warrior”), a name that underlines the contradictions of this holy figure. While the term *ghāzī* refers to a warrior who returns (alive) from the battlefield, he has the status of martyr. His hero-martyrdom stems from the encounter between Muslim and Hindu beliefs and draws equally from values of both spheres.

Scant historical evidence invalidates the claim that the young martyr actually existed, an alleged nephew of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazni (r. 388–421/998–1030), the most prominent ruler of the Ghaznavid Empire, who conquered the eastern Iranian lands and parts of northwestern India. The earliest evidence, from the seventh/thirteenth century, refers to him in terms of his sepulchre and cult. On the other hand, it confirms him as a miracle-working figure essential to the peasants' way of life, regardless of their religion. Three of his festivals are celebrated according to the Hindu lunar-solar calendar: Basant Panchamī, a Hindu spring festival held on the fifth day of the month of Māgh (January–February); his betrothal, called Lagan, during the month of Baisākh (April–May); and Jeṭh Melā, or the festival of the month of Jeṭh (May–June). These festivals associate the sequence of his betrothal and marriage to the young Hindu Zohrā Bibī to the agricultural cycle. Ghāzī Miyān is represented in these as controlling the harvests through his influence on the cycle of water. His key attributes are associated with the fertility of the fields, the fecundity of women, and the healing of lepers. In contrast, celebrations of the anniversaries of his birth (*janam din*) and martyrdom, or “wedding”

third in Kāshghar under Kaydu's son and successor Čapar.

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(C. E. BOSWORTH)

MAS'UD-I SA'D-I SALMĀN, eminent Persian poet of the 5th/11th century (ca. 440/1046 to ca. 515/1121-2) who early and late in his life enjoyed position and fame at the Ghaznawid court, but spent some eighteen years of his maturity in onerous imprisonment. As a poet, he is most famous for the powerful and eloquent laments he wrote from his various places of incarceration [see ḤĀSĪYYĀ in Suppl.].

Mas'ud-i Sa'd was born in Lahore to a family of means and education. The family's original home was Hamadān, but had been settled in the region long enough for his father to have become a responsible official at court. About Mas'ud-i Sa'd's early life no reliable information survives. He makes his first dateable appearance in 460/1076-7 as a panegyrist in the retinue of prince Sayf al-Dawla Maḥmūd, son of the ruling sultan (Zahīr al-Dawla Ibrāhīm [see GHAZNAWIDS]), who was appointed governor-general of India in that year. The *kaṣīda-yi madīḥa* which Mas'ud-i Sa'd composed on that occasion is the work of a mature and accomplished poet. By his own assertion in other poems from about this period, he was also a brave warrior, and a responsible and highly-regarded member of the prince's court. In about his fortieth year, Mas'ud-i Sa'd went to Ghazna to reclaim land that had been seized from him by persons unspecified in the sources. While there, he fell under suspicion, and possibly more because of the suspected disloyalty of his patron than of his own, he was imprisoned. This period of imprisonment, which he spent in the fortresses of Sū, Dahak and Nāy, lasted some ten years despite the repeated entreaties of a number of officials friendly to the poet, and the supplications of Mas'ud-i Sa'd himself.

He was released early in his reign by sultan Ibrāhīm's successor, 'Alā' al-Dawla Mas'ud (III) who also made the poet curator of the royal library. Mas'ud-i Sa'd also enjoyed the patronage of Abū Naṣr-i Fārsī, deputy to the current governor of India, 'Aḍud al-Dawla Shīrẓād, and was appointed by him to the governorship of Džalandhar/Čālandhar, a dependency of Lahore. When shortly thereafter Abū Naṣr-i Fārsī was disgraced and fell from favour, his protégé suffered a like fate and was again imprisoned, this time in the Indian fortress of Marandj, and for a period of eight or more years.

Mas'ud-i Sa'd was released from his second and final period of incarceration in ca. 500/1106-7, shortly after the opening of the reign of Sultan Mas'ud's successor, Kamāl al-Dawla Shīrẓād, but he remained in obscurity throughout both his reign and that of his successor, Sulṭān al-Dawla Arslān Shāh. Only toward the close of his life, with the beginning of the reign of Yamīn al-Dawla Bahrām Shāh, a notable patron of literature, did the now aged poet once again enjoy the recognition that his poetic talents merited.

