

## **Bektashi Ceremonial Garb** **Baba Rexheb, from Zeri Bektashizmes**



According to Bektashi instructions, the Bektashi habit is a symbol of remembrance maintained since ancient times, from the time of the Prophet Adam, peace be upon him! This habit was respected and made holy by all the prophets. The Prophet Muhammad ('alayhi salawatullahi wa Aalihi) received knowledge of this saintly dress from the Angel Gabriel on the night of the Mi'raj. The Blessed Prophet clothed the Great Ali in these holy robes and left them as an amanat to be used with ceremony. From the Noble Ali they were inherited by Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn and all the other Imams and eventually handed down until it reached the our Pir Hunkar Haji Bektash. According to Bektashi practice, this ceremonial dress is lasting and irreplaceable. This is significant as dogma rather than as a distinctive sign of proper discipline.

The ceremonial garb is composed chiefly of the following:

1. the Tâj (head covering)
2. the Khirqah (robe)
3. the Kemer (girdle)

## **The Tâj**

The tâj is made of four pieces of felt sewn together. They are called "the entrances". These four are further divided by twelve gores which are called terks.

The four "entrances" are:

1. Shari'ah
2. Tariqat
3. Ma'rifat
4. Haqîqat

The twelve abstinences are:

1. To abstain from wearing the garb of iniquity and turn to those of perfection.
2. To abstain from sin and turn to the qualities of the perfect.
3. To abstain from carnal desires and turn from them completely.
4. To abstain from forgetfulness and turn to the remembrance of Allah.
5. To abstain from ambition and turn to contentment which is a generous treasure.
6. To abstain from fear. To rest and have one's convictions in Allah according to the instructions of the Qur'an.
7. To abstain from the finery of this world and turn to cleanliness.
8. To abstain from beastly appetites and turn to watchfulness against them.
9. To abstain from self-aggrandizement and turn to contentment with humility.
10. To abstain from revenge and acts against others and turn to tolerance.
11. To abstain from undue haste and turn to patience and gentleness.
12. To abstain from grief and confusion over misfortune and turn to the yielding of self to the sayings and wishes of Allah in compliance with the instructions of the Qur'an, "We will test you with sadness, hunger, loss of wealth, people and other things. Blessed are the enduring who when unhappiness occurs say: 'We are God's and unto Him we shall return.'"

## **The Khirqah**

The khirqah is a robe covering the body from the neck to the ankle. It indicates the removal of the imperfect clothing of this world and bearing of the white robes of oral purity. For this reason the original hierarchy always used white which stands for a clean heart and purity. Moreover, as we have explained previously, the khirqah symbolizes the first dress of Prophet Adam ('alayis-salam). It means the covering and blotting out of sins. This also is one of the symbols given to the Prophet Muhammad ('alayhi salawatullahi wa Aalihi) at the time of the Mi'raj. It was then given to the Noble Ali by him. It came down to us through the chain of the authority of which we have spoken.

The khirqah is separated into four parts

1. The front part
2. The back part
3. The right side
4. The left side

The front part denotes the instruction of God and our spiritual guides. The back part signifies the Last Day. The right side is the activity and sacrifice made to reach our spiritual objectives. The left side, which begins from the heart, is the will and desires of the wearers.

Apart from this, the khirqah has an inner and outer side. The outer part signifies the humility of the wearer and the inner is the quality of forgiveness and covering of the sins of others.

### **The Kemer**

The kemer is the woollen girdle tied at the waist and left to us by the Great Ali when he tied them for the first time around the waists of his seventeen faithful followers during the ceremony of confirmation from which they received the name kemerbestigân (the kemer-wearers). Those most worthy of mention were: Imam Hasan, Imam Husayn, Salmân al-Fârîsi, Ammâr ibn Yasir, Abu Dhârr al-Ghiffâri, Miqdâd ibn Awsad, Mâlik al-Ashtar, and Kanbar-i Âli Sultan.

This metaphorical apparel was inherited by the Twelve Imams and the Fourteen Ma'sûm in a special ceremony and handed down until it came to Haji Bektash Veli by whom it was sanctified and remained a remembrance for us. According to Bektashism the kemer signifies the act of the bond tied between the spiritual guide and the wearers revealing that they are faithful and bound together in a sanctified tie.