

Classic Poetry Series

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

- poems -

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Mian Muhammad Bakhsh(1830-1907)

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh (Punjabi: ????? ???? ????) was a Sufi saint and a Punjabi / Pahari poet. He belonged to the Qadri tariqah. He is especially renowned as the author of a book of poetry called Saif-ul-Maluk. He was born in a village called Khari Sharif, situated near Mirpur, Azad Kashmir.

Lineage

He was a fourth generation descendant of Damriyan Wali Sarkar, who is buried in Khari Sharif. Damriyan Wali Sarkar's khalifah was Din Muhammad; and his khalifah was Mian Shamsuddin, who had three sons: Mian Bahaval Bakhsh, Mian Muhammad Bakhsh - the subject of this article -, and Mian 'Ali Bakhsh. Mian Muhammad Bakhsh's ancestors originated in Gujrat, but had later settled in the Mirpur District of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. He was a poet of Phari language (widely spoken in different parts of Kashmir).

Dispute About Date of Birth

There is considerable disagreement about his year of birth. Mahbub 'Ali Faqir Qadiri, in a biography printed as an appendix to the text of Saiful Maluk gives the date as 1246 AH (1826 AD), a date also followed by the Shahkar Islami Encyclopedia; 1830 and 1843 are suggested in other works. Mian Muhammad Bakhsh himself states in his magnum opus, Saiful Maluk, that he completed the work in the month of Ramadan, 1279 AH (1863 AD), and that he was then thirty-three years of age. Hence, he must have been born in 1829 or 1830.

Upbringing

He was brought up in a very religious environment, and received his early education at home. He was later sent with his elder brother, Mian Bahaval, to the nearby village of Samwal Sharif to study religious sciences, especially the science of Hadith in the madrassah of Hafiz Muhammad 'Ali. Hafiz Muhammad 'Ali had a brother, Hafiz Nasir, who was a majzub, and had renounced worldly matters; this dervish resided at that time in the mosque at Samwal Sharif. From childhood Mian Muhammad had exhibited a penchant for poetry, and was especially fond of reading Yusuf o Zulaikha by Nur ad-Din Abd ar-Rahman Jami. During his time at the madrassah, Hafiz Nasir would often beg him to sing some lines from Jami's poetry, and upon hearing it so expertly rendered would invariably fall into a state of spiritual intoxication.

Mian Muhammad was still only fifteen years old when his father, falling seriously ill, and realizing that he was on his deathbed, called all his students and local notaries to see him. Mian Shamsuddin told his visitors that it was his duty to pass on the spiritual lineage that he had received through his family from Pir-e Shah Ghazi Qalandar Damriyan Wali Sarkar; he pointed to his own son, Mian Muhammad, and told those assembled that he could find nobody more suitable than he to whom he might award this privilege. Everybody agreed, the young man's reputation had already spread far and wide. Mian Muhammad, however, spoke up and disagreed, saying that he could not bear to stand by and allow his elder brother Bahavul to be deprived of the honour. The old man was filled with so much love for his son that he stood up and leaving his bed grasped his son by the arms; he led him to one corner and made him face the approximate direction of Baghdad, and then he addressed the founder of their Sufi Order, Shaikh 'Abdul-Qadir Jilani, presenting his son to him as his spiritual successor. Shortly after this incident his father died. Mian Muhammad continued to reside in his family home for a further four years, then at the age of nineteen he moved into the khanqah, where he remained for the rest of his life. Both his brothers combined both religion and worldly affairs in their lives, but he was only interested in spirituality, and never married - unlike them.

Formal Pledge of Allegiance

Despite the fact that he had essentially been made a khalifah of his father, he realized that he still needed to make a formal pledge of allegiance or bay'ah to a Sufi master. Having completed his formal education he began to travel, seeking out deserted locations where he would busy himself in prayer and spiritual practices, shunning the company of his fellow-men. He took the Sufi pledge of allegiance or bay'ah with Hazrat Ghulam Muhammad, who was the khalifah of Baba Baduh Shah Abdal, the khalifah of Haji Bagasher (of Darkali Mamuri Sharif, near Kallar Syedan District Rawalpindi), the khalifah again of Dumriyan Wali Sarkar. He is also said to have travelled for a while to Srinagar, where he benefitted greatly from Shaikh Ahmad Vali.