Mas'ud-i Sa'd was a skilful court panegyrist who continued the style of his eminent predecessors, 'Unṣurī, Farrukhī and Manūčihri [q.v.]. His work does not reflect either the shift toward mystical subjects nor the more complex metaphorical structure that can be seen in the poetry of his contemporaries Sanā'ī and Azrakī. His panegyrics have a special interest for the historian because they contain a

measure of historical data about a period for which other sources are rare. However, his most enduring contribution as a poet has been his prison poems (*ḥab-siyāt*), in which, through the skilful deployment of conventional language, he conveys with originality and power the wretchedness of his days. One hears in these poems that intensely personal voice whose lack is so frequently decried in studies of Persian poetry.

Bibliography: The notices of Mas'ud-i Sa'd-i salmān in mediaeval *Tadhkiras* are not to be trusted, and the only reliable source for his biography is his *Dīwān*, which has been capably edited by Raḥīd Yāsīmī, Tehran 1338/1939, and frequently reprinted. Although he boasted of his knowledge of Arabic, no Arabic poetry by him has survived. The best study of his life and work remains that of Mīrzā Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb Kaẓwīnī, *Mas'ud-i Sa'd-i Salmān*. Translated by E. G. Browne, in *JRAS* (1905), 693-740, and (1906), 11-15. C. E. Bosworth makes a number of comments on the life of Mas'ud-i Sa'd and the general literary situation at the Ghaznawid court in his *The Later Ghaznavids, splendour and decay: the dynasty in Afghanistan and northern India 1040-1186*, Edinburgh 1977. There is a lengthy chapter on his imagery in M. Shaffī-Kadkanī, *Suwar-i khīyāl dar shī'r-i Fārsī*, Tehran 1350/1971.

(J. W. CLINTON)

MAS'UD, SAYYID SĀLĀR, called GHĀZĪ MIYĀN, a legendary hero and martyr of the original Muslim expansion into the Gangetic plain of India.

He is alleged to have been the son of a sister of Sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazna [q.v.], to have been born at Adjmēr [q.v.] in 405/1014, and to have been killed in battle against Hindu idolaters, aged 19, in 424/1033. His tomb is on a pre-Muslim sacred site in Bahraīḥ, in the sub-Himalayan plain of northern Uttar Pradesh, and is the centre of a widespread cult. The hero-cult was well-established by the beginning of the 8th/14th century, and is succinctly described by Ibn Baṣṭūta. The Sultans Muḥammad b. Tughluq and Firūz Shāh Tughluq visited the tomb. The procession of the hero's *nēza* ("lance", a tall tufted pole) was prohibited by Sultan Sikandar Lodī (d. 923/1517) but remains a highlight of the annual festival (cf. similar poles of Lāl Beg of the Čuhfās, and of Shāhbāz Kalandar at Sehwan). The myth of Sālār Mas'ud was elaborated in Persian in the early 11th/17th century in the *Mīr'āt-i Mas'ūdī*, a heroic romance which owes something to the *Dāstān-i Amīr Hamza* though it strives for a greater air of historical authenticity. Ghāzī Miyān's cult extends to Bengal and the Panjāb, probably sometimes conflated with the cult of other local Muslim *shahīds*. The main *urs* or death anniversary is celebrated on the first Sunday of the solar month of Džyesh't/ha/Djet'h, between 14 and 21 May, but an *urs* is also mentioned on the significant date of 11 Muḥarram. The martyr-cult is combined with a fertility-cult (cf. the secondary sexual symbolism of the pole, and the "mystic-marriage" implication of *urs*). Legends and songs of the marriage of Ghāzī Miyān before his last battle are widely distributed and were sung at Muslim weddings. At an extreme popular level a conflation may occur (e.g. in west Nepal), with the celebration of the martyrdom of Husayn at Karbalā, with the bridegroom figure of Kāsim b. Hasan, lamented in Indian *marthiyas*. The *urs* of Ghāzī Miyān is celebrated by lower-class Hindus as well as Muslims. Mendicant followers of Ghāzī Miyān carry a *daff* (tambourine) and are known as *dāfālī fakīrs*.

