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## Research Article

### Pir balkhi of kashmiri bazar Lahore and inscription of Pir Balkhi in Lahore Museum

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#### Abstract

In Islamic gallery, there were some valued inscriptions displayed in a corner at museum Lahore. The inscription attributed to the saint Pir Balkhi buried in the Kashmiri bazar but recorded in Lahore museum which was appraised the said inscription received from tomb of saint Salahuddin's at kaithal in District Karnal at India. The calligraphy of the inscription is represented 400 years of Monumental Calligraphy. The script was a specific nature of monumental suls.

**Keywords:** Inscription; monumental Calligraphy; Pir Bulkhi; Salahuddin Kaithal.

## Introduction

Previously Saifur Rehman Dar was contributed an article "Earliest dated inscription in Lahore". He explained about the inscription and described that "I had worked to learn Museum when inscriptions reached in it. While looking relevant literature of Gandhara Sculpture in Lahore Museum; looked in the register of additions from 1912-1928.

*"Five inscribed stone and three sculptures from Salahuddin's tomb at Kaithal in Karnal District received from Sub-Engineer Karnal Division in India"*

"Tomb of Sheikh Salahuddin Balkhi" was an oldest tomb in a town. It was situated in Siwan gate site and supported by 8 pillars and locally known as

"Ath Themhah that is the tomb of eight columns". There are two inscriptions one in a beam inside the dome and the other on a beam outside the dome (1<sup>st</sup> part of Ayatul Kursi) which seemed historical. It was western beam and written in Arabic, Naskh characters on a red stone. It was recorded in period of Nasiruddin Mehmud 643-AH/1245 AD and the size had been recorded in the Museum 206cm long; 16cm high and 28cm wide.

#### About the script

The script used in particular inscription was Kufic Amez Suls (Kufic and suls). As concerned kufic script stone inscriptions from Bhanbore (239 AH/853 AD) in Kufic (Ghafur, 1996); dated 243

AH/857 AD (Mutawakal Abbasi's period) discovered in 1907 at Tochi Valley (Ahmad, 1964) the bilingual inscription from Lalankat measuring 55 x 36cm and inscribed 45 x 30cm area. The epigraph comprised seven lines text in Persian inscribed in simple kufic letters and three line text of Sharada script. It was noted that writing was not in relief as inscriptions in Arabic Script in South Asia, but was inscribed or cut into the stone in the manner of Indian epigraph again, while the calligraphy of the record do portray some naskh flourishes, it cannot be said to contain any of the features that latter become the water mark of the highly decorated and pleasing style, nevertheless the style of writing of good quality (Abdul Rehman, 1998). All above inscriptions shows some evolutionary changes in the prevalent style (Shafi, 1944).

The kufic script mixed some character naskhi and keep up its gradual changes. An Arabic inscription, dated 440 AH/1048 AD discovered from Udigram Castle Swat (Saif ur Rehman, 1994). Suls Script existing in its complete shape before the time of Yaquat 698 AH/1298AD form the kufic and suls scripts, a new script came into existence under the Ghaznavi influence which named *kufic Amez Suls* (Muhammad Iqbal Bhutta, 2001). This script was used in Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Egypt, Pakistan and India from the Gaznavi period & 400 years ago at the time of Akbar. Same inscription were present in Lahore museum; in Masjid Quwat-al-Islam; tomb of Altutmish both in Dehli and *Arrhai Din Ka Jhonpra* in Ajmer. This sequence was maintained up to the Suri Period and vanishes after Akbar's period dated 973 AH/1565 AD (Lahore Museum Collection). The inscriptions of the year 749, 750, 753, 810 AH from Alhamra Grenada, this script was in its evolutionary stages of Kufic to Suls script for which may refer to another inscription at the dome of Barasby Nagashi at Cairo built in 1432 AD (Papodopouls, 1980). The advent of this style came to its existence purely for the requirements after that angular Kufic had lost its status for very difficulty in reading & Kufic Amez Suls replaced it soon (Ziauddin, 1970).

