



THE RUMI OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

A BIOGRAPHY OF MAULANA SHAH HAKEEM
MUHAMMAD AKHTAR



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May Allah Ta'ala accept this weak effort on behalf of myself, my parents, my spouse and children, my brothers, my teachers, my Shaykh (mentor), my mashaayikh, the cover designer, the sponsors and all those who assisted in this publication with their ideas and duas.

Contents

Introduction	7
Foreword by Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu).....	14
A short note on the reality of Tasawwuf and Tazkiyah	16
Name and Titles	18
The title of Aarif Billah	18
The title of Shaykhul Arab wal Ajam	20
Appearance and physical features	20
Summary and time-line of his life.....	21
Birth.....	22
His father’s love and affection.....	23
Childhood and Youth.....	23
A Child’s Love for Allah	24
A Youth’s Love for Allah.....	25
Encouraging others to salaah and salaah with jama’ah.....	27
A young man’s concern for his beard	28
Titles of respect from even his seniors.....	28
Opposing un-Islamic customs.....	28
Abstaining from intermingling with females even before maturity.....	28
Teenage Years and Education	29
Seeking Islamic knowledge.....	32
Du’a of his father	32
Sincerity in acquiring knowledge of Islam	32
Dedication and Sacrifices	34
Love for Maulana Abdul-Ghani ؒ and its miraculous effects.....	35
A wife worthy of emulation	36
Her piety	37
Simple marriage	37
Criterion for a marriage partner	37
Her piety and ibaadah.....	38
Her loyalty and contentment.....	38
Assisting her husband in his Deeni works	39

Pious Children	40
Her compassion for others	41
Her level of chastity	42
A beautiful example of how one should value his partner.....	43
Her demise.....	44
A Muslim's reaction to the demise of a beloved one	45
Noble Children.....	48
A unique du'a for his progeny	48
Praise for his son.....	49
Setting an example when marrying off his daughter	49
Aspiration for his children	49
Advice to his children	50
Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu).....	52
His youth and his studies	52
His spiritual training	53
Relationship with his father	54
Humility.....	56
Tolerance.....	56
Independence.....	56
Serving the Pious	57
Content with Ilm as his lot.....	57
Serving the creation	58
Unique Qualities	58
Current activities.....	59
The three Mashaayikh (Mashaayikh-Thalaathah).....	60
Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ؒ.....	61
A brief biography of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ؒ.....	62
His childhood.....	66
His condition.....	67
His status in the words of the Ulama.....	67
The love of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ؒ for Maulana ؒ.....	69
A unique aspect of knowledge	71

Love for other people	71
Repelling evil with good and a forgiving nature	72
Love for poetry which expresses the love of Allah ﷻ.....	73
Acceptance of his du'as.....	74
Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ.....	75
A brief biography of Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ.....	75
The du'a of his grandfather.....	80
Piety and knowledge in every second generation	80
An exam of respect.....	81
His status in the opinion of his Shaykh.....	81
His position amongst his contemporary Ulama	83
Respect from his contemporaries.....	83
Compassion upon his juniors.....	85
A great lover of Allah.....	85
Punctuality on a'maal.....	89
Difficult days.....	90
Clothing.....	91
His independence	92
Respect for the Qur'an.....	93
Control over his gaze.....	93
His humility and its reward.....	94
Self-defense and the passion for jihaad.....	96
Desire for martyrdom	97
His expertise in stick fighting	97
His stick.....	98
His strength and bravery.....	99
Anger for the sake of Deen.....	101
Efforts for the formation of Pakistan	101
Maulana Phulpuri's ﷺ Migration to Pakistan.....	103
His love for Pakistan	104
His grief and sadness over the evil conditions which later prevailed in Pakistan.....	104
One hidden (takweeni) wisdom of Maulana Phulpuri's migration to Pakistan	105

Seventeen Years in the company of a friend of Allah ﷺ	106
What caused Maulana ﷺ to link up with Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ?.....	106
How did Maulana ﷺ come to know of Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ?.....	107
The desire to meet Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ.....	108
The first meeting with Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ.....	109
Change in dressing.....	110
An etiquette for accepting invitations	111
The benefit of sacrificing one's youth for Allah ﷻ	111
Forty days in the company of his Shaykh	112
The Test of Loyalty.....	113
Simple but sincere gifts.....	116
Serving his Shaykh	116
Relationship with his Shaykh.....	120
The extent of his sacrifices in serving his Shaykh.....	120
One great cause for barakah in knowledge.....	121
How he entered into the permanent service of his Shaykh.....	121
The love of his Shaykh prevented him from earning.....	124
The jealous ones	124
The value of serving the Friends of Allah - an amazing proof	125
Du'as for those who caused him harm	126
Thorns are inseparable from roses	126
A discussion with Shaytaan	128
The preservation of the Uloom (divinely-inspired knowledge) of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ.....	129
Becoming his Shaykh's step-son	131
Criticism over the marriage of Maulana's ﷺ mother	131
The final days and conditions of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ	132
The Du'as of Maulana Abdul-Ghani ﷺ	137
Two confidential conversations	139
The written impressions of Maulana Abrarul-Haq Hardoi ﷺ	140
Precaution in distributing the inheritance of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ.....	140
Maulana Abrarul Haq of Hardoi ﷺ	141

Choosing a Shaykh after the demise of one's first Shaykh?	141
Brief biography of Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq Haqqi ؒ.....	142
Acceptance of his du'as.....	145
His Taqwa	145
Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ, one of the true Abrar	147
An informal relationship.....	147
A relationship of respect after bay'ah	149
Serving Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ	150
Accompanying and serving Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ	151
Patience in serving the friends of Allah ﷻ.....	152
The reprimand of one's Shaykh is for the reformation of the disciple	154
A lesson to be learnt from Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ	154
A karaamah of Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ	155
A memorable trip to Hardoi.....	156
Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ praises the talks of Maulana ؒ.....	157
One can spiritually benefit from even those who are junior.....	158
A letter to his Shaykh	159
Khilaafat from Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ؒ	160

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الحمد لله وكفى وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى

Introduction

As we approach Qiyaamah, the battle between spirituality and materialism becomes more heated and challenging. Allah ﷻ has formed a system in this world of mujaddideen - revivers who would water the various branches and aspects of Islam with their sweat and blood, reform the excesses brought about in Islam by various groups and re-acquaint mankind with the actual objectives of their lives. They correct the many misconceptions which people dwell in, and turn the focus of all back to the basics.

In the seventh century after Hijrah, the Ummah found themselves facing two major challenges; the challenge of materialism – adoration of wealth and worldly enjoyments and the challenge of rationalism – worship of the intellect and logic. From amongst those whom Allah ﷻ had created to confront and tackle these challenges which had swept across the Muslim world like a tide was a great Turkish scholar (whose family hailed from Balkh in Khurasaan) famously known as Maulana Jalaalud-Deen Rumi ؒ. He presented ‘the love of Allah ﷻ’ and ‘the purification of the heart and soul’ as the cure for all evils which had reared their heads in his era.

Maulana Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi writes in his master-piece on the revivers of Islam entitled Rijaalul-Fikr wad Da’wah (translated into English by the title ‘Saviour of Islamic Spirit’):

The impetus received by the movement of rationalism and scholasticism in the seventh century of the Muslim era had cooled the yearnings of the human soul for the apprehension of the Divine. From one end of the Islamic world to another, leaving a few illuminated souls here and there, nobody seemed to have any taste for Divine manifestation and illumination of the heart. It was, as if, an apathy or coolness had overtaken the hearts of the people. It was a situation expressed by Iqbal in this verse: “The fire of love has cooled down; what a calamity it is. The Muslim is naught but a heap of ashes.”

It was at this critical stage that Maulana Rumi sounded the note of alarm and exhorted the people to betake the path of love. His call fired the frenzy of love once again in the entire world of Islam. Maulana Rumi explained what he meant by love and to what sublime eminence it could raise the people... Love is so dignified and high-souled that it cares nothing for empires. One who has once drunk at the spring of love looks with disdain on all worldly possessions...The sagacity of intellect can be exchanged for the bewilderment of love, as the former is a product of doubt and uncertainty while the latter is born of gnosis and illumination...Maulana Rumi's summon to betake the path of love is marked by his advice to become a lover if one cannot become a beloved. He says that it is not possible for everyone to become worthy of being a beloved, but he can nevertheless become an adorer... But love is too precious to be wasted on any transitory or finite being which is likely to become extinct. Love is a living spiritual passion and so the object of love should also be living and everlasting...

Maulana Rumi says that only the overwhelming grace of the Divine Beloved can truly inspire and refresh the heart of man...Nobody needs to have any apprehension of being denied access to that Glorious True love, for He is ever willing to respond to the call of the lover...The love may appear to be a sickness for it produces a crushing grief in the lover's heart. Its pain may be unbearable, but if the lover is able to endure it, he is rewarded with an everlasting illumination and the gnosis of Allah...The sickness of love is in fact a cure for every other illness, be it moral or spiritual. Where the spiritual healers fail and yield to despair, the love succeeds and cures all the moral and spiritual diseases in no time...The love of Allah is an ocean, boundless and wide-spread; it pervades the cosmos and is without any beginning or end. It is a story of the rapturous flame kindled in the heart of man, which, can never be described adequately and therefore it is better to acknowledge one's incompetence to narrate it and hold his tongue.¹

Materialism began making deep inroads into the Muslim world once again during the twentieth century, under the banner of western thought, technology, science and philosophy, producing a skepticism and an

¹ Saviours of Islamic Spirit v.1 pg.345-351

inclination to disbelieve everything beyond the scope of one's senses and one's limited and indoctrinated logic. This challenge was coupled by a deluge of immorality, obscenity, shamelessness and sexual freedom which was promoted by western culture through secular education, television, videos, pornography, music, literature and magazines, media, social media and propaganda. These evils progressed to such an extent that sexual licentiousness and perversions soon become the norm of the day. This has finally even led to the forming of a western 'cult' whose sole objective in life is to promote, legalize and normalize perversions like LGBTQ etc. May Allah ﷻ save us all from these evils.

Aarif Billah² Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ was one of those reformers at the end of the twentieth century whom Allah ﷻ had used to re-direct scores of people from lives of materialism to lives of spirituality, to remove people who were trapped in the webs of illicit love affairs and carnal desire towards illicit beauty which is temporary and fleeting and transport them into the pure and pristine love of Allah ﷻ, whose love and beauty is eternal and never-ending. He was blessed with the unique tact and ability to disincline people's hearts from the attractions of this world, especially illicit love-affairs and sensual desires, and incline their hearts to the love and recognition of Allah ﷻ. His lectures and advices contained a balm for the hearts and were brimming with the love of Allah ﷻ. In these aspects, he was a reminiscent of Maulana Jalaalud-Deen Rumi ﷺ in the modern and fast-progressing twentieth century.

A great well-known scholar of South Africa, Maulana Yunus Patel ﷺ, describes him in the following words:

Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar (daamat barakaatuhum) is a glittering star amongst the friends of Allah Ta'ala. Maulana's heart is brimming with the LOVE of Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasul ﷺ. Readers of Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar's (daamat barakaatuhum) writings and listeners of his speeches are in reality drinking from three fountains of knowledge and sincere LOVE for Allah Ta'ala and His beloved Rasul ﷺ; Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ Maulana Shah

² The gnostic who was blessed with the recognition of Allah ﷻ

Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ and Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ﷺ in whose company Maulana spent many years of his life and received 'khilaafat' from them.

Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar (daamat barakaatuhum) is the author of numerous books on various subjects, especially on 'Tasawwuf ' and on "Ma'rifat" (recognition) of Allah Ta'ala. His commentary of the 'Mathnawi' of Maulana Rumi ﷺ has been hailed by great Ulama such as Maulana (Muhammad) Yusuf Banuri ﷺ, Shaykh (ul-Hadith Maulana Muhammad) Zakariyya ﷺ, Maulana Manzoor Nu'mani ﷺ and Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq (his own Shaykh) as a commentary which ignites the love of Allah Ta'ala and deeply effects the hearts of readers.

He has thousands of disciples in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, America, England, Canada, South Africa, Reunion and many other parts of the world. The spiritual benefit to those who spend time in his company, sincerely desiring reformation, is evident in their transformed lives. The fact that great Ulama and many Scholars of Hadith and Tafsir, who are themselves of a high spiritual rank, have taken "Bay'ah" (pledged allegiance) upon his hands is a clear indication of his esteemed rank and profound knowledge of Deen. Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar's (damat barakaatuhum) visit to South Africa and many other countries of the world is spiritually most rejuvenating to both the young and the old, who flock in large numbers to hear his inspiring talks on various subjects.

The basic themes of his talks have always been: • The development of love of the Creator and Sustainer, Almighty Allah Ta'ala, in the hearts. • Following the beautiful lifestyle of Rasulullah ﷺ. • The fulfillment of the rights of Allah Ta'ala and of His Creation. • And most importantly abstinence from all sins, which is a guaranteed prescription for becoming a friend of Allah Ta'ala...

In this time and age, materialistic prosperity is the principal aspiration, and unfortunately surpasses religion in terms of chief priority. Life revolves entirely around carnal and sensual pleasures - thus, the purpose of life itself has been forgotten and the gift of life wasted. The beautiful character traits pertaining to human excellence including shame, modesty, honesty, sincerity, trustworthiness, generosity, kindness etc. are presently at their

lowest ebb. Hearts have become veiled in darkness, permeated with evil desires and passions and filled with malice, greed, pride, envy, and jealousy. In satisfying these cravings of the carnal self, both the heart and the soul are foolishly exchanged for that which is ephemeral and perishable. The translation of "Ma'aarif-e-Mathnawi" into the English language and its publication in such desperate times is indeed a great boon for the Ummah.³

Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ had therefore been referred to as 'the Rumi of his era'. He wrote: I had great love, admiration and connection with Maulana Jalaalud-Deen Rumi ؒ and his Mathnawi even before I reached the age of maturity. Later Allah Ta'ala blessed me with a Shaykh who also happened to be a great lover of the Mathnawi. He would say: "The Mathnawi is filled with burning love and ignites the fire of love in the hearts of its readers." My Shaykh, Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ؒ would teach the Mathnawi daily to his class after Asr Salaah, presenting it in such a manner that it would create a sensation in the hearts of the listeners.⁴ He also said: "My first Shaykh (spiritual guide) is Maulana Rumi ؒ. It was from him (his advices in the Mathnawi) that my restless heart would attain solace and comfort. The painful yearning for the love of Allah Ta'ala had first been developed in me by Maulana Rumi ؒ."⁵

Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ had written an amazing commentary on the 'Mathnawi' of Maulana Rumi ؒ entitled Ma'aarif-e-Mathnawi. He even composed his own original poetry in Persian in the style of Maulana Rumi ؒ, which he added into this commentary. When he presented a copy of this book to Allamah Muhammad Yusuf Banuri, one of the greatest Hadith scholars of his time and a prize student of Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri ؒ, Allamah read out some poems and assumed that they were the poems of Maulana Jalaalud-Deen Rumi. When Maulana

³ Summarized and edited from the introduction of Ma'aarif-e-Mathnawi (English translation)

⁴ Ma'aarif-e-Mathnawi

⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.34

Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ mentioned that they were his poems, Allamah Banuri was surprised and he commented:

لا فرق بينك وبين مولانا روم

“There is no difference between you and Maulana Rumi.”

N.B. Considering this, throughout this book, we have referred to Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ as ‘Maulana’, which is the title by which Maulana Rumi ﷺ is famous. Therefore, whenever ‘Maulana’ is mentioned, please note that it will refer to the Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ, except where it can be clearly understood otherwise.

I was first introduced to the personality and teachings of Maulana ﷺ through the discourses of my respected Shaykh and teacher Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu), the founder and rector of Darul-Uloom Azaadville. Many of my teachers were also spiritually affiliated to Maulana ﷺ. After completing my Aalim course at Darul-Uloom Azaadville, Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu) had sent me for a period of four months to spend time in the company of Maulana ﷺ, who was by that time paralyzed and bedridden. During that time which was spent in his company, my impression of Maulana ﷺ was that he was an epitome of the love of Allah ﷻ.

While perusing through the Maulana’s biography entitled ‘Rashke-Awliyaa’, a strong feeling overwhelmed my heart that I should translate selected portions of this book for the benefit of those who cannot access the original work. This biography was prepared with the wish to introduce Maulana ﷺ to the English-speaking world and all those who are unacquainted with his life, so that the Muslim Ummah can draw important lessons from his life and benefit from his experiences and advices, all of which are very relevant to current times. At the same time, this book could also serve as an impetus for people to derive benefit from those of his Khulafa (deputies), disciples and students who are still alive amongst us.

This biography is mainly based on the following sources:

- a) Tarjumatul-Musannif – a brief auto-biography by Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ.
- b) Rashke-Awliyaa – a detailed 792 page biography which was prepared by Sayyid Ishrat Jameel ؒ, who was fondly known as ‘Meer Sahib’. He had spent approximately 46 years of his life in the company and service of his Shaykh, Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ. He would record with his pen and later with a voice-recorder every little advice or statement of his Shaykh, throughout this period of time. This biography mainly consists of those incidents and narratives which were narrated by Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ himself during the course of those 46 years, which were then transcribed from the voice recordings. In that sense, it is a very reliable and authentic source of information about Maulana’s ؒ life, for it is the transcription of what he himself had narrated. A few points were added on to this biography, which were stored in the memory or note-books of Meer Sahib ؒ. This biography also contains a detailed description of the three senior Mashaayikh of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ, in which many his personal experiences with them are recorded.
- c) Tazkirah Majma’ul Bihaar by Maulana Jalil Ahmad Akhun, which was translated into English by Maulana Mohamed Mohamedy.
- d) Those incidents which I had heard myself from my Shaykh Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu) or Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu), the illustrious son of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ.

This is the first part of this book which deals with the early part of his life and his experiences with his Mashaayikh. Insha-Allah, other parts will be forthcoming.

We make du’a that Allah ؒ accepts this meek effort, and grants us the ability to appreciate the sacrifices of our elders, to spur us on to study their lives, to imbibe their qualities and characteristics, to implement their advices which are derived from the Qur’an and Sunnah and to become worthy successors of the legacy which they had left behind! Aameen.

This section was completed on Yawmul Arbi’aa (Wednesday) 26 Jumaadal Ulaa 1444 (21/12/2022)

Preface by

Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq

(daamat barakaatuhu)

Principal of Darul-Uloom Azaadville

Special Khalifah of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar رَحْمَةُ اللهِ

الحمد لله وكفى وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى الحمد لله منشاء الخلق من عدم ثم الصلوة على
المختار فى القدم يا رب صل وسلم دائما ابدا على البشير النذير محمدا مولاي صل وسلم دائما ابدا
على طه سيد المرسلين بلغ سلامى روضة فيها النبى المحترم يا خير من دفنت بالقاع اعظمه فطاب من
طيهن القاع والاكم وروحي الفداء لقرى انت ساكنه فيه العفاف وفيه الجود والكرم هو الحبيب الذي
ترجى شفاعته لكل هول من الاهوال مقتحم اما بعد

Bismihi Ta'ala

It is of absolute importance that we take inspiration from those who lived exemplary lives in the total obedience of Allaah ﷻ, who bore great love for Allaah ﷻ, followed the Sunnah of Rasulallah ﷺ, were practical embodiments of it and lived to bring it alive in the whole world! It is such people who we should take as role-models, to follow in life.

Hadhrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib ﷺ was a great and ardent lover of Allaah ﷻ, who received great inspiration from the great fire of love of Allaah ﷻ, known as Maulana Jalaaluddeen Rumi ﷺ! It seemed as if Hadhrat Hakeem Akhtar ﷺ was supposed to have travelled with him in his caravan about 700 years ago, but Allah ﷻ had willed that he should come later to guide and bring along to the high stages of wilaayah (the friendship of Allaah ﷻ) those who will come 700 years later, when fitnahs of all types will abound and will surround people from all sides. Hadhrat Maulana

Hakeem Akhtar Sahib ﷺ was chosen for this, as a spiritual guide who will have his finger on the pulse of the weaknesses and illnesses of the Ummah and who would be able to prescribe their ideal remedies and solutions!

Maulana Imraan Kajee has prepared this very wonderful biography of our illustrious Shaykh, Aarif Billaah Hadhrat Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib ﷺ. It is based on a previous work on the same subject in the Urdu language. People who know Urdu benefitted from that great monumental work. Now, those who were deprived of that great benefit have been afforded this great, valuable opportunity!

Maulana Imraan has presented all this to the readers in a most eloquent manner. It is a must read that will urge and guide everyone to the real purpose and object of life, in an easy to follow manner!

May Allaah ﷻ fully reward Maulana for this great, invaluable service! There was a great need for it! ما شاء الله (This was the will of Allah) and Mubaarak! Maulana has done a superb job and presented the subject in a most suitable way! May Allaah ﷻ tremendously reward Maulana and accept all his great efforts! May Allaah ﷻ make them all most beneficial and great storages for the eternal life of Aakhirah!