Bibliography: Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī, *I'qāz-i Khusrawī*, Lucknow 1872, i, 155; Ibn Baṣṭūta,

ELG
Gazī Miyān

The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi in Bahraich: Legend, Tradition and Reality*

TAHIR MAHMOOD

It is the month of May 1987. Braving the heat and *loo* of the day a serpentine queue of pilgrims—men, women and children, Muslims and non-Muslims, carrying multi-coloured flags and spears—is on its way to its far-off destination. Leading them there is a group of folk-singers loudly reciting to the beat of drums:

چلے غازی کی نگریا
اپنی زندگی بنانے، سوئی قسمت جگانے
سارے گناہ بخشوانے، حجی کی پیتا سنانے
چلے غازی کی نگریا

(To the city of the Ghazi have we set out—
to adorn our lives, to awaken our sleeping fate;
to tell him the tale of our woes, to procure forgiveness for all our sins—
have we set out to the city of the Ghazi)

Intermittently prostrating themselves and shouting 'Ghazi Miyan *madad*' (help), 'Bale Badshah *madad*,' they are heading for the city of Bahraich in the extreme east of the state of Uttar Pradesh,

* I am grateful to my brother, Professor Syed Khalid Mahmood of Tribhuvan University, Nepal, who supplied me with a lot of useful material relating to this essay.

where lies the legendary saint of their dreams, Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi who, they believe, has the miraculous power of giving them everything they cherish. Looking forward eagerly to the *ziyarat* or *darshan* of this holy grave, they are sustained on their journey.

Scenes of ritualistic travel by such pilgrims can be seen in the months of May and June every year on the outskirts of Bahraich. People come from all parts of the country and have been coming now for several centuries. The renowned Urdu poet of the nineteenth century Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810) must have watched a similar scene when he had said:

یوں چلی آنکھوں سے اشکِ خوں نشاں کی میدنی
جیسے بہا رچ چلے غازی میاں کی میدنی

[Of blood-tinted tears from my eyes there is such a flow as if Ghazi Miyan's pilgrim-party towards Bahraich did go.]

This is the devotional journey that Akbar had blessed on the banks of the Yamuna,¹ and the same that Sikandar Lodi and Aurangzeb unsuccessfully tried to stop, regarding it as repugnant to the traditions of orthodox Islam.²

Bahraich is situated at an equal distance of 128 kms by road from Lucknow and Faizabad in the district of Bahraich which stretches out to the Indo-Nepal border in eastern Uttar Pradesh.³ It has been an important town of the former imperial territory of Oudh. On the outskirts of the town in the north there is the famous shrine of

¹ As stated in Abu'l Fazl's *Akbar Nama*, according to which Akbar had watched in disguise the scene of the departure of pilgrims from Agra to Bahraich. The *Akbar Nama* also gives some details of the shrine at Bahraich, as cited at length in *Hayat-i Mas'udi*. See Bibliography, p. 43.

² Sikandar Lodi's action is referred to in *Tarikh-i Farishta*, *Tarikh-i Da'udi* and *Zubdat al-Tawarikh*, as cited in *A'inah-i Mas'udi*, pp. 111-12. The action taken by Aurangzeb is referred to in most of Mas'ud Ghazi's biographies. See Bibliography, p. 43.

³ The population of Bahraich town is over 100,000, while that of district Bahraich is over 2,000,000. The town has an old grand-mosque, said to have been constructed during the reign of Babur, a magnificent clock-tower of the British period, a famous Muslim seminary—the Jami'ah Mas'udia Nur al-'Ulum, and the river Saryu, said to be the same as is referred to in the Ramayana. The population is mixed, the Muslims having a numerical strength well above the national average. The Oudh-Muslim culture is dominant.

