

Guru Nanak's Visit to Baghdad

contributed

on his way back to India from Mecca and Madina, Guru Nanak stayed at Baghdad which was a centre of Islamic religion and culture. The Guru held discourses with Sufi saints and one of the leading Pirs, Shah Bahlol became his disciple. The picture shows Guru Nanak sitting on a stone giving sermon to Shah Bahlol. Here sat Shah Bahlol for 60 winters meditating on the Name given by Guru Nanak. The slab of stone on which the Guru sat bore an inscription commemorating the occasion. This was noticed by Swami Ananda Acharya, a great itinerant Sadhu who went to Norway by the overland route and established a Centre there, before the First World War. The Swami referred this in his book "Snow Birds" as follows:

On Reading an Arabic inscription in a Shrine Outside the Town of Baghdad, dated 912 Hejira.

"Upon this simple slab of granite didst thou sit, discoursing of fraternal love and holy light, O Guru Nanak.

Prince among India's holy sons.

What song from the source of seven waters didst thou sing to charm the soul of Iran!

What peace from Himalaya's lonely caves and forests didst thou carry to the vine groves and rose gardens of Baghdad!

What light from Badrinath's snowy peak didst thou bear to illumine the heart of Bahlol, thy saintly Persian disciple!

Eight fortnights Bahlol hearkened to thy words on life and the path and spring eternal, while the moon waxed and waned in the pomgranate grove besides the grassy desert of the dead.

And after thou hadst left him to return to the beloved Bharata's land, the faqir, it is said, would speak to none nor listen to the voice of man or angel;

His fame spread far and wide and the Shah came to pay him homage but the holy man would take no earthly treasures nor hear the praise of king and countries.

Thus lived he lonely, devoted, thoughtful for sixty winters, sitting before the stone whereon thy sacred feet had rested.

And ere he left this house of ignorance he wrote these words upon the stone:

"Here spake the Guru Nanak to faqir Bahlol, and for these sixty winters since the Guru left Iran, the soul of Bahlol has rested on the Master's word-like a bee poised on a dawn-lit honey rose."