The reason for declining of angular kufic was lost in its popularity (Monumental Cursive Script) outside Pakistan and India. The use of kufic Amez Suls in architectural inscriptions began in 11<sup>th</sup> Century which marked the passing of one calligraphic era (Welch, 1979). Begley said "there was some confusion in the scholarly literature that monumental cursive style should be called as Nashki and Suls. Within the Arabic and Persian literature on calligraphy can be interchangeable. Naskh was used for the earlier varieties of Monumental Cursive however Suls applied the uniform varieties inscribed on various monuments of the sub continent from 12<sup>th</sup> Century to onward. There were two major categories of bold monumental cursive calligraphy. Most of the letters were preferably thick especially in verticals; which sometimes were so widely flaring as elongated triangles; Kufic Amez Suls is extremely regular in appearance, well proportioned letters and uniform in thickness compared to Naskh. The sense of movement of this script was dignified (Begley, 1985).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this script was seen in Islamic Monuments. The reasons for declining angular was that Kufic cannot understand easily; script being plain; unembellished and with a combination of circles; lines sharp angles with few decorative flourish mixing qualities with arabesque (Bhutta, 1998). The art of arabesque had introduced in the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century with some evolutionary stages for two centuries. This art was used first time in Masjid al-Hakim (980-1012). In this art we can see the beginning of its vital connection between script and ornament (Khan, 1990). In the Subcontinent, this art flourished in the 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> century's (Ghaznavi period) was used upto now. In this particular era the trellis work, arabesque had adorned in this context in the building of the slave Dynasty; reached its zenith in the Mughal era, when the stucco trellis (jali) work replaced with marble was very attractive. It was feared that Kufic script and arabesque mixed with each other along over lapping. Now certainly, another script is to be required which would hold its identity. The 138 feet height minaret constructed by Sultan Masud III at Ghzna (Sheilas). Schulmberger had excavated

inscriptional slabs in 1948 and 1951 in Ghazni which clearly indicated these experiments (Arslanapa). The epitaph of Sultan Mahmud Ghazna was itself a combination of Suls and Kufic. When Kufic Amez Suls reached Dehli at Masjid Quwat at Islam in a very improved shape (Begley, 1985). Kufic was completely replaced with the Kufic Amez Suls (Nath, 1979). Kufic had lost its requirement as monumental script in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century (Begley, 1985). He further stated that although it has no artistic value, but it was important due to its history for 400 years (1150 AD to 1550 AD) when it was completely vanished (Ibid). In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Suls reached its zenith by Yaqut al Mustasmi. However it was more refined by Sheikh Hamid Ullah a Turkish Calligrapher (Okley).

After the invention of six styles by Ibn Muqlah, the Kufic script had restricted to decorative use. Now, the decorative element in Kufic style was more prominent than the text of inscription itself. This style of Arabic script in its simple form and intricately ornamental forms charmed the eyes as magic. It was initiated as arabesque and supplied pure calligraphic motifs in the decoration of churches and shrines in Italy, Spain and France. Thus quite unknowingly Scott remarked on it (Scout) verses of the Holy Quran were quoted on Church wall in Kufic style. He quoted a French author, that the lofty gate of the most important Church of St. Peter was decorated with the Muslim confession of Faith in Arabic script. Obviously, the script must have appealed universally in artistic nature otherwise Christians can not be allowed to enter their sanctuaries (Ziauddin, 1936). Kufic Amez Suls style was inscribed on the Muslim monuments about 400 years ago. They proved that original shape of the letter can be restored (Qayyum, 1967). The main objective of the study to evaluate the replacement of Ghaznavi period Kufic with Kufic Amez Suls and after completing its evolutionary stages and forming different shapes Bahar Style (Begley, 1985) existed in its final shape. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this Ghaznavi's script was refined by Pakistani calligrapher's late Hafiz Yousaf Siddiqi newly constructed Mausoleum of Qutab-ud-Aibak at Lahore.

## Inscription

In Kashmiri Bazar, the walled city of Lahore and tucked under the modern building lied between Wizer Khan and Sonehri Masjid was a small shop like space with apparently insignificant 'grave' covered with a green embroidered cloth. A limited number of local inhabitants pay their homage to the person buried. These under, locally called Pir Balkhi or the saint of Balkhi, modern Mazar Shrief in Afghanistan (Kanhyalal, 1977). The period of this inscription was 643 AH/1245 AD.

