

## A Persian Inscription from the Swat Valley: A Fresh Discovery

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An important Persian inscription, engraved on a stone slab and fixed on the grave of Akhund Daulat Muhammad, lies in the old graveyard of Isalampur village about 7km to the south of Saidu Sharif (district Swat). The first two lines of the inscription contains a famous Persian couplet while the other two show name of the deceased person and the date of his demise.

### Historical background of Akhund Daulat

#### Muhammad

Akhund Dault Muhammad was the eldest son of Akhund Abdul Karim (commonly Known as KarimDad) and grandson of Akhund Darweza. Akhund is a Persian word signifying a tutor, a preceptor or a religious teacher (Raverty, 1862: 227; Barikoti, 2010: 24; Stein, 2006 : 65 ). Therefore, it always comes as a prefix of the actual names of the learned successors of Akhund Darweza. Akhund Abdul Karim was a great scholar, a poet and a religious teacher, who had constructed a congregational mosque and a madrassa at Isalampur, where he used to teach Islamic sciences. It was a hypostyle mosque, which is now recently renovated but the existence of a big stone Shiva lingam suggests that either the mosque is constructed over a temple site, or the lingam is brought from somewhere else (Pl.5). AKhund Abdul Karim died while fighting against the infidels at the Tirat village near Madyan (Swat) in A.H 1072/ A.D 1661 (Rashid, 1988: 175 ; Ali, 2003 : 279 ).

According to traditions, Akhund Daulat Muhammad received his early education from his father at Isalampur, and then went along with his brother, Akhund Noor Muhammad, to Delhi for further religious studies, and was registered in the Dar-ul-Ulum of Hazrat Binauri. How long he remained there? We cannot say anything with certainty. It is also said that the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir also remained their classmate at the

same institution and it was due to that friendly relations that he, afterwards sent troops for their help when they were fighting against the infidels in the Madyan and Tirat villages of Swat to avenge the murder of their father Akhund Abdul Karim. Akhund Daulat Muhammad spent a very simple life and was well versed in the Holy Qur'an and mysticism, while his brother Akhund Noor Muhammad became famous as a man of pen and sword.

### Genealogical table

The following table shows his descent from Hazrat Uthman, the third Caliph of Islam. Akhund Daulat Muhammad, son of Akhund Karimdad, son of Akhund Darweza, son of Akhund Gadai, son of Shaikh Sadi, son of Shah Darghan, son of Matta Shah, son of Jiwan Shah, son of Akhund Jannati, son of Rahmat Balkhi, son of Akhund Himmat, son of Akhund Zuhab, son of Akhund Wahab, son of Zafar Shah Hirati, son of Musawir Shah, son of Akhund Mughira, son of Akhund Kibriya, son of Sayyid Hasan, son of Sayyid Ahmad, son of Sharfuddin Farghana, son of Akhund Yamin, son of Akhund Muhean, son of Akhund Kamal, son of Akhund Jalal, son of Jamaluddin Bokhari, son of Ahmad Saghira, son of Sakhi Ahmad Kabir Turkiya, son of Hazrat Muqim, son of Abdul Aziz Madani, son of Abdul Qadir, son of Abdur Rahman Madani, son of Hazrat Abban, son of Hazrat Uthman Ghani (Ali, 2008:277).

### Distribution of the hired Land

After the demise of their father Akhund Abdul karim, they distributed the hired land between themselves. Daulat Muhammad received the area of Sapalbandai (correctly Sapparbandai, i.e. the village of thatched huts) (Rehman, 1993: 8). While isalampur was given to Akhund Noor Muhammad. The descendants of both the brothers are known as Akhund Khel Miangan and are living in the above stated villages.

### Death of Akhund Daulat Muhammad

Akund Daulat Muhammad died in 1096 A.H/ A.D 1684, and was buried according to his last will, in the graveyard of isalampur. His grave is located about 40 metres to the west of Mian Noor Muhammad's mausoleum. It is 5.5m long, 1.73m wide and 0.25m high from the present ground level. It is enclosed in semi dressed stone masonry work all around (Pl.1). There are two big olive trees, one on the head and the second on the feet side of the grave while a third one has grown in the middle, which is deeply rooted inside.

### Inscription of the grave

The inscription is engraved on a stone slab measuring 83cm long, 44cm wide and 6cm in thickness (Pl.2). It is composed in Persian language in the Nastaliq style (Pls. 3, 4). The first two lines contain a famous Persian couplet in honour of Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H), while the other two lines show the name of Daulat Muhammad, son of Shaikh Abdul Karim and the date of his demise as 1096 [A.H]/ A.D 1684.