Poetic Talents and Works

Once he had advanced a little along the Sufi way he became more and more interested in composing poetry, and one of the first things he penned was a qasidah (quatrain) in praise of his spiritual guide. Initially he preferred to write siharfis and duhras, but then he advanced to composing stories in verse. His poetry is essentially written in the Pothohari dialect of Panjabi, and utilizes a rich vocabulary of Persian and Arabic words.

His works include: Siharfi, Sohni Mahiwal, Tuhfah-e Miran, Tuhfah-e- Rasuliyah, Shireen Farhad, Mirza Sahiban, Sakhi Khavass Khan, Shah Mansur, Gulzar-e Faqir, Hidayatul Muslimin, Panj Ganj, Masnavi-e Nirang-e `Ishq. He also wrote a commentary on the Arabic Qasidat-ul-Burda of al-Busiri and his most famous work, entitled Safarul `Ishq (Journey of Love), but better known as Saiful Maluk.

Death

He died on the 7th day of the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijjah 1324 AH (1907 AD), and was buried in Khari Sharif, not far away from his great great grandfather, Damriyan Wali Sarkar. To this day many people visit his tomb with the intention of receiving spiritual blessings.

Aval Hamd Sanah Elahi

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Saif-Ul-Malook 01

Firstly all praise to Allah, who is the owner of everything,
Whoever remembers His name is never a loser in any field.

Pour the rain of mercy, O Allah! turn the shriveled garden green,
Make the plant my hopes and longings full of fruit.

In this wonderful garden He planted the plant of Adam,
With the fruits of His recognition, adorned it with wonderful fruits.

Free of any dwelling Himself, no dwelling is free of Him,
All the time, all the things, Muhammad, He keeps in good order.

Whoever provisions He has decided for anybody, that written He never cancels,
Even seeing tens of millions of faults, He nourishes as before.

What a kind guardian (PBUH) of the Muslim Umma, he loves and intercedes,
The likes of Gabriel are in whose service, the leader of the Prophets.

He (PBUH) is the beloved of Allah, a helper on the day of judgment,
Himself an orphan, he consoles and protects the orphans.

I, a sinner, ashamed, a liar, filled with sins,
Have only a single hope, that from your doorstep; have no other protection.

I am blind, and the path is slippery, how can I be keep myself steady?
There are many to push, only you to hold my hand.

Listen to my urging, O guide of guides, please dont push me,
You are a guardian of the weak, God has given you honor.

Who don't carry any money with them, they return empty handed from bazar,
All is in destiny, O Muhammad Bakhsh, what can be the remedy without fate?

Repeatedly taking the blows of defeats, don't lose heart, one day tide will turn,
When a hungry man turns to begging, Muhammad, Ultimately he fills the bowl.

The talk of the sad ones, Muhammad, bears witness to their condition,
Whoever has wrapped flowers, his handkerchief emits fragrance.

In the world my life is indeed useless,
My heart had sought you; you did not remain friend.

I have taken what I had to, from what was written in my fate,
With the ones who don't care, Muhammad, what power do we poor have?

I have spent my life in love, let me see one more time,
These eyes have seen you, may they be useless to see anything else.

Enough I am powerless to do anything; what else can I say about losing you?
What power does a weak have, Muhammad? either running away or crying.

In the house of beloved, aloofness helps the needy,
On whosoever He places his sight, he wins the game.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Saif-Ul-Malook 02

Remembering the beloved again again, they eat, frying pieces of their liver,
Like a fruit drink, from the hands of the beloved, they drink the cups of poison.

During the night they cry continuously, washing off sleep from their eyes,
In the morning, they are called the humble ones, and consider themselves lower
then everybody.

This body of send of yours contains gold inside it, which can't be seen except,
When you wash pouring water of your tears, the sand and dirt washes off.