## PIR Balkhi

*Tauhfahat at Wasleen* had mentioned his real name Balkhi; was born in Balkh and had possessed maximum disciples. Prince Jalal-ud-Din Khauzarmi King of Kabul, Qandhar, Gaznai and Balkh was also his followers. When Changaz Khan invaded the Khauzarmi Empire Sultan Jalal-ud-din fled to Sindh; reached Punjab when the Balkh was looted by the Changez Army. Same Saint came to Punjab from Balkh and settled down at battle field. When the decedent of Changez Khan Quli Khan invaded Punjab at the Lahore. The Saint had died and buried in his cottage in this war (Fauq). Manshi Muhammad Din Fauq had contradictory to the author of *Hadeeqa tul Aualia* and *Tahafatul Wasileen*. He stated that the Saint had been martyred during the invasion of Changez in the Altutmish's period (1239 A.D.) but Muhammad Din Fauq had not mentioned his original name. He stated about the saint thoroughly, this paper was written by Munshi Muhammad Din Fauq before 1949, where as in 1962 Muhammad Abdullah Qureshi had written under the title "*Pir Balkhi Ka Sangi Mazar*" and also written that the inscription exhibited in Islamic gallery related to Pir Balkhi. He further informed that when Sonehri Masjid was built in Lahore by Mir Manu (Nawab Bakhari) the road leads to the mosque was lined up; thus the tomb of Pir Balkhi was affected and the inscription was dislocated and reached in the Museum.

Abdullah Chughati stated that "A Grave in Kashmiri Bazar was a building on earliest time; inscription fixed on it. The same inscription is situated now in Lahore Museum Collection Pir

Balkhi (Chughati, 1981). Abdullah Chughati had stated on the bases of Kanahya Lal that the inscription related to this Tomb was now in Lahore Museum which statement totally wrong (Gazatter, 1918). Abdullah Chughati had taken this inscription for granted which was based only on hypothesis. Viz the repair of the Soneri Mosque was got before the death of Nawab Bukhari Khan i.e 1755 AD where as the establishment of Lahore Museum took place in 1864. So this matter had been taken through some information about the inscription from Saif ur Rehman Dar who Comb the nature of epigraphy and which had been sent to Srivastava, 1999 (Gazatter, 1918).

The name of Saint is situated at Siwan gate, one of eight gates of the city given as Sheikh Salahuddin Balkhi. The date of his arrival in India was 673 AH. He said slain at Kaithal; his grandson built tomb to his memory. The pillars and Cupola were entirely made by stones. The inscription was Arabic on the Cupola; the (Taniz) cenotaph was removed from the tomb engineer by Raja Kaithal (Saif ur Rehman, 1996). The other stone baring *Ayaitul Kursi* was not known & certainly not present in Lahore Museum. Saif ur Rehman Dar had contributed an article in Daily Nation "earliest dated inscription in Lahore". The attribution of this inscription with Pir Bulkhi whose grave is located in Kashmiri Bazar near Chowk Rung Mahal Lahore. The other information like reading of the inscription, about the style Saif ur Rehman Dar Speaks, in its present shape, the inscription is carved in mixed suls and Kufic Style of Arabic writing of 12<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> Century A.C (Saif ur Rehman, 1996). Abdullah Chughati delivered a lecture in Lahore Museum on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1979, he insisted that the date of this inscription be read as 543 AH/1148 AD in spite of 643. If the author accepted Chughati's statement that was contradictory to all other scientists who reported about the Saint. However the statement of Abdullah Chughtai was totally based on hypotheses and not facts. Then who was Sader Shaheed Shaikh Salahudin surname as Pir Bulkhi. The inscription told us that this Saint died in 643 AH/ 1245 AD in the age of 98 years. Thus he was born in 1147 AC. Kanahya Lal the Author *Tahriek-e-Lahore* 1884 AD while quoted from manuscript of *Tuhfatul Wasaleen*

informed, the author of *Hadeequatul Aulia*, that Pir Bulkhi was the spiritual leader of Sultan Jalal ud Din Khwarzami, the ruler of Kabul, Ghazni, Qandhar, and Balkh (Kanihyalal). Thus when Sultan Jalal ud din Khwarzami was dislodged from his throne by Chengaiz Khan and pursued by him to send the Punjab; Pir Balkhi was accompanied him thither. Here, informs Kanahya Lal, Pir Bulkhi was martyred while fighting and was buried in his own Chamber (Hujra).

This can be true only in parts Jalal ud Din Khwarzam Shah (1220-1231AC) came to Lahore in 618 AH/1221 AD where Altutmish opposed and competed him to retreat to Sindh. While Khwarzami Shah decided to move to Sindh, Pir Balkhi decided to stay in Lahore and settled here. Thus for all intents and purposes, he arrived at Lahore in 1221 and died here a martyr's death in 1245 (Saif ur Rehman, 1996).