I am very grateful to Maulana for giving me the opportunity to 'prick the finger and be included amongst the Shuhadaa'. May Allaah ﷻ grant us also a share in all these great services! Aameen Yaa Rabbal Aalameen!!!

A short note on the reality of Tasawwuf and Tazkiyah

Tazkiyah and Tasawwuf is an important branch of Islam, dealing with purification of the internal illnesses (like pride, jealousy, love for name and fame, love for wealth, excessive anger, etc.), imbibing of beautiful character (like the love and fear of Allah ﷻ, sincerity, generosity, humility, etc.), and attaining nisbat (connection), love and recognition of Allah ﷻ. Just as the Sahabah ﷺ acquired outward knowledge from Nabi ﷺ, which was transmitted to us via the Ulama and fuqaha, the Sahabah ﷺ acquired this branch of knowledge and transmitted it to us via the Sufiyaa.

However, as time passed after the era of Nabi ﷺ, many innovations crept into the branch known as tazkiyah and tasawwuf. Throughout the centuries, the reliable and genuine Ulama, Sufiyaa and Da'ees (propagators) always separated the objectives from mere customs and rituals, sifted the truth from falsehood and reformed the people's belief regarding the reality of tasawwuf.

Regarding tasawwuf, we encounter three groups of people;

For one group, tasawwuf is something alien to Islam, something fabricated by some deviant mystics (sufis), which has absolutely no basis in shari'ah. This is largely due to their lack of knowledge regarding the shar'i standpoint regarding tasawwuf, and their misgivings are generally founded on the excesses and innovations of many deviant and misguided individuals who claim to be adherents of tasawwuf, but are in reality the slaves of their whims and desires, who ply their trade under the guise of their own concocted version of tasawwuf. Then there are the second group of people who we will find on the other extreme. They are under the false impression that, once a certain level of love and recognition has been acquired, the shari'ah then becomes irrelevant. This group is more dangerous than

the former, because such beliefs often take a person out of the fold of Islam. For them, Deen consists mainly of dhikr and wazaa'if, coupled together with various other forms of innovations and customs, very often imbibed from other religions due to frequent intermingling.

Between these two extremes, we find a group of people who have drawn the middle path, combining both shari'ah (the external acts of worship) and tariqah (tasawwuf - the internal acts of worship), and at the same time shunning all forms of rituals and customs which are foreign to the teachings of Islam.

Shaykhul Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandehlawi has mentioned the following regarding Tasawwuf and our Akaabir (pious predecessors), "Tasawwuf was an extremely important activity of our pious predecessors. These great personalities on the one hand were true followers and vicegerents of the fuqaha-mujtahideen and muhadditheen in the sciences of Fiqh and Ahaadith, and on the other hand in the field of tasawwuf they had followed in the footsteps of Junayd Baghdadi and Imaam Shibli. These great luminaries engaged in tasawwuf within the limits defined by Fiqh and Hadith, and both verbally and practically demonstrated that this blessed science is in reality a science established from Qur'aan and Hadith, whilst simultaneously putting a nail in the coffin of those customs and innovations which found their way into this blessed science through the passage of time. Today, there are certain ignorant people who, if they have not regarded Tasawwuf as something which is completely against Shari'ah, then they have regarded it as something totally separate from it. This is a severe transgression of the limits and is complete ignorance." (Aap Beeti)⁶

⁶ Summarized from: The Legacy of the Ulama of Deoband

Name and Titles

His name was Muhammad Akhtar. After studying Unani medicine at Tibbiyyah college in Ilahabad, he received the title of ‘Hakeem’. Due to this, he was commonly known as Hakeem Akhtar. His spiritual mentor, Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ was the one who gave him the titles of ‘Aarif Billah’⁷ and ‘Shaykhul Arab wal Ajam’⁸.

The title of Aarif Billah

In 1976, Maulana visited India. In the company of his Shaykh Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ, a trip was arranged to Hyderabad Deccan. Maulana was asked to deliver a lecture in the college of Professor Hasan Saeed. A poster was prepared for distribution. When it was shown to Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ, he saw that it stated: ‘Hakeem Akhtar from Karachi will deliver a lecture’. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ became upset and scolded the organizer, saying, “Why did you introduce him as Hakeem? Has he come here to explain how to prepare medicine? He is an Aalim (a scholar). Why didn’t you add Maulana as his title?” They changed the poster to state: ‘A great Aalim, the author of Ma’arif Mathnawi who has come from Karachi will deliver a lecture’. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ asked them to make one addition. He said, “Add ‘Aarif Billah’ and write it as follows: ‘Aarif Billah Hadhrat Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Sahib daamat barakaatuhum’⁹ will deliver a lecture’.”¹⁰

An emotional outburst in the Haram of Makkah and its effects

Maulana ؒ writes: While in Makkah Mukarramah, my eyes opened one night after midnight. After seeing the time, I tried to sleep, but I

⁷ one who recognized Allah

⁸ the mentor of the Arabs and non-Arabs

⁹ may his blessings persevere

¹⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.20

was unable to do so. I felt a strong urge in my heart to proceed to Baytullah¹¹. I sensed a strong hope that I am being called and that Allah ﷻ wanted to bless me with some great favour. I left my companions who were fast asleep and presented myself in Al-Masjidul-Haraam. My heart was overcome with a unique feeling and condition. I cried to Allah ﷻ and pleaded, “O Allah. Akhtar is your unknown slave. He is totally unworthy and incompetent. But he is the spiritual grandson of Haaji Imdaadullah ﷺ who is buried right here in this blessed city. You spread his faydh¹² all over from this pure Haram. O Allah. Revive his silsilah¹³ from here again. Allow some individuals from this very city to enter into the Imdaadi silsilah (the chain of Haaji Imdaadullah) at the hands of ahqar¹⁴, make them a means of sadaqah jaariyah¹⁵ for me and grant them the sweetness of Your love. O Allah. Akhtar wants nothing from them. He only desires that a group of people be formed who will take Your Name in the blessed precincts of Your House, who will cry in Your remembrance, who will sigh in Your love and who will be restless in searching for Your proximity. O Allah. Grant this du’a acceptance very soon.” I was suddenly overtaken by a feeling of great ecstasy and weeping and I felt in my heart that my du’a had been accepted. That was a time of acceptance. By the next evening, 40 people who were mostly Ulama and Huffaadh had already taken bay’ah¹⁶ at my hands. Within two days, the number of people increased to 53.

When this useless servant mentioned those favours of Allah which I had witnessed at the Baytullah Shareef to my Shaykh Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu), he was extremely happy... He

¹¹ The house of Allah i.e. the Ka’bah

¹² teachings

¹³ chain of students and disciples

¹⁴ This insignificant one

¹⁵ Perpetual reward

¹⁶ pledged allegiance

instructed me in Madinah Munawwarah to discuss some matter pertaining to Deen every day in Al-Masjidun Nabawi. When I mentioned what had occurred at the Baytullah Shareef to Maulana Muhammad Ahmad (daamat barakaatuhu), he was so overjoyed that he embraced me. He said, “What have you seen yet?” He then lifted his hand and rotated his finger in a circular motion as if encircling the four corners of the world. He then said, “Allah made me involuntarily do that. Insha-Allah, it will happen accordingly.”¹⁷

The title of Shaykhul Arab wal Ajam

In the title of a kitaab written by Maulana, the publisher had added on the title of ‘Ash-Shaykh fil Arab wal Ajam’ (a mentor amongst the Arabs and non-Arabs). Some people had objected to this title before Maulana Abrarul-Haq and felt that it was inappropriate. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ instructed, “Some people have objected to this title. I suggest that it should be covered with a sticker.” Maulana Muhammad Ahmad (of Partaabgarh), who was present there, commented, “You can try covering it a million times with stickers, the matter is as it is. He will become Shaykhul Arab wal Ajam.” Subsequently, during the last 15 years of Maulana’s life, many of his kitaabs were translated into Arabic and published in the Arab world, thousands of which were distributed free of charge.¹⁸

Appearance and physical features

Maulana ﷺ was handsome, tall, well-built, and had a whitish-reddish complexion. He had an oval, radiant face, a pointed nose and eyes that were filled with the intense love of Allah Ta’ala. His eyes would often flow with tears in remembrance of Allah and this habit remained till his demise. A few moments before passing away, two tears flowed from Maulana’s eyes onto his cheeks. He had a

¹⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.21

¹⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.22

wide forehead which was radiant with noor (spiritual luminance). He had a broad chest, long arms and wide palms. When he would experience restlessness and longing due to the separation from Allah Ta'ala, he would sigh and take a deep breath which would cause his chest to swell. It would seem that if he did not take a breath, his chest would burst out of the pangs of the separation from Allah Ta'ala.

Maulana رحمۃ اللہ علیہ would often wear white clothing. His pants would reach till mid-calf, the sunnah length. There was humbleness, coupled with a sort of independence, found in his gait. Maulana used to wear white socks and open shoes. In winter, he would wear a qamees (kurta) made from warm cloth over his normal qamees (kurta). This warm qamees (kurta) is referred to as a qubba or jubba in Arabic, and its usage is established from the Sunnah. Maulana's qamees (kurta) had three pockets. The front top pocket was situated on the left side. It had a flap which could close with a button or Velcro. A zip was attached to the right and left pockets.¹⁹

Summary and time-line of his life

Maulana's رحمۃ اللہ علیہ life can be summed up in the following stages:

- a) Childhood and youth
- b) 3 years which were spent in Tibbiyyah College. During these three years, he benefitted greatly from the company of Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad Partabgarhi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ.
- c) 14 years in the company of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in India
- d) 3 years in the company of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in Pakistan
- e) 6 years from the demise of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ spent largely in seclusion

¹⁹ Tazkirah Majma'ul Bihaar

- f) 11 years (from 1969 to 1980) in which people from Karachi, and especially Naazimabad, began benefiting from him
- g) 9 years (from 1980 to 1989) wherein he established a Khanqah in Gulshan Iqbal Karachi and in which he began trips to foreign countries to spread the love of Allah ﷺ
- h) 11 years (from 1989 to 2000) in which he travelled frequently to foreign countries all over the world to spread the love of Allah ﷺ (In this time, he would be away from home for more than half the year)
- i) 14 years (from 2000 to 2013) in which he was affected by a stroke, paralysis and was bed-ridden, until his demise. During the first few years, Maulana travelled with difficulty to a few places and countries, but gradually gave up travelling. These years of sickness were spent in contemplation and delivering short advices to those who came to him from far and wide. His recorded lectures and advices would be played in his gatherings, where he, together with the attendees, would listen attentively to his recorded advices. Otherwise, his close associates would be asked to deliver discourses on the different subjects and knowledge which they had learnt from him. During this period of time, many of his lectures and advices were transcribed and many more were translated into various languages.

Birth

Home-town and Date of Birth

Maulana ﷺ was most probably born in 1928 in a small village Atheha, which is about 16 miles away from Partaabgarh, in the U.P. province in India.²⁰

²⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.23

His father's love and affection

Maulana رحمته الله was his father's only son. However, he did have two sisters. Being the only son, his father loved him dearly. When Maulana would remember the incidents of his father's great love and affection towards him, his eyes would fill with tears. While Maulana رحمته الله was studying in the Medical College in Ilahabaad, he would by means of letter inform his parents of his upcoming holidays. His father would say to his mother, "Only one month is left. I am counting the days for his return." His father would fetch him from the station. He would go eagerly searching for his son in every carriage, before Maulana could even get down from the train. His father would even massage his upper-back on his return. He would plead with his father, "My father. What are you doing? I am your son. I will serve you." His father would reply, "My son. Your hand won't be able to reach your back properly. Let me massage your upper-back for you." Maulana would say, "A father who honours his children in this manner, du'as just continuously pour out of the heart for such a father."²¹

شاب نشأ في عبادة الله

Childhood and Youth

The signs of wilaayah (friendship of Allah) were seen within Maulana رحمته الله from childhood. When he was only 3 or 4 years old, his elder sister took him to the local masjid where Haafiz Abul-Barakaat رحمته الله was the Imaam. He was a khalifah²² of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمته الله. Maulana رحمته الله narrates: When I first saw him, I loved his appearance, his long kurta (qamees) and his full beard. I felt an attraction to the walls and sandy ground of the masjid. I can still remember that I even kissed the ground of the masjid... As I grew a

²¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.24

²² Disciple and Deputy

little older, I was blessed with love for pious people and I would become very happy on seeing their appearance. I would stare at every Haafiz and Aalim with a gaze of love and admiration...

I sensed the presence of Allah in the company of Haafiz Abul-Barakaat رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. I really felt in my heart that this man was a special servant of Allah ﷻ. While in secondary school, I one day requested him to allow me to take bay'ah²³ at his hands. He said, "Hakeemul Ummah (Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) had appointed me as his deputy for the ordinary people. You are not an ordinary person. Some special person will allow you to take bay'ah at his hands."

A Child's Love for Allah

Maulana رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said: As I grew a little older (at the age of five), my heart was restless to find Allah ﷻ. I would find solace in looking towards the sky and stars in the late hours of the night and I would thus remain in the remembrance of my True Beloved for long periods on end. Sometimes, I would look to the sky and say to Allah ﷻ:

اپنے ملنے کا پتا کوئی نشان تو بتا دے مجھ کو اے رب جہاں

Show me some sign, o Rabb of the worlds, which leads me to the
place where I can find You.

He رحمۃ اللہ علیہ once wrote: This useless servant felt a special type of attraction and inclination towards Allah ﷻ within my soul from the days of my childhood. I also felt that my heart was alienated from the world.²⁴

He رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said: After primary school, my father enrolled me in a secondary school, whereas I had requested him to send me to Deoband. I passed those three years with great difficulty. In the last

²³ Pledge allegiance

²⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.31

year, I insisted to my father that I had no interest in this education. But he insisted that I should at least complete this last year and pass the exams.²⁵

A Youth's Love for Allah

At the age of 13, while still immature, Maulana ﷺ began frequenting a masjid in the woods which was at a distance from his house and on the outskirts of their village. It was in a desolate area. At night, no person could be seen even in the distance. Maulana would go to that masjid in the middle of the night to perform his tahajjud. He would then cry in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ until Fajr. His father was advised by some friends to stop him from going to the masjid alone at night. Instead of prohibiting him directly, his father along with a few friends waited for him one night outside the masjid. His father said to him, "You are my only son. There are thieves and robbers here in these woods. I also have many enemies. Don't come alone here. Please perform your tahajjud at home." From then onwards, he began performing his tahajjud at home.²⁶

Maulana ﷺ said: From the age of adolescence (before becoming of age), my attachment for the Mathnawi (of Maulana Jalaalud-Deen Rumi ؒ) was developed. I began studying Persian just so that I could understand the Mathnawi. I would recite some of its couplets and cry. Sometimes I would cry by shedding tears, and sometimes I would just cry in my heart. This useless servant would specifically recite the flowing two couplets with great feeling:

O Allah, I desire that my chest (heart) splits into smithereens due to
the grief of separation from you,
So that I can then express the details of your love with the pain of
yearning and inclination.

²⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.28,29

²⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.29

That man whose chest has been split by the fire of His love,
 He will find himself cured from greed and all other spiritual
 maladies (like pride, self-admiration, love of status and love of the
 world).²⁷

The first couplet of poetry which Maulana رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had composed in his
 life was:

دردِ فرقت سے میرا دل اس قدر بیتاب ہے جیسے تپتی ریت میں اک ماہی ہے
 اب ہے

The pain of separation has made my heart so restless
 That I am like a fish out of the water on burning sand²⁸

He wrote regarding himself: When this useless servant was 13 years
 old, my heart would be restless to find Allah (i.e. to recognize Him
 and acquire His love). I had a desire to listen to poetry (in the love
 of Allah) recited with a beautiful voice.²⁹ For this reason, I would
 request my teacher to recite for me. After teaching me my lesson in
 Qur'an, he would recite the Mathnawi for me in a very heart-rending
 tune, which would stir up feeling of love within my heart. That very
 teacher of mine would usually eat meals at my house, and he was
 very kind to me.³⁰

He would say: My first Shaykh (spiritual guide) is Maulana Rumi
رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. It was from him (his advices in the Mathnawi) that my restless
 heart would attain solace and comfort. The painful yearning for the
 love of Allah Ta'ala had first been developed in me by Maulana
 Rumi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ.³¹

²⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.28, 29

²⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.55

²⁹ There are many fiqhi laws related to listening to such poetry in a tune.
 Those will be mentioned in a later chapter insha-Allah. Maulana was very
 strict when it came to abiding by such laws of the Shari'ah.

³⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.34

³¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.34

From the age of 12, he began searching for a guide who could teach him the love of Allah. He would meet with and visit every person who seemed outwardly pious, but his heart was not satisfied. Therefore, his restlessness to find Allah (i.e. to acquire the true recognition of Allah) was ever increasing.³²

Encouraging others to salaah and salaah with jama'ah

At a short distance from that masjid, there were a few Muslim homes. Maulana ﷺ visited them and encouraged them to perform salaah. He made continuous effort upon them, until they all became regular musallis³³ in that masjid. Azaan and salaah with jama'ah was established. People would jokingly call Maulana ﷺ the Shaykh of those musallis. He would lead them in salaah. At that time, he was still not baaligh (mature). He was not aware that it is not allowed for immature boys to lead adults in salaah according to the Hanafi school of thought. According to the Hanafis, all such salaah must be repeated again. In his old age, Maulana once recalled his young days when suddenly his mind shifted towards this law. He became very worried. He contacted certain Muftis. Based on their ruling, he sent a registered letter and another letter by post from Pakistan to India, addressed to the Imaam of that masjid. In it, he wrote, "Approximately 50 years ago, for this specific period of time, I had led the locals in salaah, whereas I was not baaligh. If anyone is still alive from that time, please inform him that he should repeat those salaahs."³⁴

³² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.32

³³ performers of salaah

³⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.29, 30

A young man's concern for his beard

Maulana had never cut his beard from the time it had started growing.³⁵

Titles of respect from even his seniors

Seeing his condition, his father would call him by the title 'Molwi Sahib', instead of addressing him by his name. His father's friends would call him 'Durwesh' (the ascetic).³⁶

Opposing un-Islamic customs

He ﷺ narrates: When I disassociated myself from all (un-Islamic) family customs, my entire family were enraged with me. All of them made many accusations (against me). But, I thank Allah, that when I returned to my family in 1976 from Pakistan, every one of those people were requested me to make du'a for them after they heard my lecture. The extent of respect which they showed to this Mulla on that day was such that they had never respected any rich landowner to that extent. I reminded them, "Friends! That day had also passed when you expelled me from your family circle. But we tried to please Allah. By the blessings of serving the friends of Allah, Allah Ta'ala granted us courage. Today, you are asking me for du'as. Today, you all have also understood who was on the right at that time."³⁷

Abstaining from intermingling with females even before maturity

During his childhood days, while still approaching maturity, Maulana began to avoid mixing with women. When any woman would come to the house, he would go to another room. A Hindu

³⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.30

³⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.30

³⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.30

woman would sometimes visit the house, as she was one of their neighbours. She once asked about him. Maulana's mother replied, 'He makes pardah from women.' (i.e. he avoids mixing with them) She remarked, "Such a young child, and he's making pardah from now already. I will bring an end to this pardah." After a certain salaah, as he was returning from the masjid, this lady called out to him from behind a wall, "My boy! Please take this letter and read it to me." As he tried to take the letter from her hand, she emerged from behind the wall and caught hold of his hand. She said, "What is this pardah you are making? You are still a small child." He managed to free his hand from her grip and returned home to his mother, sobbing and crying. He said to her, "Now, I will not go much out of the house."³⁸

Teenage Years and Education

Admission into Tibbiyyah college

After completing his secondary education, Maulana ﷺ began studying Persian Islamic literature by Qari Siddiq, the Imaam of the Jaami' Masjid of Sultanpur. He studied the entire 'Kareema' and some chapters of 'Gulistan' under him. He then again requested his father to send him to Deoband to further his Islamic studies. His father however forcefully admitted him into 'Tibbiyyah College', now known as 'Government Unani Medical College', in Allahabad to study Yunani medicine.³⁹ His father advised him to learn Arabic (Islamic studies) after completing his studies in medicine. In compliance with the wishes of his father, Maulana moved to Allahabad to stay with his Paternal Aunty. He explained that he

³⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.30

³⁹ State Unani Medical College, Himmatganj, Allahabad, was founded by Hakeem Ahmad Hussain from his home in the early -1904 as a private institution.

passed those days with great difficulty (as his goal and ambition was to acquire the knowledge of Deen).⁴⁰

A mile away from the residence was a Masjid known as “Jinnu Wali Masjid (Masjid of the Jinns). Maulana would sometimes go there it and remain absorbed in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ therein.⁴¹

During that period of time, Maulana Siraj Ahmad Amrohi ﷺ, a khalifah⁴² of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ, would deliver lessons on Tafsir in Abdullah Masjid. Maulana would always attend those lessons.⁴³

Hakeem Uthmaani, a pious, handsome and skilled doctor

He ﷺ says: One of my teachers in Tibbiyyah college was Hakeem Uthmaani, who had received the title of Shifaa ul Mulk (the cure of the country).⁴⁴ He was tall, fit, handsome and had beautiful eyes. I had never seen such a handsome person in my life. He suffered from a stroke in the latter part of his life, which lead to facial paralysis, and he suddenly lost all of his handsomeness. I had seen him at the height of his beauty and had seen him after losing all of his beauty. He would not look at the hands of his female patients, when checking their pulse. Instead, he would place his hand behind the curtain and ask them to place their pulse on his fingers. He had such a high level of Taqwa, and was blessed with a high rate of success in cure.