Placing the rope of sorrows around your neck, pull the 'madhani' with (the rope
of) his remembrance,
With courage, O Muhammad Baksh, soul has acquired the butter.

Life... Life is a false pretext, death is standing overhead,
Tens of millions prettier than you have gone to sleep in the ground.

Whoever did not buy love, they came here useless,
Without love, O Muhammad Baksh, what are men? what are dogs?

Without love, faith is incomplete; people say "may your faith
preserve",
To live through dying is the characteristics of love, every breath is the doomsday.

If we perform a hundred thousands acts of piety and worship, without love of
what use?
As long as love doesn't burn you, friendship cannot be complete.

Who don't have the pain of love, how can they attain the fruit of sight?
If Allah grants the ailment of love, there is no need for any medication.

When your own remembers you, you will wean off all other acquaintances,
Father, mother, friends; all will be forgotten, neither will there be any longing for
sisters and brothers.

Everybody knows about the light spot: in front of us is the darkness of grave,
Alone, by itself in the wilderness, which will be the adobe forever.

For knowledge, humans have come to the world,

With knowledge one recognize one's self, otherwise it is an animal.

Without the command it cannot escape if it makes a hundred preparations,
The bird is feeling restricted in the cage, but how can it fly?

If mother is happy, God is happy, the foremost guide is mother,
Thank God you are still happy, and also the honor stands.

He does not hesitate from spending, He gifts without being asked,
To the ones who ask, O Muhammad Baksh, He honors by bestowing wealth.

The infant which, with affection, we carry on our side,
Even if soiled the shirt, we do not strike on the ground.

The hands are trembling terribly, you turned them into a swing,
This swing, O naive one, asks you to let go of others' belongings.

World did not accompany anybody from here, everybody went alone one after another,
Those are better who kept their clothes clear of this dirt.

The aliens walked away barefooted, all mixed into the dirt after they died,
Say why the arrogance, O Muhammad Baksh? stay humble and afraid.

Mian Muhammad Baksh

Saif-Ul-Malook 03

I should stay close to the genuine ones, I, the fake of the world,
May He cover my falseness, He always has the concern.

Whatever he gave me, so was it, the provider was one,
Whether just the bread, whether with some butter, whether delicious morsels.

Listen from the wood of the flute the pain of separation from the tree,
All are in the this same situation, Muhammad, what to say of the men.

If you are patient then you will be rewarded, the news came from the Book,
Patience opens the locks, Muhammad, from every difficult gate.

For four days is your life and youth, enjoy what you can,
Not forever will be this wealth, this world, not for ever will be the forces, armies.

The writing of fate, who can erase with scheming?
Many rulers, ministers wise this fate has destroyed.

Your time (of death) today is still far away, you will have time to left and your
young,
Do justice, and worship, at the end you will perish.

Neither is any crime scene inspection there, nor any justification or excuse,
What you do, so you will get, the Royal Justice is tough.

Gardens, spring, and rose gardens, without friends of what use?
If I meet the friend, thousands of sorrows will be gone; I will be grateful a
hundred thousand times.

I fell in love with a lofty one and have found myself in deep trouble
Without friends, O Muhammad Baksh, Who can console me?

I fell in love without seeing (the beloved), and what had to happen happened,
I have forgotten laughing and playing, and now I am in a lifelong crying.

The beloved does not show the face, who will wash my stain (of dishonor)?
Leaving the door of the friend, Muhammad, What other door can I stand at?

From the friendship of the lowly, nobody has benefited,

If one grows the grape vine over a keekar tree every bunch of grapes will be injured.

The seeker who searched genuinely never remained empty handed,
The one who returned while searching, count his search as half-hearted.

With every breath the soul comes to the lips, leaving the adobe of the body,
I am standing waiting if I can get any news of the friend.

Many swings went very high and then broke and scattered on the earth,
Girls did not return to their parents' home; they were snatched by their in-laws.

Pearls did not return to the shells, they attached to the string,
The pods perished in dust after they fell down; they did not return to the tree.