The inscription reads as follows:

محمد عربی کا بردی بہ دوسراست  
 کسے کہ خاک ارش نیست خاکہ بر سراو  
 [پرستار] چہار یار محمد ہست ابن شیخ عبدالکریم دولت محمد  
 سنہ یک ہزار نو اشش [ھ]

### Translation

- 1) Muhammad (P.B.U.H) of Arabia is the honour of both the worlds
- 2) Dust upon the head of one, who does not consider himself the dust of his threshold.
- 3) Daulat Muhammad, son of Shaikh Abdul Karim is the [lover] of the four companions of Muhammad (P.B.U.H).
- 4) One thousand and ninety six (1096 [A.H])

The Persian couplet on the above inscription may also be noted in the Wazir Khan Mosque (Lahore) (Pl 5), which is also composed in

Nastaliq style on an elongated but horizontally placed large panel and has been calligraphed in dark blue on a yellow ground. It may be found in the eastern gateway vestibule facing the courtyard of the mosque (Chaghatai, 1975: 18; Khan, 1991:87; Misbah, 1999: 87). However, in comparison to the former, the latter is executed in faience mosaic.

There are also some calligraphic differences between these two inscriptions. For example, the word (محمد) is beautifully executed in the latter example while there is a break between the word (محمد) and (مد) in the former one and the word (عربی) is executed as (عربی) with two additional dots in the latter one. Similarly, the words (بہ دوسراست) is also composed as (برلوپرست) in the Wazir Khan mosque. In the second line of the couplet the word (کسی کہ خاک) is represented as (کسی کہ خاک) in the latter one. The word (ارش نیست) is engraved as (ارش نیست) in the former one.

In the third line of former inscription, a word (پرستار) is engraved, which could be [پرستار], I.e lover and hence this meaning is applied in the translation. There is yet another word (چہار یار محمد), which is a clear indication to the four companions of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). They were AbuBakkar, Umar, Uthman and Ali.

The most noteworthy points of the inscription are two fold: Firstly, besides the name of Daulat Muhammad, it records a second name as Shaikh Abdul Karim, who is commonly known as KarimDad, father of the deceased person; secondly it provides the date of the death of the buried person in Persian as (یک ہزار نو اشش), which is equivalent to one thousand and ninety six of the Hijra era.

As mentioned above, the inscription is executed in Nastaliq style, therefore, mention may be made that the Nastaliq style came into existence with combination of Naskh and Taliq. As this style was created by the Persian calligraphers, therefore, the Arabs still call it Khatt-i-Farsi. However, this style could not gain

that much popularity as it acquired in the eastern countries. This is also true because this was primarily used for the Persian language only.

Among all styles of the Arabic writing, Nastaliq is the most beautiful and attractive. Other styles of Arabic writing can hardly be compared with Nastaliq in its beauty and perfection. The text of

Nastaliq represents artistic expression of the calligrapher (Rajput, 2004:71-72).

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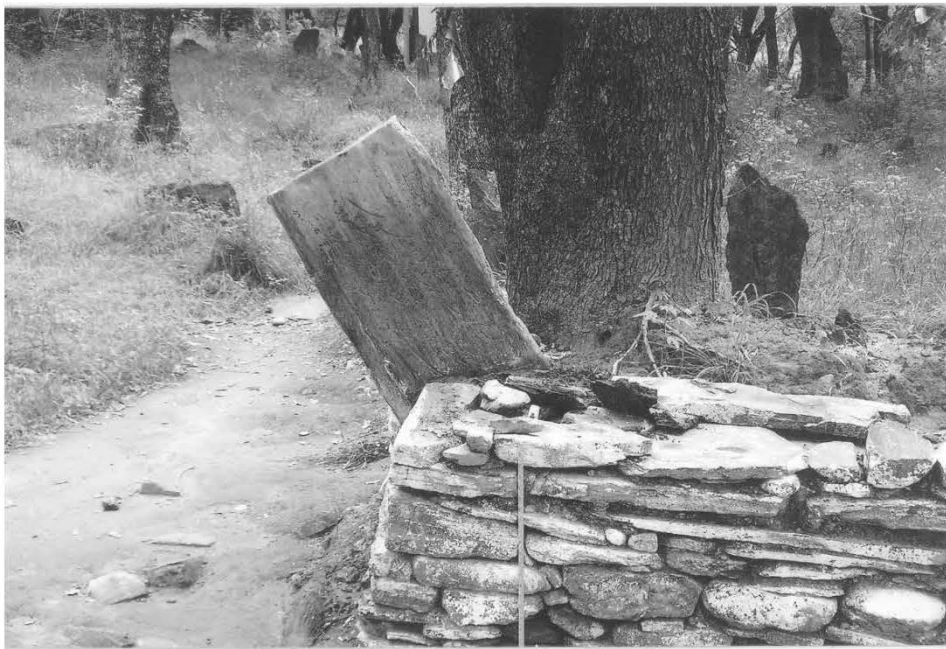
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**Pl.1: The grave of Akhund Daulat Muhammad( General View)**



**Pl.2: close view of the head stone Inscription**



Pl.3a: Inscription before Inking



Pl.3b: Inscription after Inking



Pl.4: Inscription at the wazir khan mosque



Pl.5: Shive lingam in the Jami Masjid (Loe Jumaat) at Isalampur