⁴⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.34

⁴¹ Tazkirah Majma’ul Bihaar

⁴² Disciple and Deputy

⁴³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.34

⁴⁴ Hakeem Ahmad Usmani was awarded the title of Shifa-ul-Mulk (Healer of the Nation) by the Britishers in spite of the known opposition of his family against the British rule in India. His father Hakeem Ahmad Hussain founded and established the Unani Medical College, Allahabad in 1904 and managed it from his own resources without raising any donation etc.

Maulana was the student of a medical teacher who studied directly under the late Hakeem Muhammad Ajmal Khan.⁴⁵

كفى بالموت واعظا

A Life-Changing Lesson

He ﷺ says: While studying in Ilahabad, I lived in an area called Hasan-Manzil. I had a friend from the same area who was studying with me. The college was in Himmat-Ganj, which was 2 miles away. For 3 years, I went with him every morning to college and returned back with him every evening. We were not even 20 years old. I went home for the summer holidays. When I returned, I went in the morning to my friend's house, to fetch him for college. His aged mother came crying to the door, and said, "Your friend has reached his grave. Don't come any more to meet him. He died after being sick for a week." His sudden death shook my heart, and was the reason why I then hastened in pledging bay'ah. I thought to myself that I need to quickly find a friend of Allah to link up to, as there is no reliance on life.⁴⁶

Demise of his father

During his final year examinations, Maulana's father fell terminally ill. He sternly instructed that his son should not be informed of this, so that he may complete his exams.

After completing his final examination, when he reached his Aunt's home in the evening, he received a letter informing him of the sad demise of his father. A state of extreme grief overcame him. He went to the cemetery opposite his Aunt's home. There, he looked at the graves with the intention of taking lesson and explained to his heart that you too will one day be buried in this

⁴⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.35

⁴⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.36

home of yours and that to be pleased with the decree of Allah ﷻ is the height of servitude.⁴⁷

من خرج في طلب العلم فهو في سبيل الله حتى يرجع (الترمذي)

Seeking Islamic knowledge

Du'a of his father

His father would call him by the title ‘Molwi Sahib’, instead of addressing him by his name, from his childhood days. He said: Just because of punctually performing salaah, my father would call me by the title ‘Molwi Sahib’.⁴⁸ Allah placed blessings in his words, (accepted his du’a,) and taught me some bit of Islamic knowledge.

Maulana ﷻ acquired Islamic education from his Shaykh’s institute, named Baytul-Uloom. He studied Mishkatul-Masaabih in 1950, and studied Sahih Bukhari the following year under his Shaykh Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷻ. His sanad⁴⁹ in the science of Hadith linked up to Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi ﷻ, the Muhaddith of his era, through just two links. Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani ﷻ had studied Hadith under Maulana Maajid Ali Jaunpuri ﷻ, who had studied Hadith under Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi ﷻ in the last year of his teaching career.

Sincerity in acquiring knowledge of Islam

When Maulana ﷻ enrolled in Baytul-Uloom for his studies, some of his colleagues who were studying in bigger institutes advised him to enroll into Darul-Uloom Deoband, instead of an unknown non-famous institute. Maulana replied, “My objective is not the

⁴⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.36

⁴⁸ This was an informal, yet respectful, title used by the general public in India to address the Ulama (scholars of Islam).

⁴⁹ chain

Madrasah. I have come here with the intention of benefitting from the company of my Shaykh, Maulana Abdul-Ghani, who I have hope that will be instrumental in reforming my soul and purifying my heart. I will treasure the knowledge which I receive from him, and be content for now with that. According to me, to become a Haafiz, Aalim or Qaari is fardh-kifaayah⁵⁰. However, to reform oneself, to adopt Taqwa, to become a friend of Allah, to continuously fear Allah and to not soil yourself in the anger and wrath of Allah through sinning is fardh-ayn⁵¹. I have come here to learn the love of Allah from Maulana Abdul-Ghani. According to me, this is of primary importance. However, this is also the madrasah of Maulana Abdul-Ghani, where I will acquire the knowledge of Deen, while at the same time I will be able to reform myself under his guidance. Therefore, I will not leave him and go to Deoband.” His colleagues mocked at him, “On our certificates, we will be classified as ‘graduate of Deoband’. On your certificate, you will be classified as ‘graduate of Baytul-Uloom’. Who knows where is Baytul-Uloom?” He replied, “I am not acquiring knowledge just to be known as a graduate of Deoband. I am acquiring knowledge to learn the love of Allah.” They commented, “If you graduate in Deoband, you will get a lot of izzah - honour and respect.” He replied, “I will not acquire knowledge for the sake of izzah – honour and respect. I will acquire knowledge for the sake of Rabbul-Izzah (the Owner of honour and respect).”

It is perhaps through the blessings of that sincerity that later, great graduates of Deoband became students and disciples of Maulana.⁵²

⁵⁰ Not compulsory for each and every individual, but is a communal obligation. If all abandon this obligation, all will be sinful, but if some fulfill it, they would have absolved all others of this obligation.

⁵¹ Compulsory upon each and every individual

⁵² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.37,38

Dedication and Sacrifices

Maulana ﷺ worked so hard in his studies that he completed the eight-year long syllabus in four years.⁵³

Maulana ﷺ said: The Madrasah was not well-off financially. There was no arrangement for breakfast. The students would receive meat once a week, and vegetables once a week. On the other days, there would only be daal- lentils – available. The daal-curry would be so thin that the students would commonly say that wudhu with such curry is even permissible. Maa shaa Allah, today conditions have changed. Students receive plates full of meat. In those days, students would hardly ever get meat to eat, and today they complain that they are tired of eating meat. Without breakfast, we would attend 4 or 8 periods. Just imagine the difficulty of remaining hungry from the morning up to 12 o’ clock. By 12 o’ clock, our stomachs were burning from hunger and our brains were boiling from learning... But the reality is that the more sacrifice a student makes, the more receptive his heart becomes.⁵⁴

Today, I make shukr⁵⁵ to Allah over that training and those sacrifices. O my Sustainer! May Akhtar’s life be sacrificed over the love You have shown to me. In a person’s youth, if one has been granted wealth, and is faced with the attacks of one’s desires and carnal passions, what won’t one fall into? The holes in the ground wherein we had to relieve ourselves were such that heaps of stool could be seen therein. When we would enter the toilet area, we would be met by at least 5000 flies. If one wished to go far out to relieve oneself, it would take a lot of time. But, by the blessings of the pious servants of Allah and especially Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani, I hardly felt any of these difficulties. Our spiritual breakfast

⁵³ Tazkirah Majma’ul Bihaar

⁵⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.38

⁵⁵ Express gratitude

was recital of Munaajaat-Maqbool⁵⁶, salaatul-ishraaq, zikr and tilawah of Qur'an. Allah had blessed me with His love, which I had acquired from Maulana Abdul-Ghani, the sweetness of ilm (knowledge) and respect for my teachers, which all made my life very enjoyable. At that time, the thought didn't even cross my mind that I am undergoing such sacrifice here.⁵⁷

Love for Maulana Abdul-Ghani ﷺ and its miraculous effects

He ﷺ said: During my student days as well, I was infamous as a student only concerned of his Shaykh. Whenever his Shaykh arrives, he rushes to meet him. Whatever his Shaykh says, he notes down. Whenever he gets off, he runs over to the khanqah... Every Friday, I would go walking to his house. It was 5 miles away. In winter, I would walk with my bedding and blankets on my head. I had to go walking because I could not afford to hire a rickshaw. Where will a student have so much money. I would go on Thursday evening, serve Maulana on Friday and bring water for his sunnah ghusl. I would then listen to his discourse and return to Madrasah the next morning. When I got married, I would come to Phulpur from my in-laws in Kotlah, which was about 20 miles away. I would then come on a bicycle.

Some teachers were not happy with this attitude of mine. They scolded me, "What kind of student are you? How will you ever learn like this?" I respectfully replied, "I left my home to come to Phulpur only because of this old man. I felt that, here, I could acquire

⁵⁶ A unique compilation of the du'as which Rasulallah ﷺ made and are preserved in the Ahaadith, compiled by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ. The object of this compilation was so that it would be easy for every person to make the du'as of Rasulallah ﷺ once a week. It was therefore split into 7 sections, one of which could be recited daily. This compilation has been translated into English as well.

⁵⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.39

knowledge and attain the company of a friend of Allah. If my object was only to acquire knowledge, then I would have gone to Deoband or any one of the many other institutes. I came here specifically to study under this pious man.” They finally gave up hope on me.

However, one day, the teachers asked the students of the Madrasah to write compositions in Arabic. Students from different classes took part. I was still studying Sharhul-Wiqaayah (i.e. Maulana was still in the middle stages of his course). My composition was 33 pages. It was not easy to write in Arabic, but Allah granted me the ability to translate a lecture of Maulana Thanwi ؒ which I had read entitled ‘Mahaasin-e-Islam’ into flowing Arabic. Maa shaa Allah. When I read it out before my teachers, my teacher Maulana Abdul-Qayyum ؒ commented, “Akhtar has been blessed with a karaamah (miracle) of Maulana Abdul-Ghani. Not one student of the higher years wrote a composition like this.”⁵⁸

Title during his student days

Maulana Abdul-Ghani ؒ would address Maulana ؒ as ‘Miya Akhtar’ or ‘Hakeem Akhtar’. All the teachers and students would address him as ‘Hakeem Sahib’. He would even treat other students during his student days. Allah had blessed him with a certain type of honour and awe amongst the students of the Madrasah.⁵⁹

وخير متاعها المرأة الصالحة (صحيح مسلم)

A wife worthy of emulation

Maulana ؒ chose to marry a woman from Azamgarh, instead of a woman from his own family or from Partaabgarh or Ilahabad where his family resided. He did so because he wished to always be close

⁵⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.39, 40

⁵⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.40

to his Shaykh. Had his in-laws lived far away, he would have to travel far with his wife to visit them every now and again. In that interim, he would not be able to visit his Shaykh easily, which he could not bear. By marrying in Azamgarh, which was only 18 miles from Phulpur, he could easily visit his Shaykh whenever he wished to.⁶⁰

Her piety

His own Shaykh, Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, had once mentioned regarding Maulana: “He is certainly a saahib-e-nisbat⁶¹. But the person in his home (i.e. his respected wife) is also a saahib-e-nisbat.”⁶²

Simple marriage

He رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said: My nikaah incurred very little expenses, as I spent a total of only two hundred rupees. I gifted to my wife a set of ordinary, simple clothing. You will perhaps be surprised that I performed my own nikaah. The reason for this is that there was no Aalim in the village where my wife lived. Hence, I recited the khutbah of the nikaah and thereafter performed my own nikaah in the presence of the witnesses (by instructing her representative to propose the marriage and by accepting himself).⁶³

Criterion for a marriage partner

Maulana رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had married her, although she was older than him in age, solely on account of her piety and righteousness that was well-known to the people of her area.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.42

⁶¹ One who has a very strong bond with Allah Ta‘ala

⁶² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.42

⁶³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.42

⁶⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.42

Her piety and ibaadah

He ﷺ said: Today I will tell you a secret of mine. I was so convinced of her piety and righteousness that when I make du‘a to Allah Ta‘ala, I ask Him to accept my du‘a on account of her piety and righteousness... She (was very pious and) was the Raabi‘ah Basriyyah of our time. During her final illness, when women would come to visit her, they would all be amazed and remark over a fragrance that they could perceive around her. This fragrance was such that none of them had ever smelled something as delightful as it before. For fifty years, I had seen her to be punctual with tahajjud salaah, very patient and forbearing, and extremely grateful to Allah. Therefore it is natural for me to feel grief over her loss, rather it is the demand of mercy. But, Alhamdulillah, my heart is completely pleased over the will of Allah. We all have to leave this world one day.⁶⁵

He ﷺ said: When I would arrive home, I would almost always find my respected wife engaged in reciting the Qur’an. Towards the end of her life, she became extremely ill and weak. However, even in this state, she did not allow her nafl salaah, zikr and recitation of the Qur’an to decrease. I would sometimes (take pity on her due to her illness and) say to her, “Decrease your nafl ibaadah a little.” However, she would smile and remain silent.⁶⁶

Her loyalty and contentment



He ﷺ said: When she saw my deep attachment to my Shaykh, she happily permitted me to serve my Shaykh for whatever extent of time I wished, without any objections or restrictions. She was always my support in Deeni works. From the very beginning of our married life, she said to me, ‘I will always assist you in your efforts and endeavours. I will eat whatever you feed me and I will wear

⁶⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.47



⁶⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.42

whatever clothing you provide for me. If you are in a state of hunger, I will happily remain hungry with you, and if you wish to live in the jungle, then I will accompany you to reside in the jungle. I will never ask or demand anything from you and I will never cause you anxiety and worry.’ My respected wife remained true to her words, as she never once demanded or even asked me for anything. She never asked me for jewelry, clothing or money. She never possessed any love for the world and things of the world. In fact, her disinterest in the world was such that it was as if she did not even know what the world was.’⁶⁷

Assisting her husband in his Deeni works

Maulana  had great love for his Shaykh (spiritual mentor), Moulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri , and was very devoted and attached to him. Hence, he remained in his company for lengthy periods, benefitting from his piety, teachings and guidance.

He however mentioned that it was only on account of his wife’s selflessness and generous spirit that he was able to remain with his Shaykh and benefit from him in this manner, as she had happily sacrificed her own rights by allowing him to remain away from her during this time. When she saw his deep devotion to his Shaykh, she said to him, “You may remain in the service of your Shaykh for as long as you wish. I will neither object nor restrict you.”

In the year 1960, Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani  travelled to Pakistan, as he was considering settling there. Maulana accompanied him on this journey. No women or children were taken with to Pakistan, as Moulana Shah Abdul Ghani had not yet finalized his decision to migrate from India to Pakistan. Thereafter, when some time had passed, they were supposed to return to India for a few days. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, Moulana Shah Abdul Ghani  was unable to go to India and was thus forced

⁶⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.42,43

to remain in Pakistan for one entire year. During this period, Maulana chose to remain in his service instead of returning to India. Furthermore, due to his means being limited, he was unable to bring his wife and children from India to join him in Pakistan.

We can well imagine the difficulty that his respected wife underwent during this year, as she was totally cut-off from her husband. Nevertheless, despite the hardships that she endured, she never once wrote him a letter complaining to him of her hardship and difficulty. Her adherence to hijab and purdah was so strict that for this entire period, she never once emerged from her home!

It was during this same period of separation that the respected son of Maulana, Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu), who was still a child at the time, fell ill. His sickness was so severe that it even caused all the hair of his head to fall off. Seeing her son in this serious state, she wrote a letter to her husband, mentioning their son's illness and requesting him to make du'a. However, even under these circumstances, she refrained from complaining and did not ask him to return to India.⁶⁸

Pious Children

Maulana ﷺ said: It was through my respected wife that Allah blessed me with a competent son such as Moulana Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu) who is pious and is an Aalim. Allah Ta'ala, out of His grace, is taking great work of Deen from him. Maa shaa Allah, his children too are becoming Huffaaz and Ulama. May Allah bless and my children with the ability to serve Deen till the day of Qiyaamah. And may Allah always create from my children and progeny until Qiyaamah Ulama who are Rabbaniyyeen (men of Allah), of the highest rank of siddiqiyat...⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.42,43

⁶⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.44

Her compassion for others

Maulana was blessed with a wife who was extremely caring, considerate and obedient, and her compassion was such that she would be concerned regarding the wellbeing of one and all.

Meer Sahib ﷺ was the special attendant of Maulana. On one occasion, when Meer Sahib was extremely sick, his sister went to visit the respected wife of Maulana. On returning from her visit, she made the following remark to her brother:

“I was amazed at the amount of concern that the wife of Maulana showed over your ill health! In fact, your sickness caused her so much of worry and anxiety just as a mother becomes worried and anxious over her own child’s illness. She continuously spoke about the excellent manner in which you remained with her husband and served him, and also continuously made du‘a for your recovery.”

Meer Sahib ﷺ also mentioned that he would go to the home of Maulana every morning to benefit from his company. As soon as he would arrive, Maulana would ask him if he had eaten breakfast. If he had not already partaken of breakfast, then the respected wife of Maulana would prepare breakfast for them.

The brother-in-law of Meer Sahib ﷺ was once ill. Before going to visit him, Meer Sahib went to Haafiz Abdullah, the grandson of Maulana who was still a young child at that time, and said to him, “Please request your grandmother to make du‘a for my brother-in-law.” On his return after Maghrib, Meer Sahib ﷺ asked Haafiz Abdullah, “Did your grandmother make du‘a for my brother-in-law?” Haafiz Abdullah replied, “Yes, she did. When I conveyed your request to her, she had just laid down to sleep. However, on hearing the request, she awoke from her bed, made wudhu, performed two raka’ats of salaah and thereafter engaged in a lengthy du‘a.” Hearing this, Meer Sahib ﷺ regretted asking her to make

du'a, as due to her compassion for people, she had ignored her illness and weakness and undertaken the difficulty of leaving her bed, performing wudhu and salaah and making a lengthy du'a for the recovery of his brother-in-law.⁷⁰

Maulana mentioned that his respected wife recited the first kalimah seventy thousand times and conveyed the reward to his respected mother after her demise.⁷¹

Her level of chastity

Allah ﷻ instructs women in the Qur'an to remain glued to their homes. (Surah Ahzaab v.33) Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu) related the following incident regarding his mother: My mother once, contrary to habit, accepted an invitation for meals at the house of some very close acquaintances. When everything was over, I escorted her back home. We had just reached the front of our house, when my teacher Mufti Rashid Ahmad Ludhyaanwi who was living nearby called me for some work. I left my mother near the door and rushed to the service of Mufti Rashid Ahmad, saying to her, "You can go home. I will come in a short while. I am just going to complete some work for Mufti Sahib." I thought to myself that since she is right near the door of the house, she will go inside. After completing the work, I returned. I was shocked to see my mother standing just where I had left her. I asked her, "Dear mother, why didn't you just go inside?" She replied, angrily, "Where must I go? I have no idea which house is ours. How do you expect me to know? I don't go outside." She had no knowledge of how the front of the house looked, what was the colour of the walls or of what her front door looked like.⁷²

⁷⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.46

⁷¹ <http://www.khanqah.org/mazhar-biography.php>

⁷² I heard this incident directly from Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu)

A beautiful example of how one should value his partner

Approximately sixteen days before she passed away, Maulana ﷺ was in Makkah Mukarramah in order to perform umrah. The day after he arrived in Makkah Mukarramah and performed his umrah, his son, Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu) contacted him with the following message: “Mother’s illness has worsened. However, she has asked me to tell you that you may remain in Makkah Mukarramah and that you do not need to return.” Hearing this, Maulana thought to himself, “What she has allowed me to do is one thing, but what I should be doing due to compassion and because of my relationship with her is another thing. The demand of compassion is for me to return immediately. I have already completed my Umrah. The command of my Master was ringing in my ears: وعاشروهن بالمعروف – “and treat them well”. Tell me! If one’s daughter is extremely sick, but his son-in-law is engaged in nafl ibaadah, will the father be happy with this situation? If not, then Allah too will not be happy if one behaves in this manner with his servant.

Since I had no intention of returning so quickly, and my return ticket was booked for many days later, we began making arrangements to return quickly to Karachi. We found out that a flight was leaving that night to Karachi, but to get place on that flight would be difficult for various reasons. But it was a miracle of my wife that two friends of ours went to the Saudi Airlines office, outside which was a huge crowd. They would have stood there for about two and a half hours. But their names appeared on the computer screen in just two minutes (and they were called front). We managed to get three seats, and even got our boarding passes in Makkah Mukarramah, whereas the flight was from Jeddah Airport. It was her karaamah (miracle) that we were assisted in every way possible.

We took a taxi to Madinah Munawwarah. We presented our salaam and salaam before the august presence of our Master ﷺ. We then

immediately set off to Jeddah with the same taxi, without any rest whatsoever. We travelled for the entire day, without a second of rest. But Allah Ta'ala helped us in such a way that, despite my physical weakness, everything was accomplished easily. Allah Ta'ala gave me strength to fulfill my intention. We departed for Umrah on the evening of 3rd of Sha'baan, we did all of this by the evening of 4th of Sha'baan, and we returned to Karachi on the 5 Sha'baan. In only one day, Allah afforded us the opportunity of completing Umrah and visiting Madinah Munawwarah for ziyaarah of Rasulullah ﷺ.”⁷³

Her demise

During the last 16 days of her life, she became critically ill, and shortly before passing away, she also suffered a stroke.