Soul is undergoing torture like a sugarcane in a crusher,
Now tell the sugarcane juice to stay in the sugarcane, Muhammad; let see how it can.

The heart which did not absorb love, dogs are better than it,
They guard the master's door, patient, hungry, naked.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Saif-Ul-Malook 04

The pots of the nori, filled with tears, turn and empty them into soul,
Not for every will this hustle be, nor the good times.

If love has been absorbed by a heart, it never leavers it,
Even if it comes a thousand beauties, the beloved is never exchanged.

Your support is my refuge O Allah., I cannot think of anything else
The lamp which you light yourself, how can anybody extinguish?

The key of every difficulty, my friend, has been acquired by men,
When men pray, no difficulty remains.

To talk of the special in front of the ordinary is not at all appropriate,
(It is like) cooking a sweet dessert and placing in front of dogs.

Not for ever the bulbul sings in the garden, not for ever is the enjoyment of
spring,
Not for ever is mother, Father, Beauty, Youth; not for ever is the company of
friends.

Not for ever will the waterfowl sit, not for ever will the water be high,
Not for ever will the girlfriends have their hair braided, not for ever will they will
wear the lipstick.

The companions are being carried away (to grave), we will also be carried away,
We won't again get hold of this time, Muhammad, after it passes.

Not for ever the palms red with henna, not for ever will the bangles make a
sound,
Not for ever, wearing their jewelry, will the friends sit together in company.

Not for ever will the paper be sold in the bazaar, not for ever will the hustle be in
the cities,
Not forever is the good time of youth, not for ever are these waves in the river.

How many times I have broken my Tawbah? I am not trustworthy,
Again I offered Tawbah at your doorstep, please forgive, O the one who forgives.

Black faced, ashamed, Sinner, How can I come to you door?

Raising a convict to the level of a friend is your golden generosity.

In the world who did no help in bad and good times,
From that useless companion, friends are better alone.

One should not be proud of immense beauty, who is the inheritor of beauty?
Not for ever will the branches be green, not for ever will be the flower of the garden.

Grant me perfect love, O Allah; may I turn my face away from all else,
May I know only One, see only Only, say and seek only One.

He gardens, spring, thousand of flowers, I cannot smell the fragrance anywhere,
From nowhere could I smell the fragrance of the friend, I spent the life in this hope.

A sad person listen to what a sad person has to say, he recognize its value,
What is that sad person who does not share the secret with a sad man?

Without the appointed hour, soul doesn't leave the body, one cannot leave the world,
The tough one holds the pains, Muhammad, one is powerless to do anything.

Without asking, you fulfill longings, immeasurable, countless,
For the kindness which you bestowed on me, I am grateful with every breath.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Saif-Ul-Malook 05

If you do good to pious men, they never forget it for generations,
If you do good to mean people, in return they will injure your feelings.

Come, O dear girl, fill your pitcher with water before the sun goes down,
When the sun sets and darkness prevails, you'll be afraid of going home alone.

Do not rejoice at the death of your enemy because your friends too have to die,
The afternoon sun is soon going to set.

The gardener's job is to water the plants with skin-bags full of water,
It is up to the lord to allow fruits and flowers to grow.

No one has ever gained goodness from the proximity (closeness) of the mean,
If you wind grapevine around an kikar (acacia) tree, every bunch of grapes will
be pricked (wounded) .

Advice has no effect on a fool, just as stone is not affected by cold,
If a crow is bathed in milk it remains as black as ever.

The company of a bad man is like a blacksmith's shop,
Even if you take a lot of care to protect yourself, you will get sparks in
thousands.

If He is my friend then everyone is my friend, even a stranger is also is my
friend,
O Muhammad Baksh! a courtyard without friends looks deserted.

O God! grant me life long commitment (Ishq) , I should turn away from all else,
I should know One, regard One and need One.

God has created a unique creature (man) only for love,
Whereas angels were already to worship Him.

Even shower of arrows or swords will not frighten (real) lovers,
O Mohammad Baksh! Ishq (Love of God) & restraint never go together.