A Note on the Dargah of Salar Mas'ud in Bahraich in the Light of the Standard Historical Sources

IQTIDAR HUSAIN SIDDIQUI

The personality of Salar Mas'ud, who lies buried in Bahraich, is surrounded by legends that seem to have expanded over the centuries. It is generally held that he was a descendant of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (d. AD 1030) through his daughter, that he married a pious Sayyid and entered India along with a band of warriors for the propagation of Islam by waging *jihad* against the non-Muslim rulers. He is said to have conquered the entire region upto Bahraich, where he met a martyr's death.

But the body of evidence contained in the standard contemporary sources goes contrary to these legends. Muslim invaders never seem to have crossed the river Ghogra before the establishment of the Turkish Sultanate in the beginning of the thirteenth century. One of the emigrant Persian writers in the Sultanate of Delhi, Sadiduddin Muhammad 'Awfi (d. 1232), a refugee from Bukhara, tells us that Malik Baha'uddin al-Jamji's first military expedition of Bahraich defeated its *ra'i* (ruler) and that the expedition returned loaded with booty. Al-Jamji had joined the service of Qutbu'ddin Aibak (r. 1206-10), and after his death transferred his allegiance to Iltutmish (r. 1210-36).¹ The relevant evidence, available both in the *qasida* composed by Siraj-i Khurasani in praise of the eldest son of Iltutmish, Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1230), and in the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, reveals that the territorial units of Awadh and Bahraich were finally subjugated by Nasiruddin Mahmud after

¹ Sadiduddin Muhammad 'Awfi, *Lubab al-Albad*, vol. 2, ed. E. C. Browne and Mirza Muhammad Qazvini (London: Luzac and Co., 1906), pp. 113-15.

1220.² Since then both the territories remained well-controlled parts of the Delhi Sultanate.

The references contained in Minhaj al-Juzjani's account of the immediate successors of Iltutmish tend to show that the Muslims had settled in Bahraich in sizeable numbers during the reign of Iltutmish. According to custom, the ulama and *masha'ikh* (Sufi saints) must also have been encouraged by the state or by nobles to settle down there in order to cater to the religious needs of the local Muslim population. For instance, during the reign of Sultan Ala'uddin Mas'ud Shah (r. 1242-6), the youngest son of Iltutmish (also named Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah) was sent to Bahraich as its governor. His appointment, according to Minhaj, ushered in an era of socio-economic development in the reign. The new governor is also said to have suppressed recalcitrant elements in the territory.³

None of the thirteenth-century writers mentioned above make mention of the martyred warrior Salar Mas'ud of Bahraich. It is Amir Khusrau who seems to have been the first Indo-Persian writer to refer to his tomb in Bahraich. He stayed in Awadh under Khan-i Jahan Halim Khan, the governor during the reign of Sultan Mu'izzud-din Khaiqabad (r. 1287-90), and wrote in a letter to a friend in Delhi: In the town of Bahraich, the fragrant tomb of Sipahsalar Shahid [the martyred Sipahsalar] scents the entire Hindustan⁴ with the perfume of odorous wood.⁵ This reference to the tomb made by Khusrau leaves no doubt that Salar Mas'ud did actually exist. It also suggests that he met a martyr's death some time during the early decades of the thirteenth century, for he finds mention in all the standard fourteenth-century histories.

Zia'uddin Barani's reference to Muhammad-bin-Tughluq's visit to the tomb in Bahraich in 1341, after his victory over the rebel governor of Zafarabad (District Jaunpur), tends to suggest that by this time it had become a popular pilgrimage centre in north India.⁶ Ibn Battuta, who had accompanied the sultan to Bahraich, provides

² Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, vol. 1, ed. 'Abdul Hai Habibi (Kabul: Historical Society of Afghanistan, 1963), p. 453.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 470, 478, 487, 490.

⁴ The early Indo-Persian writers refer to the modern region of eastern UP by the name of Hindustan. In Khusrau's letter 'Hindustan' certainly means eastern UP.

⁵ Amir Khusrau, *I'jaz-i Khusravi*, vol. 2 (Lucknow: Newal Kishore Press, 1867), p. 155.

⁶ With the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, sultans began to pay visits to