Maulana رحمه الله says: A few days before her demise, she said, “Just now, my sons Azhar and Athar visited me.” We had two sons before Maulana Mazhar, who had passed away in infancy. When she said this, I was shaken and realized that it is very unlikely that she will recover. It seems as if conditions from the realm of barzakh were being exposed to her already.⁷⁴

Eventually, on Wednesday 19th Sha'baan 1419 (9th December 1998), she departed from this temporary world (may Allah Ta'ala honour her with the highest stages of Jannah. Aameen).

Maulana رحمه الله narrates: After her demise, many people saw beautiful good dreams about her. Among these dreams was the dream of Mufti Husain Bhayat رحمه الله, an Aalim of South Africa, who is one of my very close friends and is my khalifah. Two days after her demise, in his dream, he saw himself attempting to enter Jannah. However, the angels prevented him from entering and said, “Not

⁷³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.44,45

⁷⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.47

yet.” The angels then asked him, “Who is this person coming behind you?” He replied, “My respected mother (referring to the respected wife of Moulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ whom he had respected and revered as his own mother).” The angels made way for her and she entered into Jannah.

The wife of Maulana Abdur-Rahman, who lives in Jeddah, saw her in a dream wearing very beautiful clothing, and reciting Qur’an. Many others had also seen her in their dreams reciting Qur’an. The brother-in-law of Maulana Muhammad Mazhar, Mufti Aasim (sallamahu) saw her in a dream in a large spacious room. The roof was so high that it could not be seen. She was picking up some very shiny items from the ground. The interpretation of this dream is that she was receiving thawaab which was being sent to her (isaaluth-thawaab). One of my friends, Janaab Muzaffar Iqbaal, an engineer, had no idea that she had passed away. He saw in a dream that Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ had passed away and that his janaazah was leaving from my house.

I make du’a that Allah Ta’ala forgives her and enters her into Jannatul-Firdaws without reckoning, and that He grants us weak ones sabr jameel. Aameen.⁷⁵

A Muslim’s reaction to the demise of a beloved one

Maulana ؒ said: We were together for almost fifty years, for half a century. Ask my heart of its condition at that time. The grief that I felt in my heart at that time was unimaginable. 50 years together is no small feat. It was not merely 50 years of living together, but 50 years of complete loyalty. She was always my helper and assistant in Deen. My continuous service to my Shaykh Moulana Phulpuri ؒ was only possible because of her. She gladly granted me permission to remain with my Shaykh as long as I wanted. When I came with

⁷⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.48

my Shaykh for the first time to Pakistan, such circumstances came about due to which I could not return home (to India) for an entire year. Allah alone knows what sacrifice, difficulties and hardships she must have endured during that year, but she never uttered a word of complaint. It is for this reason that my heart experienced such grief which was beyond my imagination.

One night, it slipped out from my tongue, “Old lady! Where have you left me and went?” I immediately took control over the emotional state of my heart and said to Allah, “O Allah, we are happy with whatever You are happy with. Her demise was according to Your will. Therefore, there could be no better time for her to leave than now. There is nothing in the world better than Your decree and Your wish. Your every decision is full of wisdom, and is filled with benefit for Your servants. Your wish is superior to anything else. O Allah, we are happy from the bottom of our hearts with whatever You are happy with.” Her condition, due to stroke, had become such that, had she spent ten to twelve days bedridden, she would have developed bedsores. Allah forbid, but had it turned septic, we would not have managed to bear seeing her in that pain. “O Allah, the time You chose to call her to Yourself was the best time. It was a mercy for both her and us. O Allah, through Your Mercy, grant her unlimited forgiveness and envelop her in the lap of Your unending Mercy. Let her, at every moment, be accompanied by peace and happiness. Grant us sabr jameel (beautiful patience) and, out of Your mercy, through its blessings, allow all our permissible works to be accomplished.”⁷⁶

A few days before Mirza Mazhar Jaane Jaana ﷺ passed away, he wrote some poetry in his diary, so that his children should not grieve too much over his loss. It was found after his demise. It is an amazing precious poem:

لوگ کہتے ہیں کہ مظہر مر گیا اور مظہر در حقیقت گھر گیا

⁷⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.45,46

“People are saying that Mazhar has died. But the reality of the matter is that Mazhar has just gone home.”⁷⁷

Allah Ta’ala took away her physical body and laid her to rest in the graveyard. But we believe that she was immediately blessed with a superior form of life in a different body. In the realm of barzakh, which is the waiting room for all souls where they reside till the day of Qiyaamah, the soul is granted a different kind of body. The believers are made to reside in a place called Illiyyeen (the abode of the elevated ones), whereas the disbelievers are kept in a place called Sijjeen (the jail). For the believers, a window of Jannah is opened into his grave, whereas for the disbelievers, a window of Jahannam is opened into his grave. When a believer passes away, he is blessed with the opportunity to meet Rasululah ﷺ (when all the pious souls are allowed to meet one another). He also meets with all his family members who passed away before him. The one who has passed away is happy in that life. Yes, the people who remain behind feel sad.

However, this is the system which Allah Ta’ala has determined for the smooth running of the universe. If death did not come to anyone, there would have been no place in the house for anyone to live. In a small plot, if one’s 10 grandmothers and 10 grandfathers had to all be living, each one lying on their own beds, would there be any place to live there? One would then make du’a that Allah should call them quickly; why are they taking so long to die? From this we understand that death too is a great mercy from Allah Ta’ala.⁷⁸

One year later, on the 22nd November 1999, Maulana said: You all know that my wife passed away. I lived with my life-companion for 50 years, half a century. Now, I lie alone on my bed. If I have company, I find solace in their company. Otherwise, when I

⁷⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.47

⁷⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.47, 48

remember her, I immediately take the name of Allah. When I take His name, all my grief and sadness melts away. My heart is very sensitive. Yet, I have experienced the benefits of living with the lovers of Allah... The heart is overwhelmed by grief when it is engaged in dunya (the world and its comforts). When the heart is engaged with Allah, why should it be overwhelmed with grief? Ask Allah Ta'ala to grant you such love for Him which is more than your love for your own self. When you love Him more than yourself, if any beloved passes away, you will experience natural sadness, but you will maintain your mental balance and you will still experience enjoyment in your heart by the name of Allah. Look, I am still alive. I lost my lifetime companion, yet I have not become inactive; leaving all my work and retiring to my bed (in depression). This is my condition, whereas I have only served the lovers of Allah. If Allah Ta'ala makes me His true lover, out of His mercy, then what to say!⁷⁹

Noble Children

Allah ﷻ had blessed Maulana ﷺ with two sons who passed away in childhood and became a treasure for him in the Akhirah; Azhar who passed away at the age of 5 and Athar who passed away at the age of 6. His third son is Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu), a khalifah of Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ﷺ of Hardoi. He also had one daughter.

A unique du'a for his progeny

Maulana ﷺ would frequently make the following du'a with great feeling and with tears in his eyes: O Allah. Make all of my children and progeny, till the day of Qiyaamah, Your friends. My heart will

⁷⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.48

not be able to bear the burden of seeing any of my children involved in Your disobedience.⁸⁰

Praise for his son

Maulana ﷺ said: My son is the principal of the Jaami'ah and is in charge of the affairs of the khanqah. Even though I only have one son, he is better than thousands. I praise Allah, it is only His favour that He has granted me such a worthy and outstanding son.⁸¹

Setting an example when marrying off his daughter

Maulana ﷺ always advised his associates to marry their daughters off with simplicity and minimal expenses. When it came to the marriage of his only daughter, he led by example. Her nikaah was performed by Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Ludhyanwi ﷺ after the Asr salaah. Some tea was served to only the visitors. After Maghrib salaah, she was sent to the home of her husband. There was no reception function. The family of the groom were not invited for any meal. Maulana used to explain: "The only invitation after marriage is the waleemah, which is the responsibility of the groom. For the bride's family to invite and feed the family of the groom is contrary to the Sunnah."⁸²

Aspiration for his children

A wealthy friend once suggested to Maulana ﷺ, "Why don't you send your son to study for a degree in a foreign country? You only have one son." He was implying that he will bear all the expenses. Maulana replied, "I have already dedicated my son for the Deen of Allah Ta'ala... I held the cloth of the Ka'bah and begged Allah Ta'ala, "O Allah! The throats of the Ambiyaa were slit for this Deen. (At Uhud) 70 Sahaabah were martyred at once for this Deen.

⁸⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.48

⁸¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.48,51

⁸² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.50

The blessed blood of Rasulullah ﷺ was spilt for this Deen. O Allah! Accept my children for this blessed Deen.”⁸³

Maulana ؒ once made the following du’a: “O Allah! Jihaad is in progress. I have only one son. Allow him to participate, allow him to become a Shaheed (martyr) in front of me and then allow me to become a Shaheed.”⁸⁴ Such a du’a can only be made by a person who loves Allah more than himself, his wealth and his children.

Advice to his children

Maulana ؒ once advised his son and his four grandsons: Remember my advice! Be ready to tie stones to your stomachs (due to hunger) or eat dry bread and plain curry. But don’t ever leave the service of Deen!⁸⁵

Beneficial advice to his daughter

Maulana’s ؒ respected daughter had always harboured the desire and longing to perform Umrah at least once with her father. Accordingly, Maulana ؒ decided to perform Umrah, but was thereafter forced to postpone the trip on account of his illness and weakness.

His daughter was naturally disappointed that she would not be able to perform Umrah with her father. Nevertheless, her husband, Manzar Mia, decided that they would proceed with the trip.

On that occasion, Maulana advised his daughter on the phone, with tears in his eyes, saying, “Remain happy and pleased with that which pleases your husband. Choose that which makes him happy,

⁸³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.50

⁸⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.135

⁸⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.50

as your success in this world and the next lies in pleasing him.” Hearing this, his respected daughter mentioned, “I am sad and disappointed because I have never performed Umrah with you.”

Maulana replied, “I know that you are disappointed, but be happy with that which pleases your husband! The pleasure of Allah ﷻ lies in pleasing your husband, and the pleasure and happiness of Allah ﷻ is greater than every other happiness. Rasulallah ﷺ said, ‘If I had to command any person to make sajdah (prostrate) before another person, I would have commanded the wife to make sajdah before her husband.’⁸⁶ Though it is not permissible to make sajdah before anyone besides Allah ﷻ, this hadith highlights the high rank and importance of the husband. This can also be gauged by the fact that Rasulallah ﷺ did not mention this in regard to anyone besides the husband. The pleasure of Allah ﷻ is most valuable.”

With great emotion and love, Maulana then said, “Ensure that you please Allah ﷻ! Ensure that you please Allah ﷻ! Ensure that you please Allah ﷻ! Sacrifice all your wishes, hopes and desires before the pleasure of Allah ﷻ! Allah ﷻ is pleased with that which makes your husband happy.”

His respected daughter then said, “Abba (My beloved father)! If I went for Umrah with you, then you would have been happy!” Maulana ﷺ responded, “Don’t look at the happiness of your Abba (father)! Look at what will be pleasing to your Rabba (Allah ﷻ)! The pleasure of your Rabba (Allah ﷻ) lies in the pleasure of your husband, so ensure that you make your husband’s happiness your first priority! The right of the husband is even greater than the right of the mother, father and siblings. Don’t look at the happiness of your father! What will cause me great happiness is that you go to perform Umrah with your husband.”

⁸⁶ Sunan Tirmizi no.1159

His respected daughter then mentioned, “I benefited greatly from your advice and found consolation. Even the little disappointment that I perceived has vanished. I will happily go with my husband.” Maulana then mentioned, “Show your husband that you are happy to go with him for Umrah, and do not show him the least disappointment or sadness. Whatever advice I have given you, ensure that you share it with your own daughters-in-law and share it with people wherever you go.”⁸⁷

Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu)

His youth and his studies

Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu) was born on October 5, 1951 in the house of Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. He acquired his preliminary education in Phulpur from Qari Mustafa رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. After migrating to Pakistan, he perfected his recital of the Qur’an by Qari Fatah Muhammad Panipati رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and Shaykh Qari Muhammad Yaseen رحمۃ اللہ علیہ.

Thereafter, he enrolled at Darul-Uloom Karachi and studied there up to the fourth year. He then studied the Tafsir of al-Baidhawi (Anwaarut Tanzil wa Asraarut Ta’weel) and Jalaalain by Mufti Rashid Ahmad Ludhyanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in Madrasah Ashraful-Madaaris, Nazimabad, Karachi. The son of Mufti Rashid Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was his classmate. He then chose to go to Jamiah Ashrafiyyah in Lahore and completed in 1972.

He was fortunate to study under learned teachers who were both distinguished religious scholars and high-ranking friends of Allah.

⁸⁷ Khazaain-e-Sharee’at wa Tareeqat pg. 415, translation edited from Uswatul Muslimah

He studied the entire Sahihul Bukhari by Shaykh Maulana Muhammad Idrees Kandehlawi ؒ, a saint and a distinguished Mufassir (scholar of Tafseer) and Muhaddith (scholar of Hadith) of that time. He studied the entire “Jaami` at-Tirmidhi” from Shaykh Maulana Muhammad Musa Khan Roohani Baazi ؒ, one of the greatest scholars of his time. He studied Sahih Muslim by Shaykh Maulana Abdur-Rahman Ashrafi ؒ, Sunan an-Nasa’i by Shaykh Maulana Muhammad Yaqub, Sunan Abi Dawud by Shaykh Maulana Sufi Muhammad Sarwar (daamat barakaatuhu), the Muwatta of Imaam Maalik by Shaykh Maulana Muhammad Ubaidullah Ashrafi ؒ who was one of the special pupils of Shaykh Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ; and Sharh Ma’aanil Aathaar of Imaam Tahaawi from Shaykh Jameel Ahmad Thanvi ؒ.⁸⁸

His spiritual training

In his childhood, he was fortunate to have received the attention of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ. Whenever Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ would see him, he would call him to his side and pass his hands lovingly over his head. When Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ was extremely sick, he would call him and hold his head to Maulana’s chest, while making continuous du’a for him. Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ however passed away while he was still a child. When he became of age, he stayed for a long time with Muhyus-Sunnah Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ؒ with the intention of rectifying his character and purifying his soul. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ had also appointed him as his khalifah (spiritual successor) while in Madinah Munawwarah. The disciples of Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ would refer to him by the title

⁸⁸ www.khanqah.org/mazhar-biography.php

‘Mahboobul Khulafa’ (the dear one from amongst the Khulafa), a title which Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ himself approved of.⁸⁹

Added to the above, he used to write letters to Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ﷺ for spiritual rectification. Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ used to show his great kindness towards him.⁹⁰

Relationship with his father

His father loved him greatly. Often, Maulana ﷺ used to say, “It is permissible to have great love (shadeed mahabbah) of one’s family. However, the greatest amount of love (ashadd mahabbah) should be reserved for Allah Ta’ala.”⁹¹ Maulana would become extremely happy when looking at his son. He would make a lot of du’a for him. He would anxiously await the arrival of Maulana Muhammad Mazhar when he was absent.⁹² Maulana Muhammad Mazhar narrates: Once my father said to me, “My son! A person who has only one eye will take extreme care for his single eye.”⁹³

His father was the most instrumental in his spiritual training and his nurturing. Maulana ﷺ worked hard for his son’s religious education and spiritual training. When he observed the fruits of his hard work in the shape of his son’s religious services and piety, Maulana used to say, “My Allah has blessed me with only one son, but who is most dear and pious. Alhamdulillah.” Maulana Abdullah Barni of Madinah Munawwarah asked Maulana ﷺ for permission to travel with his son Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu) for spiritual benefit. Maulana said, “You are allowed

⁸⁹ Faidhaan-e-Akhtar pg.24

⁹⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.51

⁹¹ www.khanqah.org/mazhar-biography.php

⁹² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.51

⁹³ Faidhaan-e-Akhtar pg.24

to travel with my son. If you remain with him, you will surely get spiritual benefit”.⁹⁴

He too had great love for his father. There was a deep bond of love between them. In his student days, he wrote a letter to his father from Jamiah Ashrafiyyah, Lahore: “I listen to the lectures of great religious scholars. But the enjoyment I get from listening to your lectures, I never felt such enjoyment elsewhere.” Maulana ﷺ commented: This is a sign that he has munaasabah with me (i.e. we have similar temperaments and suit one another). He has very great munaasabah with me. Such munaasabah between father and son is a great favour of Allah. In his lectures too, he mostly quotes my discussions. O Allah, for You is all praise and all shukr. May Allah take great work of Deen from him, accept it and make it a sadaqah jaariyah (perpetual means of earning rewards) for me.⁹⁵

Maulana ﷺ said: When Maulana Mazhar (may Allah protect him) was a child, I was unable to give him the fatherly love that he deserved. The reason for this is that I was constantly in the service of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri. I had no one who could wash my Shaykh, bathe him, make wudhu for him or bring for him from the water pots. When the water in those pots would get finished, water had to be fetched from half a mile away, as he would not drink well water... For this reason, my son did not receive my love and affection. But, he attained the mercy of Allah... Today I see the effects of Allah’s mercy, Who accepts even our weak and broken efforts. I had no hope in Maulana Mazhar (may Allah protect him) that he will become a lecturer. Great effort is required for that. But Allah Ta’ala, out of His mercy, opened his tongue and favoured me greatly. My heart experiences great joy when I hear his lectures. He has memorized so many masaail and texts (which he quotes

⁹⁴ www.khanqah.org/mazhar-biography.php

⁹⁵ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.51

during his lectures), Maa shaa Allah. May Allah Ta'ala shower him with even more mercy.⁹⁶

Humility

Maulana ﷺ said: When my son Muhammad Mazhar was young and still studying, I intended to physically discipline him over some issue. He did not run away, like other boys would do. May Allah Ta'ala elevate his ranks. Du'as pour out from my heart for him. Instead of running away, he just sat down at my side, removed his topi (hat) and said, "Respected father! You can punish me as much as you want." This made me cry.⁹⁷

Tolerance

Anger is a terrible spiritual sickness. The followers of Maulana ﷺ who were short-tempered were instructed to spend time in the company of Maulana Muhammad Mazhar Sallamahu, who had a very high level of tolerance within him. Several people rid themselves of this disease after staying in his company.⁹⁸

Independence

Maulana ﷺ narrated: A person phoned my son Maulana Mazhar and said: "I have a pile of cow hides lying here. Please send some person to collect it." (It is a norm for people in Pakistan to donate to the Madaaris the hides of their cows and buffaloes after Udhiyah in Zul-Hijjah. The proceeds from these hides, which is usually quite a large sum, are used by the Madaaris to cover various expenses) Maulana Mazhar replied, "Are you not 'a person'? Then why do you ask for 'a person' to be sent?" (In other words, you should bring it yourself, if you wish to donate it.) Giving such a reply requires a strong heart.

⁹⁶ Faidhaan-e-Akhtar pg.25

⁹⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.51

⁹⁸ www.khanqah.org/mazhar-biography.php

This is the effect of the company of the pious Elders.⁹⁹ Maulana also said regarding this incident: Aah, sometimes he utters such words that I offer my thanks to Allah.¹⁰⁰

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ said: “My son is the Khalifah of Shaykh Shah Abrarul-Haq رحمہ اللہ علیہ. Sometimes he became burdened with debt but, may Allah Ta’ala reward him well, he never told me that he was in debts. He never requested me to please make a hint to my disciples or to some well-wisher to pay his debts. He runs the Jamiah in which 1,500 students are becoming Haafiz and Ulama. My connection with this Jamiah is due to his hard work. Whenever some country invites me to spread the love of Allah there, my taste is to immediately get a visa affixed on my passport and travel there.”¹⁰¹

Serving the Pious

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ said: My son Muhammad Mazhar has served Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq رحمہ اللہ علیہ in such a manner that after Isha salaah, he began massaging his head and continued until it was the time of Fajr salaah. Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq رحمہ اللہ علیہ was himself surprised.

Content with Ilm as his lot

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ said: I have only one son, Maa sha Allah. I had every facility to send him to America for higher education to become a doctor or engineer. I had a friend (peer-bhaai) from a rich family living in Hyderabad, Sindh. He advised me to send my son to America. The hint in this suggestion was that he will bear all the expenses for my son’s education. I refused to act upon his suggestion. I said, “I have only one son. I made du’a holding the cover of the Holy K’aba, the house of Allah: O Allah! You have granted me only one son. Please accept him for Your Deen.”... He

⁹⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.52

¹⁰⁰ www.khanqah.org/mazhar-biography.php

¹⁰¹ www.khanqah.org/mazhar-biography.php

himself does not regret as to why my father did not make me doctor or engineer. Rather he is happy and grateful that Allah has granted him the wealth of knowledge of Deen.