Merciless Ishq is like a ruthless butcher who does not show mercy,
It kills by humiliating delicate bodies and feels no worry.

He who has in himself lust for the temporal world & debauchery,
is tempted by every fair face.

Lechery (lust) cannot enter a head which is filled with true love.
The heart, which has true love of his friend, does not look towards others.

When a yellow bead is brought close to straws, they fly to meet it but they don't
embrace pearls. Strange are the ways of the heart!

O God! kindle the lamp of Ishq (true love) and enlighten my heart,
Let the light of my heart spread all over the earth.

God accepts whatsoever the tongues of truthful men with pure heart utter,
This is what we regard as authentic news.

The key to solving every difficulty is in the hands of true men,
When they pay attention, troubles run away.

When the field is destroyed,
the sun and rain are of no use to it.

He who is named Uchchaa (pincer) burns in the fire,
O my dear Mohammad! Be humble and bow, you will pass through easily.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Saif-Ul-Malook 06

Those who desert their own species to join an alien species will never enjoy any pleasure,
Their sorrows will increase with every passing moment.

The greatness of a truthful man is higher than angels.
O Mohammad, don't tell this secret to avoid a possible conflict.

Every mouse, sparrow, dog and cat has a sense of belonging and attachment to his home,
You are a prince, why are you leaving your home?

It is better to eat even the bitter fruits of your own country's gardens,
than to go to foreign countries to eat sweet fruits.

Every one is happy among his own people.
To beg in your own country is better than ruling over aliens.

Roaming around like wandering dogs in the streets of your native country is better than being in a foreign land even if you are pushed and kicked from all corners in your country.

The words of compassionate people stand witness to their personality.
The handkerchief filled with flowers emits fragrance.

Pigeons with different colors, black, green or white were all essentially one in the beginning,
their colors different afterwards. (They acquired various colors afterwards.)

Friendship with the high-ups (high & mighty people) brings hardships.
O Mohammad Baksh, who will share your grief but friends?

Some work very hard to make a glass while some break it with a stone,
There are very few who value words (verses) .

All problems are solved by remembering His name. If He is gracious,
He turns the withered into green.
And if He is wrathful, He blazes the green. (He sets fire the green)

The verses of some people are like diamonds, pearls and rubies.

O Muhammad! The verses of others are earthenware lamps, candles or as like torches.

Sympathy is the essence of good words.
Reeds look like sugarcane but what differentiates them is that they lack the sugary juice as in the sugarcane.

A real Faqir (saint or friend of God) keeps others secrets; I also want to be a Faqir.

I cannot expose the faults of others, as I feel shy on my own account.

O Men of Wisdom! listen to what a Faqir tells you.
He who is good himself regards all others as good.

Some have unclean appearance but inwardly they have the water of life.
Their lips look parched like the lips of thirsty men but their souls are drenched as if bathed in water.

Gold is hidden in the sand like your body. You are unable to discover it.
Until and unless you don't wash the sand and clay with the water of your eyes, you cannot find the gold.

When a droplet dissolves in the river, what will it be called?
It becomes that for whom it has lost itself.

God has ordained man to seek knowledge.
Knowledge illuminates the inner self and wipes out all darkness.

Man has come to the world to attain knowledge. Knowledge teaches man to know himself.
Without knowledge he is like animal.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Saif-Ul-Malook 07

Be patient, patience will be rewarded, so the Holy Book informs us.
Patience unlocks all the doors of difficulties.

Glass is a stone, so is a pearl. Both have the same color and look alike,
But when they are presented to jewelers, they point out the limitless difference
between the two.

Everyone pretends to be your friend when are happy, rich and enjoying life's
luxuries.
The true friend is one who shares your sorrows and does not abandon when you
are in trouble.

It is better keep away from an insincere friend who does not help you when you
are in trouble.

Don't be proud of beauty because no one can preserve it.
Branches do not remain green nor flowers bloom forever in the garden.

God does not like a liar because his tongue loses blessings.
No one believes in what he says and all call him a liar.