Ghulam Dastagir author of *Tarikh-i-Jaleela* informed that the Saint was living during the reign of Sultan Altutmish, on the other hand Pir Balkhi, according to this inscription died in 643 AH/1245 AC at the age of 98 years. This was the period of Sultan Alauddin Masud (1242-1246 AD) of the slave dynasty when Muayzam Khan Sher Khan was the viceroy of Lahore (1241-1253 AD). If Pir Balkhi died fighting with the infidel Mongals, it was not the armies of Chengiz Khan but those of later Mongals. The first time when Mongals subdued the city was in December, 1241 AD during the viceroyalty of Malik Ikhtiarud Din Qaraqash under Muizud Din Bahram. According to Ghulam Ali & Sons *Tabaqat-e-Nasiri* and also Firishta, at the time of the viceroy of Lahore left the city due to apathy of the citizens and the Mongals made and easy prey of the city martyred the Muslims and made captive their dependents (Firishta).

From this date to onwards, for almost 30 years, Lahore practically remained deserted; be repopulated by Balban (1266-1286). The most anarchic period of Lahore's history that the Saint must had died in 1245. That he died a martyr's death (Saif ur Rehman, 1996). Now at this stage all the stories narrated by the different author deposed

that the person who buried in Kashmiri Bazar Lahore was different personality from the person who was buried in Kaithal. Saif ur Rehman Dar explained from the record of Lahore Museum and details published in epigraphic indo Moslemica were first close to each other. So no doubt Pir Balkhi of Lahore and Salahuddin were two different personalities. It was quite possible that both were living in Punjab with spiritual relation with each other.

### Inscription shaikh salahudin's tomb, Kaithal, Punjab

The inscription was mentioned by Rodgers in his list (Rodger's List) who had given an incomplete reading that the tomb of the Shaikh whose martyrdom the inscription commemorates was situated outside the Siwan gate of the town, and consist of a dome supported on eight stone pillars which one belonged to hindu temple. The inscription consists of two lines and measures 6-6x1. The style of writing was Naskh of a plain but dignified type, free from all decorative flourishes.

In 643 AH the Mughal's (who were styled by Minhaj the infidels of Chin) made an inroad in the upper provinces of the Delhi Empire, and the Salauddin of the inscription, about whom contemporary history affords no particulars, died in one of the Skirmishes which ensued in repelling the rebels. In the inscription Salahuddin had been written Sadr (Judge). This dignitary was next in rank to the Amir, who again was below the Malik (Epigraphia, 1987).

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ هَذِهِ مَقْبَرَةُ الصِّدْرِ الشَّهِیْدِ الشَّیْخِ الْكَبِیْرِ صَلاَحِ  
الدِّیْنِ اَبُو الْمَجَاهِدِ... الْحَسَنِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ اَبُو بَكْرٍ بْنِ عَلِیِّ  
الذِّكْرِیِّ الْبَلْخِیِّ رَحْمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَقَدْ عَاشَ ثَمَانِیْهِ وَتَسْعِیْنِ سَنَةً وَفَاتَ فِی  
الْجُمُعَةِ النَّاسِعِ مِنْ ذِی الْحِجَّةِ وَهِيَ یَوْمَ عَرَفَةَ سَنَةَ ثَلَاثِ وَاَرْبَعِیْنِ وَسِتْمِاِیْهِ

“This was the tomb of the martyred Sadr (judge), the great Shaikh Salahudin-abu-i-Mahamid-al-Hussain b. Muhammad al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. al-Husain Abu-Bakri Ali az-Zakari al-Balkhi, may God be merciful to them. He lived ninety eight years and died on Friday, the 9<sup>th</sup> of Zil-Hijja, the

day of Holy Pilgrimage, in 643 AH (April, 1246AD)” (Epigraphia, 1987).

500 years ago after the death of the Saint Nawab Bhagikari Khan Rustam Jang. An “amin” of Lahore during the reign of Mir Mueen ul Mulk surnamed Mir Munno (1748-1753 AD) wanted to build famous Golden mosque in Kashmiri Bazar Lahore. The mausoleum of Pir Balkhi made straight access to this mosque difficult so, he dismantled this mausoleum for straightening the road. The main grave chamber was however, left with an arched door. In 1884, this grave chamber still consisted of solid masonry. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the grave chamber was occupied by a fruit seller merchant.

At the end it is concluded that original Mausoleum Pir Balkhi of this inscription is situated in Kaithal, India (Punjab). The Pir Balkhi of Lahore is other one, but today nothing remained except its original inscription now in Lahore Museum. This is the earliest dated inscription of any sort related with the mausoleum of Sheikh Salahuddin of Kaithal.

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