Serving the creation

In addition to linking the creation to Allah Ta'ala, Maulana Muhammad Mazhar has always been in the forefront to serve the creation. Under the supervision of his father, he formed a trust with the idea of arranging humanitarian services. In a short time, this trust has already acquired a golden track record of its great services to humanity. A thick book will be required to write down a detailed account of all their services.¹⁰²

Unique Qualities

Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala had blessed me with the opportunity to be in the service of Maulana Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu) for a period of four months. This was during the lifetime of his respected father, whom I had visited for spiritual benefit on the instruction of my respected Shaykh Maulana Abdul-Hamid Ishaq (daamat barakaatuhu). I also benefited from his company on a few other occasions and on some of his journeys to South Africa. Some of the unique qualities which I had witnessed in him are:

- a) Punctuality and Consistency
- b) Tolerance and Softness. I had only seen him getting angry once, and that too for a very good reason.
- c) He is always engaged in Deeni activities.
- d) He sleeps very little
- e) His love for guests and hospitality. As a result, in the four months when I was his guest, I ate breakfast and supper with him almost every single day. Due to his love for guests, the food which he

¹⁰² Tazkirah Majma'ul Bihaar

served was always extremely tasty and enjoyable, a fact attested to by many Ulama who he hosted.

f) A jovial and informal nature with his attendants, due to which many youngsters are attracted to his company.

g) Great concern for the wellbeing of others.

h) Maulana has a beautiful habit of dedicating a large portion of every lecture of his to explain the virtues of certain famous and prominent Sahaabah, before narrating a Hadith reported by the Sahaabi. This is a very beneficial method in countering the evil of the Shia who tend to spread hatred for the Sahaabah. (This point was brought to my notice by my respected teacher Mufti Mas'ood Qaasim)

i) From my Elders, Maulana is the only one who I had seen punctually practicing upon the Sunnah of khilaal (picking the teeth with something) after meals. Maulana would use a flosser after every meal and pick his teeth.¹⁰³

Current activities

Currently, Maulana Muhammad Mazhar (daamat barakaatuhu) is the rector and is in charge of Majlis-e-Isha'atul Haq, Jamiah Ashrafal-Madaaris Karachi and Khanqah Imdaadiah Ashrafia Gulshan-e-Iqbal Karachi, He is also the patron of a number of institutions across Pakistan and in foreign countries. During the life of his respected father, the daily majaaalis (gatherings) for spiritual rectification were

¹⁰³ عن أبي أيوب يعني الأنصاري رضي الله عنه قال خرج علينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال حبذا المتخللون من أمتي قال وما المتخللون يا رسول الله قال المتخللون في الوضوء والمتخللون من الطعام أما تحليل الوضوء فالمضمضة والاستنشاق وبين الأصابع وأما تحليل الطعام فمن الطعام إنه ليس شيء أشد على الملكين من أن يريا بين أسنان صاحبهما طعاما وهو قائم يصلي رواه الطبراني في الكبير ورواه أيضا هو والإمام أحمد كلاهما مختصرا عن أبي أيوب وعطاء قالا قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حبذا المتخللون من أمتي في الوضوء والطعام ورواه في الأوسط من حديث أنس ومدار طرقه كلها على واصل بن عبد الرحمن الرقاشي وقد وثقه شعبة وغيره (الترغيب والترهيب للمنزدي رقم: 337) قال الهيثمي : وفي إسناده واصل بن السائب وهو ضعيف (مجمع الزوائد رقم: 7951)

continuously held. Maulana made sure that it continued, even during the last days of the blessed life of his respected father. By the grace of Allah, three daily congregations are regularly held in Khanqah Imdaadia Ashrafia.

To quench the thirst of the people from almost all parts of the world, Maulana Muhammad Mazhar had travelled to the various cities of Pakistan, South Africa, Rangoon (Myanmar), Bangladesh, India, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Nepal, Kenya, Botswana, etc. where thousands of people have become his disciples.

Maulana Muhammad Mazhar has been blessed with four sons who are Huffaaz and Ulama. They are: Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim Sāhib, Maulana Muhammad Isma'il, Maulana Muhammad Ishaq and Maulana Abdullah (may Allah protect them all). May Allah Ta'ala grant Maulana Muhammad Mazhar and his son's blessings in their lives, may He keep them safe with good health and ease for their entire lives and may He make their spiritual blessings spread till the Day of Resurrection. Aameen.

The three Mashaayikh (Mashaayikh-Thalaathah)

While studying at Tibbiyyah College, Maulana ﷺ read one of the famous discourses of Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ entitled Raahatul-Qulub. Maulana thus developed a great sense of admiration for Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi ﷺ. He wished to pledge bay'ah (allegiance) at his hands, thereby linking himself to this spiritual lineage. Maulana ﷺ wrote a letter to Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ, requesting for bay'ah (allegiance for the purpose of spiritual reformation). Maulana Shabbeer Ali Thanwi ﷺ replied, explaining that Maulana Thanwi was ill, and that he should choose any one of his Khulafa

(successors) as his Muslih and Shaykh (spiritual guide). A few days later, the news arrived that Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ had left this world. Maulana was extremely grieved. It was holidays. Maulana returned home from Tibbiyyah College crying. With great pain and anguish, he recited some portion of the Qur'an and conveyed the rewards to Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanwi ؒ. He recited the following couplets over and over again whilst crying:

جو تھے نوری وہ گئے افلاک پر مثل تلچھٹ رہ گیا میں خاک پر
 پلپلوں نے گھر کیا گلشن میں جا بوم ویرانے میں ٹکراتا رہا

Those who possessed nur (spiritual illumination) have gone to the heavens. I have remained on the ground like dregs of dirty oil.

The nightingales have built their nest in the garden, whilst the owl is still fluttering around in the ruins.¹⁰⁴

Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ؒ

Maulana ؒ was therefore searching for a spiritual guide who would help him cross the road to Allah, spiritually reform and correct him and teach him the secrets of Allah's love and recognition. The first such person who he came into contact with was Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ؒ. He met him during his student days when studying medicine at the Tibbiyyah College in Ilahabad. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ؒ was a Wali of a very high stature. He was the khalifah of Maulana Sayyid Badr Ali Shah ؒ, in whose company he had spent a great amount of time and underwent a lot of mujaahadah (spiritual training). Maulana Sayyid Badr Ali Shah ؒ was the khalifah of Maulana Fazlur-Rahmaan Ganj Muradabadi, a great Shaykh of the Naqshabandi Mujaddidi chain.

¹⁰⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.55

A brief biography of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ﷺ

He was born in Phulpur, District Partaabgarh, Uttar Pradesh in 1317 Hijri (1899). His father's name was Ghulam Muhammad. His relationship of spiritual rectification was first with the 'Uways of the era, Maulana Fazlur-Rahmaan Ganj Muradabadi ﷺ. He presented himself in his blessed company. He benefited from his blessed being. After taking his du'as, he returned home.

Childhood: His childhood was one of righteousness and rectitude. He paid special attention to the performance of good deeds and avoiding evil. He was punctual with his Salaah and fasting and had a special inclination for recitation of the Qur'an. He never used to play like normal children do. His favourite pastime as a child was to gather the other children his age and teach them things about Deen, explain to them the importance of salaah, encourage them to do good and forbid them from doing wrong.

Spiritual Training: He learned to read the Qur'an Kareem and studied the basics of Islam in his hometown, Phulpur. He then completed the secondary grades in a local school nearby. However, some kind of spiritual condition overcame him, which caused him to give up his schooling. Due to this spiritual condition, he went to Moulana Waarith Hasan ﷺ in Ilahabad whose house was adjacent to the Teele-Wali masjid. There he occupied himself in zikr and azkaar, spiritual efforts and reformation of the heart under the supervision of his Shaykh. He was instructed to say the pure Name of 'Allah' 70 000 times daily. He remained in the company of his Shaykh for a very long time. He was in all probability also first granted khilaafah by Moulana Waarith Hasan ﷺ.

Maulana Shah Badr Ali: In order to increase his spiritual progress and love for Allah even further, he pledged allegiance to Maulana Shah Badr Ali ﷺ. Maulana Shah Badr Ali ﷺ was a resident of

Sidhona in the district of Rai Bareli. Allah Ta'ala had blessed him with many karaamaat (miracles). He had graduated at Al-Azhar University and knew Sahih Bukhari almost off by heart. He also participated in the Jihad of Bulqan. He passed away in 1354 AH.

Maulana Shah Badr Ali ﷺ paid great attention to him and showered him with much affection. He considered him as one of his own children. Sometimes he would remark, "I have four children, but they are of this world. One son is for the hereafter and he is 'Muhammad Ahmad.'" Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ﷺ received khilaafah from Maulana Shah Badr Ali ﷺ as well.

Work of Da'wah and Tabligh: After receiving khilaafah from Maulana Shah Badr Ali ﷺ, he engaged himself in the effort of guiding people, rectifying the lives of people Da'wah (calling towards Allāh) and Tabligh (conveying the message). He walked from village to village, together with some sincere disciples. They carried with them their own simple food from which they ate. He would visit different areas and would advise and deliver lectures according to his system. In this manner, the effects of his reformatory talks spread to the outlying regions. People started coming from far off to attend his gatherings. His talks on spiritual reform awakened a desire within people for Deen and to rectify themselves.

Settling in Ilahabad: A few years before his demise, he began staying mostly in Ilahabad. Before that he used to stay sometimes in Partaabgarh and sometimes in his village, Phulpur.

Following the Sunnah and Avoiding Innovation: He placed much emphasis on following the Sunnah. Whether big or small, he attempted to carry out every act according to the Sunnah. He strongly objected against and abstained from customs and innovations. Because customs and innovations dominated the public occasions during that time, he made a point of never participating in

public events. If, however, one of his close disciples asked him to merely be present at an event, and if he was convinced that there would be no customs and innovations, then he would attend. If he then saw or heard anything contrary to Shari'ah, he would immediately leave the gathering and make his displeasure known.

He was once delivering a discourse by the function of a wealthy person. After the talk, some people wanted to engage in an activity which he considered as un-Islamic. He immediately departed and without fear of censure, condemned the act. He said, "If this is what you intended to do, then why did you invite me?" He then added, "I cannot tolerate breaking anyone's heart. But, at the same time, at no price can Allah be displeased simply for the sake of pleasing the creation." His methodology in rectifying people was to be soft, but it was "be soft, not wrong". He was stern when necessary. This sternness was for the sake of Allah and for the benefit of the creation of Allah.

Humility: He was extremely humble. He had no vanity or arrogance to his personality. His distinguishing feature was that he met everyone as a low slave. He sometimes said, "People have good thoughts about me. They love me and come to me. It may be that Allah forgives me through this, for there is no worse person than myself on the face of the earth."

Service and Hospitality: He was suffering from severe weakness for some time, yet he would not see someone in need turned away without fulfilling his need. He met everyone cheerfully and considered it his duty to relieve people of their distress and to cheer them. If any of his attendants did not feel well, then he would feel greater distress at our condition than we ourselves, and he ignored his own difficulty.

If an honorable guest arrived, he honoured him to the extreme, even when he was weak and ill, and served him and showed warm hospitality. He personally brought his food and fed him most lovingly. He became extremely overjoyed at the arrival of Ulama

and Mashaayikh, wholeheartedly dedicating himself to their hospitality and comfort. He sat for hours in their company, and was deeply saddened when they left.

Lectures and Advice: Despite his illness and weakness, he gave every visitor advice and guidance appropriate to him. Although Maulana did not qualify from any madrasah, nor was he a formal scholar, he had deep insight into the Qur'an and Hadith. He would recite extremely pertinent verses from the Qur'an and narrate Ahaadith – leaving even the Ulama astounded at the depth of his knowledge.

Du'a and Zikr: Allah Ta'ala had placed a lot of effect in his du'as. Due to this, people would flock to him from far and wide and return home cured – having achieved what they had come for. Troubled and distressed people would also find peace and solace in his gatherings and many sick people were cured. However, he really appreciated the most those who came for spiritual reformation.

Towards the end of his life, he would mostly engage in zikr within his heart. Sometimes he would pick up a tasbeeh and make zikr. At other times, he would even engage in audible zikr.

His writings

1. Roohul-Bayaan: This is a collection of all the lectures and discourses that he had on different occasions. These discourses were compiled by Maulana Ammaar Ahmad Saheb during his lifetime and had been published under the title "Roohul-Bayaan."
2. 'Irfaan-e-Muhabbat: This is a beautiful treasure of his poetry which are dripping with the ma'rifat (recognition) of Allah Ta'ala and which Moulana Sayyid Muhammad Al-Hasani had beautifully compiled and arranged under relevant titles and headings.

3. Kamaalaat-e-Nubuwwat: This is one of his unique books. It is a translation of the beginning of Moulana Muhammad Ismail Shaheed's amazing academic work, "Mansab-e-Imaamat." Apart from that, some other aspects of Seerah have also been included.

4. Akhlaaq-e-Salaf: This is a summary and translation of 'Allaamah Sha'raani's work in which the akhlaaq and teachings of the pious predecessors have been discussed at length. (This has been translated in English by my respected brother Maulana Moosa Kajee)

Demise: On the 4rd Rabi'ul Awwal 1412 Hijri (12th October 1991), after 49 days of constant unabated severe illness, he departed for the abode of the hereafter. His son, Maulana Ishtiyaq Ahmad led the janaazah salaah in Mansoor Park.¹⁰⁵

Hereunder, we will quote some of the experiences and observations of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ regarding Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ﷺ

His childhood

Maulana ﷺ said: He was a wali (friend of Allah ﷻ) since childhood. An elderly Aalim informed me that when they would be playing games like tip-cat during their childhood days, Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Sahib would build miniature masjids from sticks and bricks and give azaan over it.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ This brief biography has been collected from: a) Biographies of the Naqshbandi Mujaddidi Masha'ikh, p. 143 – 149 by Maulana Mahbub Ahmad ibn Qamruz Zamaan Nadwi Ilahabadi, translated by Mawlana Sulayman al-Kindi and b) Twin Rivers by the same author translated by Maulana Zakariyya Du Preez. The date of demise was taken from Rashke-Awliyya Pg.64

¹⁰⁶ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.57

His condition

Maulana ﷺ narrates: During the period of those three years, I never heard a word from his tongue regarding ghayrullah (others besides Allah ﷻ). He was a radio which played only discussions regarding aalamul ghayb (the realm of the unseen).¹⁰⁷

Maulana ﷺ narrated: On one occasion, in 1980, I was in Hardoi. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ too was in Hardoi. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ had invited many Ulama to meet him. In the guest-room, Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ was seated. The Grand Mufti of Darul Uloom Deoband, Mufti Mahmud Hasan Gangohi ﷺ was seated on his left. I was on the left of Mufti Mahmud Hasan. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ was seated in front of Maulana, on his right side. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ was speaking. Suddenly, while in the middle of his talk, he fell silent, and his gaze settled in one direction. Mufti Mahmud Hasan ﷺ lowered his head and studied Maulana's gaze. He whispered in my ear, "Hadhrat Maulana is not here." He meant that he is not in our world or realm. It takes a friend of Allah to recognize the spiritual state of another friend of Allah... It happened on a few occasions that Maulana Muhammad Ahmad was standing with us, while we had no idea in which realm his thoughts were. After a while, he would make salaam to me. I would say, "Hadhrat. You were here with us. Why are you making salaam to us?" He would reply, "I was not here. I have just come from somewhere right now."¹⁰⁸

His status in the words of the Ulama

Maulana ﷺ narrates: On one occasion, Mufti Mahmudul Hasan Gangohi ﷺ, the Grand-Mufti of India, said to Maulana Abrarul-Haq

¹⁰⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.57

¹⁰⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.64

ﷺ: “Shaykhul-Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya ﷺ asked me, “At the present, who is the Wali with the strongest nisbah (connection to Allah Ta’ala) from the chain of the Naqshabandis?” I replied, “Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ﷺ.”¹⁰⁹

Maulana ﷺ narrates: I was fortunate to reach maturity while being nurtured with care by the Ahlullah (the friends of Allah). From the age of fourteen to sixteen which I spent in Ilahabad, for three consecutive years, I remained in the service of Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ. When my Shaykh Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri visited him at his house, he stared at the ground and then looked up to the sky. He said, “I can see the nur (spiritual effulgence) of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Sahib from the earth to the skies.”¹¹⁰

Maulana ﷺ says: When I wanted to take Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ to meet Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi ﷺ for the very first time, I first introduced him with glowing praises. I said, “Hadhrat! In Partaabgarh, there is a pious wali by the name of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad. He lives on the outskirts. His condition is amazing. He recites poetry with great love. He is an embodiment of love. His du’as are readily accepted...” Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ said to me, “Why don’t you go? We will also come with you.” We left from Azamgarh towards Partaabgarh. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad was so happy that he himself came to the station (with his driver) in his car to fetch my Shaykh and escort him to his house. He went inside to arrange some tea and other edibles. Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ and all of us were seated outside the house... Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ stared at the ground and then looked up to the sky. He said, “I can see the nur (spiritual effulgence) of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Sahib from

¹⁰⁹ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.56

¹¹⁰ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.57

the earth to the skies.” He also commented, “Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Sahib is an embodiment of love.”

In front of his house was a forest, in which he used to repeat the name ‘Allah’ seventy thousand times (daily). On seeing that forest, my Shaykh Maulana Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ said, “It seems as if the entire forest is brimming with nur.”¹¹¹

Maulana says: Great Ulama would come to Maulana to request his du’as. On one occasion, I found by Maulana Muhammad Ahmad, a man who had never formally studied or taught, (great scholars like) Maulana Habibur-Rahman A’zmi رحمہ اللہ علیہ, the great Muhaddith and annotator of Musannaf Abdir-Razzaaq, and Maulana Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمہ اللہ علیہ. I enquired from others as to why they had come. I learnt that they had come to learn and glean from the burning love of Allah ﷻ which Maulana possessed. They submitted to Maulana Muhammad Ahmad, “Akhtar has come from Karachi. He is the commentator of the Mathnawi. Today, we would like to hear a lesson on the Mathnawi.” Maulana Muhammad Ahmad suggested to me that I should deliver a lesson on the Mathnawi, as these are senior people who are requesting it. I took the name of Allah, and had the honour of delivering a lesson on the Mathnawi in their presence.¹¹²

The love of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabgarhi رحمہ اللہ علیہ for Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ narrates: After our lessons at college, some of my classmates would proceed to the Jamna river to watch the women bathing there. I would present myself in the service of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad رحمہ اللہ علیہ from the time of Asr salaah till 11 pm. Maulana was an embodiment of love and an embodiment of beauty.