O God! nothing comes to my mind but to take shelter behind you,
The lamp you kindle can never be put out by anyone.

Be patient and never lose hope. you will get your reward from God.
Deeds done discretely and with patience are divine and they are better than
works done in an irrational hurry.

He has angels to work for him, while we are merely humans.
He protects everyone without discriminating between the good or bad.

Burn yourself like kebabs or wine sprinkled on the kebabs for the delight of
others.
Merge yourself in the One as the bubbles dissolve in water.

If a poet has no sense of sorrow, his verses are also shallow (without depth or
passion) .
Poetry without sorrows is not possible just as fire does not burn without smoke.

We spent our life hoping against hope for the spring came and endured all sorts of thorns,
When the spring came, the gardener did not permit us even to peep into the garden.

Youth passed, hoping against hope and the worry now is that my black hair has turned gray and it is a message of death.

O God! let spring always reign over this garden and let not autumn come (enter) here ever.
May blessing reach all and may every hungry person eat fruit.

Friendship based on greed is not durable.
O Muhammad! the shawl is torn into two pieces when entangled with thorns.

The grieved listen to grieved and the joyful to the joyful.
As the grieved sob, the joyful feels perturbed.

Only the clear headed nightingale knows the real worth of flowers,
The vulture knows not the value of flowers as it eats corpses.

To talk sense before insincere people is like preparing kheer (pudding) and presenting it to dogs.

I am hopeless and cannot harm you at all,
O Muhammad! the weak can only weep or runaway.

If a big powerful gun demands your life, place your head before him instantly,
A hundred sages will give you the same advice: Be afraid of the tyrants.

Do not feel at ease even when the enemy has gone or is dead,
Even if the fang of a dead snake pricks you, you may die of pain.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh

Saif-Ul-Malook 08

What do we gain by back-biting?

Save yourself O Muhammad! for as you sow, so shall you reap.

The saints (favorites of Allah) do not die, they just hide behind the veil,
So what if they leave the world silently?

God! if you show mercy, sinners like me will be absolved.

If you perform justice, even people of pomp and show will tremble in fear.

Life is trapped in agonies like sugarcane in the crushing roller,
O Muhammad! in this condition it is impossible for the juice to withhold.

A million springs of beauty will dissolve into dust,
O Muhammad! love in such a manner that you are remembered for ever.

Don't watch the thorns of roses fearfully from afar,
Unless you endure being pricked and bleeding you cannot fill your pouch with flowers.

The black stone of Badakhshan(Afghanistan) mines burn in the sun,
As a result, many of such stones turn into shining and precious diamonds.

The seekers never return empty handed, says Hazrat,
Look at Saif-ul-Malook, he gets whatever he seeks.

A true seeker will never remain empty-handed,
His search was halfhearted if he return empty-handed.

Do not be proud because the breath may or may not come,
The body, which you keep so clean from the dust,
ultimately has to dissolve into dust.

When pearls are thread, they never return to their shells.
As pods fallen into the dust never climb back to the tree.

On by one my black hairs started leaving me,
Grey hair has brought me the message to pack up
and prepare for the eternal journey.

Izrael (the Angel of Death) brought the divine command,
Shah (father of prince) recited words of true love (Ishq) and instantly gave
away his life

The big black wasp (soul) flew towards the heaven and
to felt the departed leaving behind his worn out boat.
(Boatman is a soul and the worn out or broken boat i the body)

The wood-pecker was freed from this prison because the call came from Al-
mighty,
He flew swiftly to the city of Saba.
The human body is the cage for the soul (Bird)

Worldly wealth does not accompany any one ti the world to come,
Those who get rid of this dust and keep their hands and cloth clean are better
than others.

It does not behoove the wise to love this world,
This bride is not loyal to anyone,
she married millions of husbands and devoured each and every one.

Anyone who divorces this child-eater is really wise,
O Muhammad! why should one keep in wedlock such a vampire.

Who is at peace here? Everyone is grieved,
O Muhammad! this unfaithful world is a big racketeer.

Mian Muhammad Bakhsh