¹¹¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.61-63

¹¹² Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.63

He had a heart filled with love for Allah ﷻ. Seeing Maulana, I felt great love for him and I felt very comfortable in his presence (due to munaasabah). He too was very compassionate towards me and he loved me alot. In a letter (to me), he once wrote, ‘The love and affection you have for me, there is none in the world who has such love for me.’¹¹³

Maulana ﷺ narrates: When Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ sometimes visited his hometown Phulpur, I would also go and stay there. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad used to bring his bedding from his home to the guest’s room and spend the night there (with me). He used to say, “Senior and respected Ulama come to me, but I don’t bring my bedding out for anyone. It is only for you that I leave home to sleep here.”¹¹⁴

On one occasion, I was present in his gathering. After the gathering, when I returned to my place of residence with a rikshaw, I noticed Maulana arriving behind me in another rickshaw. I said, “Hadhrat, I am returning from your gathering. Had you told me, I would have stayed there a little longer.” He recited the following couplets (which he himself had composed):

محبیت دے کے تڑپایا گیا ہوں میں آیا نہیں لایا گیا ہوں
 نہیں سمجھا میں سمجھایا گیا ہوں سمجھتا لاکھ اسرارِ محبت

I didn’t come by myself, I was brought here
 Love was instilled within me and I was made restless.
 I have understood thousands of the secrets of love
 No, I haven’t understood. Actually, I was made to understand.¹¹⁵

Maulana ﷺ narrated: On one occasion, Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ said, “I was suffering from a headache. After hearing your lecture, the pain in my head has disappeared.”¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.57

¹¹⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.57

¹¹⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.57

A unique aspect of knowledge

Maulana رحمہ اللہ narrates: When I visited Maulana for the very first time in Sabiri Manzil (in Ilahabad), a group of Ulama from Nadwah were present there. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad رحمہ اللہ said: “O Ulama of Nadwah! Tell me, is there something like the evil-eye or not? Islam affirms the effects of the evil-eye. Nabi ﷺ said : العين حق – The effect of the eye is a reality. (Sahih Bukhari) Since Islam has affirmed the effect of the evil-eye, why do you hesitate to affirm the effect of good-eyes. If the evil-eye can cause a lush tree to become dry, a buffalo to give less milk, a young man to become sick and weak, which the whole world accepts, do you think that Allah ﷻ has not put effect in the good gazes of the friends of Allah ﷻ.” Mulla Ali Qari, the great Muhaddith, therefore comments:

قلت وضد هذا العين نظر العارفين الواصلين إلى مرتبة الرافعين من البين حجاب الغيب فإنه من حيث التأثير الإكسير يجعل الكافر مؤمنا والفاسق صالحا والجاهل عالما والكلب إنسانا (مرقاة المفاتيح ج8 ص364)

The Ulama, on hearing this, all began crying. Maulana رحمہ اللہ then said with great feeling:

تنہا نہ چل سکیں گے محبت کی راہ میں میں چل رہا ہوں آپ میرے ساتھ آئے
“You cannot walk the path of love all on your own
I am walking down this road, just join me.”¹¹⁷

Love for other people

Maulana رحمہ اللہ said: I had seen many lovers of Allah ﷻ. Maulana Muhammad Ahmad was himself a great lover of Allah. But I had never seen a person having such love for the creation of Allah like his. It was for this reason that he had become so beloved to the people. You can gauge his love for his friends and disciples from the

¹¹⁶ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.150

¹¹⁷ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.58

following; when his guests and disciples would arrive, he would become overjoyed, yet when they would leave, he would look at the tea-cups and saucers and at the places where they would eat, drink and cook and cry, remembering fondly that his guests had stayed here and utilized these cups. People would narrate that he would, when bidding his guests farewell, stand at the door of his house for up to half an hour. As long as he could catch sight of them, he would silently watch them. Since his house was at the edge of a forest, he could catch sight of them from a great distance away.¹¹⁸

Repelling evil with good and a forgiving nature

Maulana ﷺ explained: Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ was granted a very lofty position in good character and forgiveness. He would humble himself before those who would harm him. There was an Aalim in Partabgarh who had qualified in Mazaahirul-Uloom. He was very talented and was an orator. Jealousy tends to creep in amongst scholars. When he saw the followers of Maulana increasing, he was perturbed, thinking that Maulana will steal the show here and I will not receive any recognition. He began speaking ill of Maulana. Maulana came to know of this. He invited the Aalim, gave him tea and gave him many gifts. He was the Imaam of the masjid, he had influence in the community and he had a group of followers. Maulana realized that if I do not treat him cordially with softness and love, he will stir the people against me. In that case, I will not be able to pass on the love of Allah ﷻ to the people. When Maulana noticed that his pants were torn, Maulana hired a rickshaw and sat in it with him. I witnessed this myself. I got into the next rickshaw just to see where they are off to. I found them by a store which sells material. Maulana had purchased for him material and gave it to a tailor to sew for that Aalim new pants. Maulana gave him so many gifts that he fell in love with Maulana. Wherever he went, he would sing Maulana's praises. Previously, he kept his

¹¹⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.58

distance from Maulana. Maulana would send someone with a rickshaw to fetch him (so that he could spend time with Maulana). Maulana was so kind to him that his jealousy was converted into love. That Aalim finally softened up and gave up his opposition. He too possessed capability, which was his achievement. Maulana had through this transformed him into a friend of Allah, to a great extent. He finally became a great lover of Maulana. But Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ﷺ had to work hard and bear him patiently for many years. He had to bend over backwards and humble himself for many years before he won the heart of that Aalim.¹¹⁹

Love for poetry which expresses the love of Allah ﷻ

Maulana's ﷺ love for poetry was developed due to the company of Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmed ﷺ.

Maulana ﷺ said: In his gatherings, I never heard any mention of the world. We would be engrossed in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ. I would listen to his heart-rending poetry on the love of Allah ﷻ. Pious people have different ways of transferring and passing on nisbah (a loving relationship with Allah) to those in their company. In the company of Maulana ﷺ, it would be transferred to them through his poetry. Great Ulama would attend. The poetry would be recited. How can I begin to describe what a gathering it was?!! Sometimes, after Isha salaah, the gathering would begin. Maulana would go on reciting poetry while in a spiritual state of ecstasy. The listeners would be absorbed and captivated. This would continue until half the night. All would then perform tahajjud. Then, the gathering would recommence. Maulana ﷺ would then continue reciting his poetry in a heart-rending tone until the time of fajr salaah. All would proceed to the masjid for fajr salaah. On returning,

¹¹⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.59

this gathering would recommence. It was only after ishraq salaah that all would return home.

After half the night, if Maulana Muhammad Ahmed happened to see anyone looking at his watch, he would become very upset. He would say, “After half the night, when I go into a spiritual state, then people here start falling off to sleep.” He would then recite the following couplet with great remorse:

داستان عشق کی ہم کس کو سنائیں آخر جسے دیکھو وہی دیوار نظم آتا ہے

In the end, who can we tell of our tale of love?

Whoever we see seems to be a wall.

He said to me, “Your eyes never close in my gathering.” I can only thank Allah that despite the enjoyment of sleep in one’s youth, I never failed (the test). I would stay awake as long as Maulana was awake. If he remained awake till 1am, I too remained awake till 1am.¹²⁰

Acceptance of his du’as

Maulana narrated: An innocent person was sentenced to death by hanging. He approached Maulana Abdur-Rahman رحمہ اللہ, a khalifah of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ to request du’as, as he was being punished despite being innocent. Maulana Abdur-Rahman رحمہ اللہ asked him whether he had requested Maulana Muhammad Ahmad رحمہ اللہ to make du’a for him. He replied that he had done so. So Maulana Abdur-Rahman رحمہ اللہ said to him, “In that case, don’t even worry. You will see what happens.” It is to this extent that the Ulama were convinced that he was mustajaabud-da’waat (a person whose du’a’s were readily accepted). A person who had seen Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partabgarhi رحمہ اللہ crying and pleading with Allah ﷻ at that time narrated to me: Maulana engaged himself in du’a for the person who was supposed to be hanged. Maulana cried and

¹²⁰ Rashke-Awliya Pg.60

pleaded like a small child cries and pleads before his father. After engaging in du'a for a long time, he stood up, folded his sleeves and said challengingly, "I want to see who can hang him." This was his informal relationship with Allah ﷻ. It was just a few days later when the judge in the High Court declared his innocence. SubhaanAllah.¹²¹

When any person who had been struck by some calamity wrote to my Shaykh, Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ, requesting for du'a's, he would reply by writing the contact details of Maulana Muhammad Ahmad ؒ and commenting, "Ask him for du'as."¹²²

Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ

Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani ؒ was born in 1293 AH (1876) in the district of Azamgarh, India. His father's name was Shaykh Abdul-Wahhab. His original hometown was Chau, which was about seventeen kilometers from Phupur. Because he spent the major portion of his life in Phulpur, he was referred to as Phulpuri.

A brief biography of Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ

Education: His father sent him to Jaunpur, India to start his religious education. He started his studies under Maulana Abul-Khair Muhammad Makki ؒ, the son of Maulana Sakhaawat Ali who was the Khalifah of Sayyid Ahmad Shaheed of Rai Bareli ؒ. After spending two years with him in which he studied upto Sharh Jaami (in nahw) and Sharh Tahzeeb (in logic), he went to Mawlana Sayyid Ameenud-Deen Nasirabadi ؒ and then later to Jami'ul-Uloom in Kanpur where he studied uptil Miskhat. While studying here, he had first met Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ. After qualifying, his inclination towards the rational sciences (like mantiq,

¹²¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.62

¹²² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.62

the principles of fiqh, ilm-ul-kalaam and philosophy) led him to Madrasah Aaliyah in Rampur which was regarded as the center of Logic and Philosophy at the time. He studied there under Maulana Fadhle-Haq who was an expert teacher of logic and philosophy. While specializing in these post-graduate rational sciences, he would even teach the students of the lower years books like Hidaayah, Meer Zaahid and Mulla Hasan, etc. In the same institute, he had studied Sahih Muslim and the science of tajweed under Qari Ali Husain Khan ﷺ, a distinguished student of Qari Abdur-Rahman Paanipatti ﷺ. After receiving the Dars-e-Nizami certificate from there, he went to further his studies in Hadith under Maulana Maajid Ali Jaunpuri ﷺ in Glauti. The latter was one of the distinguished students of Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi ﷺ and had completed the Daurah-e-Hadith in two years, in the class of Maulana Muhammad Yahya Kandehlawi ﷺ. Maulana Maajid Ali Jaunpuri ﷺ used to spend the night noting down the lessons of his teacher. There were times when he used to continue noting them until the fajr salaah. Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandehlawi ﷺ has written regarding him in Aap Beeti, “The imaam of the manaatiqah (leader of logicians) and ustaazul asaaticah (teacher of the teachers). In his era, his intelligence and logic was famous in all quarters. His famous lighthearted statement was: Maulana Mahmud (Shaykhul Hind) may be able to somewhat teach Tirmizi. Maulana Khalil Ahmad may be able to somewhat teach Abu Daud. But if anyone has to comment on Sahih Bukhari, then I am one who may be able to somewhat comment on it.”¹²³

Teaching: Maulana Abdul-Ghani ﷺ taught for some time in Madrasah Islamiyyah in Sitapur. However, because he had differences with the beliefs of the people there, he resigned from his post. He then taught as the head teacher in the madrasah of Maulana Abu Bakr ibn Maulana Muhammad Makki in Jaunpur for five years.

¹²³ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.68

He would teach 16 different lessons, which would span from morning till evening, which included Sahih Bukhari and Sunan Tirmizi. He would stay awake till one in the morning to prepare for his lessons of the next day. In that era, Maulana Mia Sayyid Asghar Husain Deobandi ﷺ was also teaching in the same institute.

During this period, he accompanied Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ to Sarai-e-Meer in Azamgarh where the latter delivered a talk. Maulana Abdul-Ghani ﷺ took bay'ah (pledged allegiance) to Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ in the mihrab at the Eidgah. This was on the 1st Rabi'ul Awwal 1328 AH. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ advised him to complete certain forms of azkaar punctually, which he fulfilled diligently. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ later conferred khilaafah (successorship) to him on the 1st Rabi'ul Awwal 1332 AH.

In Phulpur: In 1336 AH, upon the advice of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ, he established a madrasah in Phulpur. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ laid the foundation with his own hands and remarked that he was naming it Rawdhatul-Uloom (a garden of knowledge), in relation to the name Phulpur (the area of flowers). There is a well in this madrasah. This well was dug after Maulana Abdul-Ghani ﷺ had seen a dream in which he saw Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi ﷺ standing at that spot. The water of this well is sweet and cool.

In 1349 AH Maulana Abdul-Ghani ﷺ established another madrasah, Baytul-Uloom, in Sarai-e-Meer, next to the Eid-Gah. Here, the entire dars-nizaami (syllabus for the Aalim Faadhil course) would be taught. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ had accepted the post of 'The Supervisor and Overseer' (sarparast) of the madrasah. . Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ named it Baytul-Uloom. He said: "Bearing in mind the name Sarai-e-Meer (the residence of the Sir), I would like to name the madrasah Darul-Uloom (the large house of knowledge),

but there is more humbleness in Baytul-Uloom (the small house of knowledge). I make du'a that Allah ﷻ will make it a Darul-Uloom. The letter which Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ had written regarding this madrasah is quoted below:

Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Sahib.

May Allah ﷻ reward you for having established such a madrasah after seeing the need for it. I see a great need for it and am delighted over its establishment. I make du'a that it becomes firmly established and proves to be a support for Deen. I consider it obligatory to support it. I believe that if I encourage others to support it, this encouragement will be classified as "encouraging towards good". I also make du'a for those who support it and those who encourage others to do the same.

However, since I do not know all the collectors (who go around to collect donations for the madrasah) and they are possibly changing all the time, I consider this arrangement enough for their attestation: Whichever collector has your signed approval will be considered to be reliable by myself as well. A formal receipt must be taken from him and the donation be given to Baytul-Uloom. Ability is from Allah alone.

Was salaam.

Ashraf Ali Thanwi, may Allah pardon him

5 Sha'baan 1352 A.H.

In order to maintain and see to the administration of this madrasah, Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ would travel five miles to and from his home in Phulpur to Sarai-e-Meer. He would sometimes have to spend the entire day there. He would carry from home his own dough, salt and clarified butter and cook his meals separately. He never even tasted the salt of the madrasah and he never took any salary for his services as the principal. He solely undertook this journey of ten miles everyday for the pleasure of Allah. This is indicative of his high level of sincerity and wara' (abstention).

Relationship with his Shaykh, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ:

Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ was only thirteen years younger than his Shaykh Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ. The first time he had met Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ was while studying in Jami'ul-Uloom Kanpur. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ had taken his examination for al-Qutbi, which he passed with distinctions. He was overtaken with love and admiration for Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ from this very first meeting and made an intention to take bay'ah (pledge allegiance) at his hands after qualifying.

Writings: Besides his teaching and reformation, several books like *Ma'rifah Illahiyyah, Ma'iyah Illahiyyah, as-Siraat al-Mustaqim, Hurmatul Khamr* and *al-Baraahinul-Qati'ah* were compiled and prepared by Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ, in which his advices and lectures were preserved. He had himself compiled a book entitled *Usoolul Wusool* on the principles of Tasawwuf.

Migration to Pakistan and demise: Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ؒ migrated to Pakistan some time before his demise. The great Mufti Rashid Ahmad Ludhianwi ؒ, his disciple, saw to the enshrouding and burial according to the Sunnah method. In fact, he personally bathed his mentor with the assistance of a few others. The janaazah salaah was performed by Dr. Abdul-Hayy Aarifi ؒ – a khalifah of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ. He was buried in the Papaush-Nagar graveyard in Karachi at noon. May Allah ﷻ illuminate his resting place.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Condensed from: *Rashke-Awliyaa, Eminent Ulama* by Maulana Ebrahim Muhammad and *Aqwaal-e-Salaf* of Ml Qamaruz-Zamaan

Hereunder, we will quote some of the experiences and observations of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ regarding Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ:

The du'a of his grandfather

Maulana ﷺ narrated: There was no rain in my Shaykh's hometown Chau. This led to drought. There was a place in which some water was stored. All the people of the village took water from there, but they did not let Maulana Phulpuri's father take anything. He came crying to the masjid and complained to his father, "The situation is unbelievable. My crops are drying and these villagers refuse to give me any water, as they regard me as insignificant." His father (Shaykh Amanatullah) was a pious man. He performed 2 rak'ats of salaatul haajah. He fell into a lengthy sajdah. When going into sajdah, there was no sign of any clouds in the sky. In the interim, clouds formed and it rained so much that the villagers began fearing a flood. They rushed to the masjid to pacify this pious old man, otherwise they feared that the entire village will be carried away in the flood. The same villagers who refused to give them water now pleaded for forgiveness, "We troubled your son. Please forgive us and stop making you du'a for rain, otherwise this entire village will flood. The amount of rain we needed, we have received. Please end your sajdah." Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ narrated this to me himself.¹²⁵

Piety and knowledge in every second generation

Maulana narrated: My Shaykh, Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ once said, "In my family, the grandsons (i.e. every second generation) become Awliyaa. My grandfather (Shaykh Amaanatullah ﷺ) was a Wali (friend) of Allah. My father was a common Muslim. According to this system, Allah ﷻ made me an

¹²⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.66

Aalim.” Maulana did not claim to have been a Wali of Allah. Instead, he substituted it with the position of an Aalim.”¹²⁶

An exam of respect

Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ؒ narrated: At the time of taking bay’ah (pledging allegiance), Hakemul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ put me through a difficult and complicated test. At the time of the bay’ah, he said, “Say! ‘I pledge allegiance at the hands of Ashraf Ali.’” Allah ﷻ assisted me and saved me from disgrace. I immediately responded with titles of respect, “I pledge allegiance at the hands of Hakeemul-Ummah Mujaddidul-Millah Maulana Shah Ashraf Ali Thanwi daamat barakaatuhu (may his blessings remain forever).” Had I said in nervousness “I pledge allegiance at the hands of Ashraf Ali”, my Shaykh would have understood that he has met up with a rude ignorant villager, a disciple who says just as his Shaykh says (without considering the protocols of respect and etiquette).”¹²⁷

His status in the opinion of his Shaykh

The love which his Shaykh Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ had for him can be estimated from the following: He once wrote to Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ to seek permission to visit him in Thanabhawan. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ replied, “Permission for what? In fact, I have a yearning to meet you.” Once Maulana Phulpuri ؒ came to Thanabhawan unannounced. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ was lying down at the time. On seeing him, he stood up out of joy, took a few steps and hugged him saying, “Your arrival is a cause of hundreds of delights.”¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.66

¹²⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.66

¹²⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.98

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ received a letter in which the sender wrote: Hadhrat! When I walk on the earth, I get the feeling as if I am walking on the ground of the Aakhirah. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ commented, “This man is the Siddiq of this era.” (Siddiq refers to a very high rank and class of the friends of Allah, whom Allah ﷻ has praised in the Qur’an in Surah Nisaa) Hajee Abdul-Waahid of Sultanpur was at that time in Thanabawan. When Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ left to attend to some work at home, he decided to peep at the letter to see who was the personality upon whom Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had conferred the title of ‘the Siddiq of this era’. At the end of the letter, he saw the name ‘Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri’.¹²⁹

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ would, in his letters, address Maulana Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ by the following titles: ‘My Muhibb and Mahboob (loving beloved) Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani – may Allah protect him and honour him’.

In one letter, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ wrote to him: You are a carrier of the knowledge of nubuwwah and a carrier of the knowledge of wilaayah.¹³⁰

Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ once wrote in a letter to Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ: “My heart’s desire is to become a gardener who pulls out weeds, and earn my living in this manner. I wish that nobody will even know me.” Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ wrote in his reply: “Insha-Allah, you will remove the weeds from the hearts of Allah’s servants.” (This was written before he received khilaafah from Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ)¹³¹

¹²⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.91

¹³⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.98

¹³¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.93

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ had on a certain occasion suggested his name to assume the role of Sadr Mudarris (head teacher) at Darul-Uloom Deoband. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ asked him, “(If you are appointed,) What salary will you take?” He replied, “I will live off chick peas and continue teaching (i.e. I do not require a salary, I will do it for the pleasure of Allah).” Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ commented, “That is what I expect from you, that you will prove yourself true to your word.”¹³²

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ said with reference to Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri’s simplicity: “Mashaa-Allah, Maulana Abdul Ghani is a soldier. He is ever-ready. He is like a wrestler. This is topped by his ilmi-academic and amali-practical excellences and achievements. Nonetheless, judging from his appearance, one could never say that he is someone of great caliber. This is the effect of zikr. Zikr is a unique thing. Complete reformation is achieved through it.”¹³³

His position amongst his contemporary Ulama

Maulana ؒ said: My Shaykh was an Aalim (scholar) of such a great stature that the great Ulama of that era, the likes of Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Banuri, Mufti Muhammad Shafi’ Uthmaani (the grand-Mufti of Pakistan) and Maulana Ihtishaamul Haqq Thanwi, would visit him in Nazimabad and sit before him like students. Mufti Muhammad Shafi’ would even drink his left over water for tabarruk (acquiring blessings).¹³⁴

Respect from his contemporaries

After the demise of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ, his khalifah Dr. Abdul-Hayy Aarifi began a formal relationship of islaah (spiritual

¹³² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.98

¹³³ Eminent Ulama

¹³⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.89

reformation) with Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ. On the invitation of Dr. Aarifi, Maulana Phulpuri visited Karachi on 21 December 1958. He remained as his guest for one month. He returned home on the 19th January 1959. Dr. Abdul-Hayy Aarifi was not even satisfied with the period of one entire month. He expressed his thoughts in the following letter, dated 22 January, 1959 A.H.:

“What can I say? I have not yet regained consciousness from the dream which I experienced while awake (while enjoying the ecstasy of your company). Hadhrat undertook this journey with so much of compassion and love. Despite staying for a while with us, I feel that I am still not satiated. I still feel that extent of spiritual thirst which I felt before your coming. I beg you for your special du’a. Right now, I feel the most regret that I could not serve you as a host in a manner which was befitting of your status and position. I was unable to arrange and ensure your comfort and ease according to your satisfaction. I feel guilty of innumerable short-comings. I also feel strongly that something may have been done in a manner which was against your honorable disposition, which I was unaware of. On certain occasions, I had the audacity of discussing certain issues with a great amount of informality. I was unable to take into consideration Hadhrat’s honourable temperament regarding the acceptance of invitations and the acceptance of bay’ah. For this reason, I plead with you to please forgive me for every type of shortcoming which I was guilty of, considering the compassion of the Elders (which they possess for their juniors).” Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ replied on that very letter: “These thoughts are all the results and fruits of love. I was very happy (during my stay). I make du’a for you from the bottom of my heart.”¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Sawaanah Hadhrat Aarifi Pg.202, Rashke-Awliyya Pg.117-118

Compassion upon his juniors

Maulana rahimahullah said: My Shaykh Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri rahimahullah had a very good relationship with Mufti Mahmud Hasan Gangohi rahimahullah. When they would meet, Maulana Phulpuri rahimahullah would embrace him and say, “My beloved (mahboob) has come.”¹³⁶

A great lover of Allah

The condition of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri rahimahullah in his extreme love for Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala was amazing.

Maulana rahimahullah narrates: Allah had granted Maulana Phulpuri rahimahullah a lot of strength and very good health in his youth. For that reason, his daily ma'moolaat (a'maal and devotions) were quite a lot. After tahajjud, he would recite the 12 Tasbihs (1200 times zikr of various different forms). Then, from Fajr till 9 o'clock on most occasions, in the masjid of Phulpur, he would in one sitting complete the rest of his daily ma'moolaat. Sometimes, he would remain engaged in this till 11 o'clock. It was always his practice to perform Isha with the wudhu he had made before Zuhr salaah. On one occasion, I saw something astonishing; he performed his Isha salaah with the wudhu he had made for tahajjud. He would normally be seen engaged in tilaawah (recitation) of the Qur'an from Zuhr to Asr... Between Zuhr and Asr, or Asr and Maghrib, or Maghrib and Isha, if any taalib (student or disciple) happened to be present, he would spend his time passing on advices on Deen to him, otherwise he would spend his time in a'maal.

When he would deliver a lecture, at the beginning of the introductory khutbah, tears would already flow from his eyes. The spiritual condition which we feel after lecturing for one hour would be felt by him from the very beginning. At the beginning of his

¹³⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.89

lecture, one tear would emerge and find its place right under his eye. Till the end of the lecture, it would shine like a moon. It would make its place there and would not fall or drip out till the end.

The Khanqah was on the outskirts of the area. His house was quite a distance away from the area. From his house, one would be able to see the area in the distance, but one could not hear the sounds of the people there. It was a ten minutes walk to reach there. The jungle was still and silent. There were no houses nearby. It was a wonderful world of solitude and seclusion. Life in the jungle, far away from the city, was wonderful and amazing. I would give azaan and Maulana would lead the salaah. After Maghrib, there would be absolute calm silence and an atmosphere of isolation, where the voice of no person could be heard. It was only the masjid, khanqah and small madrasah of Maulana's which was here.

Only the sighs of Maulana could be heard every hour or two. He recited the Qur'an in an amazing manner. He had such a beautiful voice. It sounded like the melody of a flute. After reciting every ten or twenty verses, it seemed as if his chest was now overflowing with love. He would call out 'Allah' in such a loud voice that the entire masjid would shake and vibrate.

His ibaadah was ibaadah of love. He was like a starving person who was enjoying a tasty rice dish. He would cry abundantly in tahajjud. The pleasure which he experienced during his zikr was such that it would make one forget all the kingdoms of the world. He would enjoy reciting the Qur'an so much that each word would take him into a trance. At the time of tahajjud, he would read the entire Qaseedah Burdah (in the praises of Rasulullah ﷺ). He would then complete the 12 Tasbihs (1200 times zikr of various different forms). He was the Imaam for the fajr salaah after that. He would lead the salaah in such a manner that was truly enjoyable. He had such a lovely voice that on one occasion, while he was leading the fajr salaah, a group of Hindus happened to pass by in a wedding

procession. The entire procession came to a sudden halt. They couldn't move. They said, "We can't move away from here. This is such an wonderful and unique voice."¹³⁷

Maulana رحمۃ اللہ علیہ also said: One the face of the earth, I have never seen a person worshipping Allah with such love. Allah ﷻ has made Akhtar a traveller. I have travelled to many countries. I met all the senior Khalifas (successors) of Hakeemul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. But I have never seen anyone worshipping Allah ﷻ like Maulana. My Shaykh used to call out 'Allah, Allah, Allah' during his tilaawah and tasbeeh. When steam builds up in the steam engines and locomotives (or in a pressure cooker), the steam has to be released regularly. The steam escapes with a loud sound. If the steam is not released, the engine will burst. In a similar manner, it seemed as if there was a build-up of anwaar (spiritual effulgence) in his heart. He would release that by crying out "Allah, Allah, Allah". He would then recommence his tilaawah. If he did not call out the name of Allah in this manner, it seemed as if his body would burst into small bits and pieces.

On the other side of the road across his house was a well which belonged to a Hindu. Sometimes, after Maghrib, he would worship Allah by this well. In that calm silent setting, he would recite the Qur'an for two hours at a time. Till today, I have never again seen any similar example of his method of recital of the Qur'an and zikr, his feeling when he took Allah's name, the amount of tears which flowed uncontrollably from his eyes and his cries at the time of tahajjud. After making salaam on the completion of 2 rak'ats, he would fall into sajdah like a child who falls into the lap of his mother. Just as a child grabs hold of his mother and cries after not being able to find her for a while, he would fall into sajdah and in a

¹³⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.84,85

similar manner cry, ask forgiveness for lengthy periods and Allah alone knows what he would ask Allah for.

On one occasion, in the masjid of Phulpur, there was no one besides me. I too was hidden from his sight. He didn't even realize that I was there. In the course of his tilaawah, he stopped and called out to Allah

آ جا مری آنکھوں میں سما جا مرے دل میں
Come into my eyes and enter into my heart.

Sometimes, he would say the following couplet of Khwajah Azizul Hasan Majzub رحمۃ اللہ علیہ with great love:

میں ہوں اور حشر تک اس در کی جبین سائے ہے سر زاہد نہیں یہ سر سرِ سودائے
ہے

I am rubbing my forehead at this doorstep and will continue to do so till the Day of Resurrection. This head is not the head of an ascetic. It is the head of one who is madly in love.

At the time of tahajjud, when he would just awaken, while he was proceeding to relieve himself with a jug in his hands, he would recite the following poem:

عشق من پیدا و دلبر ناپدید در دو عالم این چنین دلبر کہ دید
My love is quite apparent, but my Beloved is hidden and cannot be see. In the two worlds, show me if anyone has such a wonderful Beloved.

It seemed as if he was seeing Allah at all times. He would sometimes look up into the heavens and say, "O the comfort of those hearts which are restless (in Your love)." Then, tears would well up in his eyes. I would sit quietly in one corner. I would eagerly await the opportunity of hearing him say 'Allah'.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Rashke-Awliya Pg.85,86

Maulana ﷺ said: Had I not seen Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ, I would never have known what it means to be a true lover of Allah. His condition was such that he would sometimes write the name of Allah in the air. While sitting, he would raise his finger in the air and draw a straight alif. He would then write the laams of the name of Allah. He would finally add a tashdeed and a small alif (mamdoodah) above the tashdeed. I would then know that he now is writing the name of Allah in the air. Sometimes, while sitting, he would write the name of Allah on his sleeves. When he would utter the name of ‘Allah’ one tear would emerge and find its place just above his cheek. It would not fall or drip from there. It would make its place there and would continue shining brightly. Till today, when I remember him frequently lying down on a straw mattress in the veranda next to the mud wall which had cracked as a result of the rain, his walks at the river-side, his tilaawah and zikr in the open section of the masjid in the light of the stars, his crying voice and loving chants of the name of ‘Allah’ while engaged in his recital of the Qur’an, my heart cries tears of blood.¹³⁹

Punctuality on a’maal

Maulana says: In his younger days, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ had a practice of making zikr of the name of ‘Allah’ 9500 times daily. He would sometimes increase this to 12000 times. He once suffered from extremely painful boils which erupted all over his body, due to which he was unable to even sit. He was so punctual and regular on his a’maal that, even in such a condition, he completed his daily azkaar while lying down in the Jaami’ Masjid of Jaunpur. On one occasion, his fever shot up to 104 degrees. He laid out a mat in the mihraab (front section) of the Shahi Masjid, lied down on a pillow and completed his azkaar.

¹³⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.122

Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ would not feel it difficult to complete his a'maal, unlike us. We sometimes feel lazy and become lax. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ would never feel lazy and sluggish to complete his a'maal. Except for one day. It was an extremely cold day. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ felt a bit sluggish. On that day, he lied down and remained lying down. After a while, he sat up and lit a fire with some twigs, while chewing on some chick peas. Shortly thereafter, he said, "Hakeem Akhtar! Bring my Qur'an Shareef and Munaajaat-Maqbool! My Shaykh Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ said, 'Any work or deed which needs to be completed will only be completed by doing it. It can never be completed by just sitting. If we remain sitting and continue to say: I need to make tilaawah, I need to make zikr, etc. it will never be achieved. Nothing is achieved by merely sitting.'" Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was so energized by this one statement that it seemed as if an electric current had charged the battery of his heart. He then proceeded to complete all of his daily a'maal over the next five to six hours.¹⁴⁰

Difficult days

Maulana ﷺ narrated: Some people troubled Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ to the extent that he was forced to leave his home-town and village (Chau) and take up residence in the city of Phulpur. He managed to dig a 10-12 feet burrow (like a tunnel) in the ground and took his wife and children to live there. In the afternoon, he would cover the entrance with a straw mat (to shade them from the hot sun. They would relieve themselves in the fields. They had no house. When it would rain, the burrow would fill with water. Their small nest would now also be of no use. For a few days, they would take shelter in the city. This was his beginning stages. Just imagine how difficult it must have been. When we think about the sacrifices of the elders, tears well up in our eyes. When he started the madrasah, he had

¹⁴⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.88

nothing. We are such that we want to start off from the beginning with comfortable carpets. But a madrasah starts off with humble beginnings. Then, Allah ﷻ slowly makes means for its growth. Remember that a madrasah which starts off with straw mats, but its inception was with ikhlaas (sincerity), is accepted by Allah ﷻ. If there is no sincerity, then even these huge buildings and constructions are all useless. They have no value in the sight of Allah ﷻ.¹⁴¹

Clothing

Maulana ﷺ narrates: From the time I entered into his service, I always saw Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ wearing a kurtah (qamees) and a loin-cloth (izaar, lungi). During some years, he may have worn a pants for one or two days at most. Most of the time, he owned just one kurtah which his attendants would wash and give him to wear...





By the grace of Allah ﷻ, (towards the end of his life) Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was blessed with an abundance of wealth from various sources. But he was never seen possessing any material items other than his mattress and bedding, and a loin-cloth (izaar/lungi) and tasbeeh which would be kept by his bedside. He did not own any box or cupboard. No other material items could be seen in his possession. Once a week, on a Sunday, he would ask me to bring a scissor and mirror for him. He would then trim his hair and moustache himself... He would always have his clothes washed at home with great care. If perchance, his clothes had to be sent to a washerman for laundry, he would himself wash them once more at home before using them. He would thereafter say, "This practice of mine is not my fatwa (that the clothes require to be washed a second time). I have a special relationship with Allah. If I go against this,


¹⁴¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.94

then my tongue ceases to move when I make zikr. I am particular about this for my own comfort and ease.”

He wouldn't use buttons. His collar would stay open even in winter. He wouldn't even feel cold.¹⁴²

His independence

Maulana  narrated: Till today, the masjid in Phulpur where Maulana Phulpuri  would make ibaadah for hours on end is full of a special kind of nur (spiritual effulgence). One section of the masjid was roofed. The rest of the masjid had no roof. He would normally perform tahajjud in this portion of the masjid. The roof remained like that for his entire life, until he migrated over to Pakistan. Yet he never ever requested any wealthy man to donate towards completing the roof. This was despite the fact that many wealthy people of royalty (nawaabs) would invite Maulana Phulpuri  to their homes. However, he remained completely independent from them. I myself had seen the condition of Nawaab Chattari, whose lips would shiver out of awe when talking to Maulana Phulpuri . Yet he passed his life in such simplicity and poverty.

My Shaykh was so independent that Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi  had to say to the people of Phulpur, “O people of Phulpur! Contribute to the madrasah of Maulana Abdul-Ghani. He will never ask anyone for contributions. His name is Abdul-Ghani (the slave of The All-Independent). Don't even expect him to ever ask you for donations. But remember! If you do not contribute, you will be taken to task on the day of Qiyaamah.” Truly, I had never heard from his tongue any discussion of money with the rich and wealthy.

¹⁴² Rashke-Awliyya Pg.113

It was only talks centred around the love of Allah ﷻ. This is what I had witnessed throughout his life.¹⁴³

Respect for the Qur'an

Maulana ﷺ narrated: Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ would travel between Rawdhatul-Uloom and Baytul-Uloom on his horse-and-cart. I would also sit with him. He would travel with wudhu and continuously recite the Qur'an. He was an expert Haafiz. When he would pass by any filth like the dung of animals etc. he would stop reciting the Qur'an. He would say: Imaam Muhammad ﷺ has written that, for the one who takes the name of Allah ﷻ in a place where there is a stench, there is a fear of falling into kufr.¹⁴⁴

Control over his gaze

The horse-and-cart, while going to Baytul-Uloom, would pass by the market place. I had never ever seen Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ even glancing towards any clothing store or any store which sells confectionary and sweetmeats. I bear witness to this in the Masjid, after watching him for 12 years. I have never seen him looking to the right or left at any seller. They would make salaam as we would pass, but Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ would not lift up his gaze. Even when he would walk, he would not look around. His gaze was fixed on the ground in front of him.

Let me narrate to you an incident regarding this: There was a friend of mine who at that time had not yet taken bay'ah (pledged allegiance) to Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ. His father, who was a friend of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, had to undergo an eye operation in Sitapur. He said to Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, "Hadhrat! You have some disciples in Sitapur. If you ask any of them, our food and

¹⁴³ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.83

¹⁴⁴ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.89

drink during this time can be arranged by one of them.” The friends of Allah are kind people. By the recommendation of Maulana Phulpuri ؒ, this need of his was taken care of. This very person, before pledging allegiance to Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ, was severely afflicted with the malady of lustful glances. There was a railway station about half a mile away from the store in which he was employed. Throughout the day, different passenger trains would stop at this station. When he would hear the sound of a train approaching, he would leave the shop, run to the station and steal lustful glances at the women who were in the carriages exclusive for females. People tend to judge the friends of Allah based on their own conditions. So he narrated: “Maulana Phulpuri ؒ came to Sitapur to visit my father while he was still recovering. As was his habit, he was engaged in recital of the Qur’an while walking. His gaze was fixed to the ground in front of him. Suddenly, a very beautiful woman appeared in front of him. He was completely unaware of her presence. I said to myself that I will today see whether he looks at her or not. (His intention was to test Maulana Phulpuri ؒ.) When they were now quite close to each other, Maulana Phulpuri ؒ sensed that someone was walking towards him. (He lifted his head.) As his gaze fell on her, he turned and changed his road. He was overtaken by nausea. He sat on the side of the road and vomited.” This was the level of his Taqwa. This person later took bay’ah (pledged allegiance) at the hands of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ and became such a worshipper that Allah ﷻ caused miracles to happen at his hands.¹⁴⁵

His humility and its reward

Maulana ؒ narrated: My Shaykh, Maulana Phulpuri ؒ lost his temper with an uneducated farmer who would work on the fields. He went slightly overboard in venting his anger. He was a human

¹⁴⁵ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.90,91

after all. No matter how great a friend of Allah one may be, he is still prone to making mistakes. That man was an illiterate villager who used to plough the land. He would live in a village close to Phulpur. After receiving a scolding, he left. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ thought to himself: ‘I had scolded him more than was necessary. I should never have become so angry. If Allah questions me; why did you scold him more than was necessary, what answer will I give on the day of Qiyaamah?’ Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ set out to find him. His village was only 1 ½ miles from Phulpur. But Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was so restless in the fear of Allah ﷻ that he lost his way. He had to walk through the fields in this perturbed state. He reached the village of this farmer after a very long time. The sun had already set. He performed Maghrib salaah in this village. He then found the farmer. The farmer was amazed to see Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ said to him, “Today, I overdid it in reprimanding you. I scolded you more than was necessary. For the sake of Allah, please forgive me.” He replied, “You are such a senior Aalim and I am an ignorant villager. You are like my father. A father has the full right to scold his son.” Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ insisted, “I don’t know what my condition will be on the day of Qiyaamah. On that day, we will come to know who was senior and who was junior. Till you don’t say that you have forgiven me, I will not move from here.” When he saw how determined Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was, he had no option but to say, “Okay. It’s your instruction. Just to please your heart, I am saying ‘I have forgiven you’. Otherwise, you have the full right over me to scold me.”

The immediate reward of this humility and self-annihilation of the ego was that Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was blessed with the vision of Rasulullah ﷺ on that night in his dream. He explained his dream as follows: Rasulullah ﷺ and Sayyiduna Ali ﷺ were together in one boat. At a distance was my boat, in which I was sitting alone.

Rasulullah ﷺ instructed Sayyiduna Ali ؑ in a raised voice, “O Ali! Join the boat of Abdul-Ghani to my boat.” When Sayyiduna Ali ؑ joined the boat of Rasulullah ﷺ to my boat, there was the sound of a light thud as the two boats met. Till today, my ears still experience the enjoyment and ecstasy of that sound.¹⁴⁶

Self-defense and the passion for jihaad

Maulana ؑ narrates: From the very early stages of his life, the desire to sacrifice his life in the path of Allah made him uneasy. Due to this sentiment, he employed a famous teacher, Marhoom Zaakir Husain Ghazipuri, at the madrasah in Phulpur for ten years at a significant salary and learnt the art of self-defense and military tactics from him i.e. stick-fighting, sword-fighting, fencing, the usage of the spear and archery. He had also learnt wrestling from another teacher during his student days in Rampur. He therefore had a very good physique. He would wield the stick with such force that would make strong soldiers run. He had such a passion for the art of warfare that he would practice stick-fighting even in the month of Ramadhan Shareef, while fasting, till eight o’ clock in the morning and again after Taraawih at night.¹⁴⁷

At the order of his Shaykh, he taught the art of stick-fighting to some Ulama in Thanabhawan. On one occasion, seeing his talent in this field, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؑ remarked, “Our Moulana Abdul-Ghani is enough to face an army of one thousand men. If we ever require an army, our army will come from Azamgarh (where he used to reside).”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.93, 94

¹⁴⁷ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.113

¹⁴⁸ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.115

Desire for martyrdom

In the end of his life, my Shaykh was disabled and was unable to even stand. Despite that, he said to an army officer by the name of Major Toor who was a pious man, a punctual Musalli and who kept a full-fist length beard, “Major Toor! When the war between Pakistan and India breaks out, even though my knees have given in and I cannot stand, take me on my bed to the border of Lahore and allow me to fire the cannon. I will continue firing the canon and shooting the enemy till a bullet from their side strikes me and I will then become a martyr.” Saying this, he burst out in tears. He ﷺ used to say, “I learnt the art of stick-fighting and sword-fighting over a period of ten years, in the desire that I will attain martyrdom. Just like students study for ten years to qualify as Ulama, I learnt sword-fighting for ten years so that I may engage in jihaad and attain martyrdom.”

He used to always say to me, “From the time I was young, I had presented my application in the court of Allah ﷻ: O Allah, take me from this world as a martyr.”¹⁴⁹

His expertise in stick fighting

His Shaykh, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ once said to Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, “I heard that you are an expert in stick-fighting and that you can take on 500 people at once and duel against them. Demonstrate to me your expertise in this art.” Some great Ulama like Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani, Maulana Shabbir Ali and others were in Thanabawan at that time. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ gave each one of them a stick and asked them to attack him all at once. They all tried to attack him, but he defended himself single-handedly. He then went in to the offensive and they all fled. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ said to him, “When you were

¹⁴⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.114

demonstrating your prowess with the stick, I was also overtaken by a zeal and fervor (to engage in Jihad preparation).”¹⁵⁰

Once, the Hindus of Phulpur called 14 expert wrestlers from Banaras. They said to them, “Brothers! The people are overawed by this Maulana. He is very good at stick-fighting. Won’t you challenge him to a duel?” The land of the Madrasah was quite big. These 14 wrestlers thought to themselves that they were today going to see Maulana defeated. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ said, “Why should I waste my time in combatting them? Let them first duel with one of my students and prove their prowess. Then Abdul-Ghani will combat them.” He asked one of his students, Bakhshis Korea, to stick-fight them. He was also an expert. He demonstrated his expertise against these 14 huge wrestlers. In a few minutes, all those wrestlers had dispersed, with bleeding ears or broken noses. The Hindus said, “Oh. This Madrasah which Maulana opened is not a Madrasah. It is a training centre.”^{151,152}

Maulana ﷺ commented: I would take lessons in the art of stick-fighting from Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ would also take lessons in the art of stick-fighting from him. We would learn this together.¹⁵³

His stick

Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ had a special stick which he had named Abdul-Jabbaar. He would permanently keep it submerged in mustard-seed oil. It was very heavy.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.97

¹⁵¹ The reality of the matter, however, was that it was not a training centre. It was a Madrasah for learning and teaching Islamic sciences. However, in his free time, Maulana would teach some students this art of self-defence.

¹⁵² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.97

¹⁵³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.97

¹⁵⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.96

His strength and bravery

Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ used to say: Alhamdulillah, till the age of seventy, I never felt the effects of old age.¹⁵⁵

Maulana ﷺ said: My Shaykh was very strong. Allah ﷻ had also granted him such a brave heart and such courage that I would be left amazed. On one Hindu festival, wherein a large image of Ravan (the devil) is made from pieces of cardboard and paper and burnt in a fire, out of revenge for supposedly having abducted the wife of Rama (one of their Gods). A newspaper by the name of ‘Madinah’ used to be published in Bijnor, in which an entire ruku’ of the Qur’an used to be included in every edition. This page which featured a section of the Qur’an was also attached to the image of Ravan. A person came to the Masjid and informed Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ that a portion of the Qur’an was about to be burnt in this Hindu festival. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ picked up his stick and walked into their gathering. They were a crowd of about 10 000 people. This is no easy thing to do, my friends. Only one student of his went along, Maulana Shamsul-Haqq, who himself was very timid. The Hindus were just about to light the fire when Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ reached. There was absolute silence in the gathering. He loudly challenged them in the following words, “If you don’t remove that section of the Qur’an from your image, then I warn you that I can kill 500 of you before you will manage to kill me. Don’t you know my expertise? I have been training in stick-fighting for the last 10 years. I am an expert in club-fighting and stick-fighting.” The Hindu priests came to him and said, “Maulana, what is the matter?” They all knew him. They also knew of his expertise in stick-fighting and feared him. Maulana replied, ‘Look here! This newspaper which you have attached to this image contains the Qur’an. Remove it and hand it over to us. If you refuse, then Abdul-Ghani’s stick will find your

¹⁵⁵ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.84

heads.” They removed it from the image and handed it over to Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ.¹⁵⁶

I was present on one occasion. This is an eye-witness report. Near that area of Phulpur in which Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ lived, the Muslims had built a small Masjid near the tax-collectors office so that they may be able to perform salaah there. The councillor and prominent Hindus of that area, after consultation, decided to break down that Masjid. They had gathered around the Masjid for this purpose. Someone informed Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ that the Masjid is going to be broken down. He picked up his stick and proceeded there. I was with him. The Hindu councillor, his senior officials and some wealthy land-owners were standing around the Masjid. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ said to them, “You people are looking at this Masjid. If you remove even one brick of this Masjid, Abdul-Ghani will bury you under its foundations.”¹⁵⁷

Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ himself narrated to me on one occasion: I was once returning from Thanabawan by train. A Sikh, with a gun in his hand, dared to insult Nabi Isa ﷺ. The station was nearby. As I lifted up my stick to discipline him, the train arrived at the station. He jumped out of the carriage and hid himself in the room of the station master. I threatened him, “If you are a man, then come out. Why are you hiding like a woman?” I was not intimidated by his gun.¹⁵⁸

In Phulpur, a Muslim boy fell in love with a Hindu girl. Tensions were raised and there was fear that Hindu-Muslim riots would break out. The Hindus threatened to burn down all the Muslim houses. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, with his sword in his hand, stood in the middle of the area at the side of the well near the market. He wielded his sword and said, “As for the boy who is in love with your

¹⁵⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.95

¹⁵⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.95

¹⁵⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.96

girl, you may punish him and discipline him, if he refuses to desist. But if you even dare to cast a glance (with the evil intent of causing harm) at any innocent Muslim, then the sword of Abdul-Ghani will meet your throats.”¹⁵⁹

SubhaanAllah! It was from people like him from whom we gained some idea of the bravery of the Sahaabah. One, one Sahaabi could take on thousands of enemies. A small glimpse of that aspect of their lives had passed before our very own eyes.¹⁶⁰

Anger for the sake of Deen

Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ؒ would become very angry upon seeing things being done contrary to the teaching of Islam, and he would immediately rectify the wrong without any hesitation... Once, someone complained to Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ regarding Maulana Phulpuri’s anger. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ replied, “We require a hot-tempered person among us also, otherwise the enemy will devour us.”¹⁶¹

Efforts for the formation of Pakistan

Maulana ؒ narrates: My Shaykh was a very senior khalifah of Hakeemul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ. He was also the Secretary General of the Muslim League for the entire Azamgarh district. He was very active in this regard... He had an amazing attachment to Pakistan. He was overcome with this thought and worry that Pakistan should be formed. He would cry to Allah ﷻ in sajdah: O Allah, free us from the slavery (being subjects) of the disbelievers and make Pakistan an Islamic state. The cries and tears of our Elders are etched into the foundations of Pakistan.

¹⁵⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.96

¹⁶⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.96

¹⁶¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.115

Before Independence, for the purpose of working towards the establishment of Pakistan, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ convened a large jalsah (meeting) on behalf of the Muslim League in Azamgarh. Such a large congregation was not seen till then in the history of Azamgarh.

For this jalsah, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ left Phulpur after performing tahajjud salaah to fetch Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmaani ﷺ from Ghorakpur, as he was scheduled to deliver one lecture here. He left by car at the time of tahajjud, and returned at the time of Isha with Maulana Zafar Ahmad. He led the Isha salaah and then said, “Today, I performed Isha salaah with the wudhu that I had made at the time of tahajjud. I did not drink one drop of water for the entire day, as I did not want to have to stop to relieve myself.”

Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmaani, Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmaani and other great and senior representatives spoke in this jalsah. I was also present there. Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmaani ﷺ said in his lecture: In today’s times, the number of people who are religiously inclined (Deendaar) are few. Government will remain in the control of worldly-orientated politicians. If they remain under the guidance of the Ulama, they will safely reach the shore. If they will bypass and ignore the Ulama, they will not be able to reach the shore. He then recited a couplet which is unique and amazing and which explains the difference between the Ulama and the worldly leaders and politicians:

ہمیں کشتی نہیں ملتی انہیں ساحل نہیں ملتا

This means that the worldly politicians have at their disposal all worldly means and channels. The Ulama do not have this at their disposal. They are likened to people who do not own ships, but know the road. The people who own the ships are unaware of the road and course which they need to take. If the owners of the ships allow the knowledgeable ones to steer the ships in the right direction, the ships will reach the desired destination.”

On the night of that jalsah, I saw in a dream that my Shaykh was restlessly turning over in his bed. In the dream, I asked him why he is so restless. He replied, “Surah Anfaal is being revealed.” At that time, I was still studying basic Arabic grammar. I didn’t even know the meaning of Surah Anfaal. After waking up, I narrated my dream to him, and asked him why he was so restless and what was the meaning of Surah Anfaal. He replied, “Surah Anfaal makes mention of victory for the Muslims. Insha-Allah, Pakistan will now be established.” He then called his close friends and associates and asked me to repeat the dream in front of all of them.¹⁶²




Maulana Phulpuri’s ﷺ Migration to Pakistan

Maulana ﷺ narrates: Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ would cry day and night for the formation of Pakistan. He had an amazing attachment to Pakistan. He felt a great aversion towards those who opposed the formation of Pakistan. He had made great sacrifices for the formation of Pakistan. He felt a great aversion towards those who opposed the formation of Pakistan. Maulana had made great efforts for the formation of Pakistan. He openly engaged in the struggle towards the formation of Pakistan. After Pakistan was formed, The Congress party won the elections in India. Since my Shaykh was the general secretary of the Muslim League in Azamgarh, he was forced to go into hiding for a period of two months, after the government had issued a warrant of his arrest. The government wished to arrest him. Maulana proceeded to Haaji Akhtar of Sitapur, who was his disciple. He hid him secretly. Before coming to Pakistan, Maulana also stayed for six months in Kanpur.¹⁶³


¹⁶² Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.115-117

¹⁶³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.118

His love for Pakistan

Maulana  narrates: When my Shaykh, Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri  entered into the borders of Pakistan from India for the first time, the people at the Lahore border showed him the flag of India (behind him) and the flag of Pakistan, from where the land of Pakistan began. Maulana Phulpuri said, “Alhamdulillah! Even the sky and the land here seems completely different.” He also said, “In the land and sky of Pakistan, I can sense the nur (spiritual light) of the Kalimah” When the Pakistani soldiers noticed this group of fully-bearded men, they made salaam loudly. Seeing this exhibition of one of the signs of Islam, he became happy.... Some people said to Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri , “Stay over in India, so that you can be buried there.” His sons also said to him, “Father! Come over to India. Pass the last years of your life there. Your entire family are there.” Maulana replied, “I regard it as degrading to myself to even urinate in the direction of India.” Aah! His condition was that he preferred death here (in Pakistan, since it was a Muslim country). My Shaykh’s grave is in the graveyard of Paposnagar.

His grief and sadness over the evil conditions which later prevailed in Pakistan

Maulana  narrates: My Shaykh was full of excitement and happiness when he came here to Pakistan. But he would sometimes express remorse and regret when seeing the be-pardagi (immodest dressing, intermingling between males and females and violation of the laws of hijab) and other sinful activities, “Oh! What kind of Pakistan (pure land) is this? This seems to be Naa-Pakistan (an impure land due to the sins and evil prevalent there). Why is Pakistan converting to Naa-Pakistan?” But he had such a passion to engage in the struggle for Pakistan that he was ready to tolerate

thousands of evils, while being ready to engage the enemy face-on.¹⁶⁴

One hidden (takweeni) wisdom of Maulana Phulpuri's migration to Pakistan

Maulana ﷺ explained: May Allah ﷻ reward Maulana Nur Ahmad with the greatest of rewards. He was the one who had brought Maulana Shaykh Phulpuri ﷺ to Pakistan. By his blessings, my Shaykh journeyed to Pakistan. Otherwise, to leave one's home-land and move over to this desolate land without any material means was not easy. Maulana Nur Ahmad had fulfilled the rights of loyalty. He served Maulana Phulpuri in every manner possible, physically and monetarily. Due to this, my mother also came here, and I also managed to come. Had Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ not come to Pakistan, I would also not have come. Had I not come here, this khanqah would not have come into existence, nor would these books of mine which are being printed here have been printed so easily, for printing in India is not that easy. In India, great Ulama wish for their books to be printed, but are unable to do so due to lack of means. On the other hand, (the condition here is such that) the students and students' students of Ulama like myself will not prepare a manuscript of a book without it being printed (in a short time). The reality of the matter is that Allah wanted to bring me here. Other family members and close attendants of Maulana Phulpuri also came here to Pakistan. Their hearts could not adapt to Pakistan and they returned... (This was said on 16 January 1993)¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.119

¹⁶⁵ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.119

Seventeen Years in the company of a friend of Allah ﷻ

What caused Maulana ﷺ to link up with Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ?

Maulana ﷺ writes: From the beginning, I had great confidence in Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ. After he passed away, I was determined to take bay'ah at the hands of a person from his chain (i.e. one of his students or deputies). From childhood, I had resolved to choose such a Shaykh and guide who would be an embodiment of deep, fiery love of Allah ﷻ, absorbed in the love of Allah ﷻ, one who has a temperament of a mad lover who is ready to sacrifice all for his beloved, who at every moment is uneasy and restless due to his passionate and deep-rooted connection with Allah ﷻ, from whose every vein and fiber drips the love of Allah ﷻ, whose cries, pleas and tears bear testimony to the pangs of love which he carries in his heart. It was during that period in my life, when I did not yet have even a hair on my beard and moustache, that I composed my first couplet:

دردِ فرقت سے میرا دل اس قدر بیتاب ہے
جیسے تپتی ریت میں اک مابئی ہے
آب ہے

The pain of separation has made my heart so restless
That I am like a fish out of the water on burning sand

I thank my Allah millions of times that He had granted me such a friend of Allah as my Shaykh upon whom the effects of Allah's love were dominant. At that time, there were two other Khulafa (spiritual deputies) of Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ who resided in Ilahabad; Maulana (Muhammad) Isa ﷺ and Maulana Siraaj Ahmad ﷺ. But Allah ﷻ had written my share in Azamgarh.

I had even seen a dream in which I had seen myself taking bay'ah (pledging allegiance) at the hands of Maulana Sirraaj Ahmad. But, according to the advice of Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ علیہ, one should not complete importance to dreams alone. Benefit is based on having mutual munaasabah (compatibility). I had such a munaasabah with Maulana Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ. Therefore, I did not take bay'ah to Maulana Sirraaj Ahmad رحمہ اللہ علیہ. Had I done so, I think that I would have been spiritually ruined.¹⁶⁶

How did Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ come to know of Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ?

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ writes: The son-in-law of Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ who was studying with me at Tibbiyyah college provided me with brief eye-witness accounts of the mad love and the overwhelming love of Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ. I fell in love with his description. I was informed that he is overwhelmed by an amazing condition of love. When he utters the name 'Allah', tears well up in his eyes. His collar is always open and his hair is disheveled. He described Maulana to me as a person who had the nature of a lover of Allah, which led me to think that I will reach my objective by him. I found myself hoping that my munaasabah (compatibility) will be with him. Allah ﷻ assisted me from unseen means. I began a series of correspondence with Maulana via letter and chose him as my Murshid (spiritual guide). On the top of the first letter which I had written to him for my reformation, I wrote the following poem:

جان و دل اے شاہ قربانت کنم دل هدف را تیر مژگانت کنم

O King, I am ready to sacrifice my heart and soul for you!

I am just presenting my heart so that you can target (and shoot) it
with the arrow of the love of Allah which you possess.

¹⁶⁶ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.71

Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ responded: “It appears that your temperament is one of love. The lovers often traverse the path towards Allah ﷻ swiftly. Congratulations over the love that you have for your Shaykh, as that is the key to all the stages in this road to Allah ﷻ.” He then entered me into his bay’ah and instructed me with certain Azkaar (through correspondence).¹⁶⁷

The desire to meet Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ writes: After a period of correspondence, my heart was restless and yearning to meet Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ. But there were certain obstacles which prevented me from presenting myself in Phulpur, so I was unable to go there. I would find solace in looking towards the sky and stars in the late hours of the night. My restless heart would be calmed by seeing these signs of Allah’s power. Sometimes, I would look to the sky and say to Allah ﷻ:

اپنے ماننے کا پتا کوئی نشان تو بتا دے مجھ کو اے رب جہاں

Show me some sign, o Rabb of the worlds, which leads me to the place where I can find You.

I would find solace in looking towards the sky and stars in the late hours of the night and I would thus remain in the remembrance of my True Beloved for long periods on end. I would finally fall asleep when I was exhausted. After completing my studies in medicine, I returned home. There was a masjid a masjid in the woods which was at a distance from the outskirts of the village. It was in a desolate area. It was enshrouded in complete silence. I would make zikr in that masjid and would enjoy it greatly. My heart’s desire was only to remember my Beloved in the silence of the jungle and shed tears (in His love).¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.71

¹⁶⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.72

The first meeting with Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ writes: The day of Eidul-Adha was imminent. My father had already passed away. My mother was a widow. I said to my mother, “I have passed many Eids with you. On this one occasion, allow me to pass my Eid with one friend of Allah.” Allah ﷻ granted me the tawfiq (ability and inspiration) to say this... Some of my family members said, “Such a happy occasion should be celebrated at home.” I said, “Now I cannot manage to hold myself back any longer.” ... After receiving permission from my mother, I set out towards Phulpur. I reached Phulpur one hour before the Eid salaah on Eidul-Adha. I was overjoyed. It was as if joy and ecstasy was dripping from every pore of my body. It was an amazing sense of joy that I experienced. The thought that ‘this is the city of my Shaykh’ brought delight to my heart.

My Shaykh was engaged in recitation of the Qur’an at that time. It was 8 o’ clock in the morning. His hat (topi/qalansuwah) was placed on the ground. His hair was disheveled and his collar and buttons were open. On my first sight, I felt as if I was looking at Shaykh Shamsud-Deen Tabrezi ﷺ (the spiritual guide of Maulana Jalaalud-Deen Rumi ﷺ). Every inch of his skin contained signs of deep love for Allah. His hair was disheveled. His collar was hanging open. Every few moments, an ‘aah’ would escape from his lips. I witnessed the fulfillment of my heart’s wish; Allah ﷻ had granted me such a Shaykh out of His kindness who fitted the description that I had begged Allah for.¹⁶⁹

I stood nearby silently. I don’t know how Maulana sensed that someone is standing there. He turned around and looked at me. As our eyes met, I immediately said, “Assalaamu alaikum. Hadhrat! My name is Muhammad Akhtar. I have come from Partabgarh. I have

¹⁶⁹ Rashke-Awliyyaa Pg.73

the intention to remain here for forty days for my spiritual reformation.” I blurted out the above three sentences in one breath. I had read the above etiquette in the books of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ, which is that whoever comes should immediately state his name, purpose of his visit and the duration of his stay. Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ became very happy. He called out to his eldest son from his place, “Babu! Quickly bring some vermicelli. Bring something for him to eat.” He asked me to have something to eat and to take some rest. He then took a ghusl and donned the very turban which Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ had given to him as a gift. It also had some patches on it. I joined him as he proceeded to the Musalla. At the Musalla, some small children were making a noise. Maulana really scolded the wealthy attendees. He said, “Have you lost your senses?! You bring your small children here, who spoil everyone’s salaah.” This was the first time I heard his scolding. I said to myself, “An Aalim should be like this (i.e. fearless and brave).” People normally fear the rich. But my Shaykh didn’t seem to know the meaning of fear. Maulana then led the Eid salaah.¹⁷⁰

Change in dressing

When I arrived, I was dressed in a buttoned Sherwani (a stylish coat which reaches till the thighs), long pants and a (stylish) Turkish hat, looking like a typical college student (in those days). But I saw all Ulama seated around Maulana. I had not yet studied Arabic. I had come straight out from medical college. I had only studied a bit of Persian. When I saw the situation here, I immediately went to the shops in Phulpur and bought some white material. I had a longer qamees (kurta till below the knees) and shorter trousers till above the ankles sewn for me. I wore a hat (topi/qalansuwah) which was normally worn in the Khanqah. I stored my Turkish hat, long pants and Sherwani in a box. Wearing my qamees (kurta), I came in front of Maulana. Seeing me, he said, “Look at the condition this person

¹⁷⁰ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.74

came in. Suddenly, he is dressing like the Ulama.” He then said, “Maa shaa Allah. I can see nur (spiritual effulgence).”¹⁷¹

An etiquette for accepting invitations

Maulana asked me, “Will you join me to Azamgarh?” I replied, “I have come only for that (to accompany you).” My Shaykh had been invited by Judge Jaleel, a deputy (mujaaz-suhbah) of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ, for a meal. When we alighted from the rickshaw, I said, “Hadhrat, can I come back after a while?” He asked, “Where are you going?” I replied, “You were invited. I was not invited. I will eat some food in the restaurant and come back. I read in the works of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ that a person should not just join his Shaykh (or teacher) for meals uninvited. Maulana became extremely happy and said, “Maa sha Allah! This is what you should do. Wonderful! Congratulations! May Allah reward you.” He then said, “Just wait here for a few minutes. I am coming now.” Maulana went to Judge Jaleel and said something to him. Judge Jaleel came running to me and said, “Maulana! It will be your favour upon me if you have your meals at my place.” I asked Maulana, “Do you permit me to accept his invitation?” Maulana said, “Yes. Accept it.”¹⁷²

The benefit of sacrificing one’s youth for Allah ؒ

Maulana ؒ said: All praise and gratitude is due to Allah ؒ, that I took bay’ah (pledged allegiance) to Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ؒ at the age of eighteen... I sacrificed my youth for Allah and attained great enjoyment. My heart knows what Allah ؒ grants the one who sacrifices his youth for the Creator of youthfulness.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.74

¹⁷² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.75

¹⁷³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.77

Forty days in the company of his Shaykh

Maulana ﷺ said: Hakeemul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ advised that a mureed (disciple) should at least once in his life spend forty days with his Shaykh in such a manner that he never leaves his Shaykh. He should not even leave the khanqah for a cup of tea... Alhamdulillah, Akhtar, who is addressing you, spent forty days in the service of Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ at the age of eighteen on our very first meeting. It is not appropriate to tell you what I had done, but I say this to encourage my friends. Till today, I perceive the blessings of the forty days which I spent with my Shaykh on our first meeting. I went from Azamgarh to Aligarh (from the slums to the suburbs), but was never affected and influenced by any society. That forty days of companionship helped me at every stage of my life. Forty days in the company (of a friend of Allah) brings about a new spiritual life, and a (Islamic) temperament is formed within one. Besides traveling expenses, I too along with me forty rupees for my food; one rupee per day.¹⁷⁴ I said to Maulana, “Hadhrat! I am giving this to you, as I will have to eat meals by you.” Maulana took the money. He later returned all forty rupees, saying, “Keep this. Eat almonds from it.”

When forty days were complete, Shaykh Phulpuri ﷺ himself said to me, “Your forty days are over. You will leave tomorrow. Scratch my back for me.” I really scratched Maulana’s back with all my strength. At times (on other occasions) I would massage him with so much force that I would perspire, while others were shivering due to the cold during winter. He was a wrestler and his body was quite tough.¹⁷⁵

Thereafter Maulana ﷺ attached himself so strongly to his Shaykh that he spent the next seventeen years in his company.

¹⁷⁴ At that time, one rupee had a significant value.

¹⁷⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.77,78

The Test of Loyalty

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ narrates: When I was studying at Baytul-Uloom, the food would be served a bit late. Instead of making a formal request to the administration, the students decided to strike and refused to eat. All they needed to do was to respectfully submit to the teachers that we get hungry, so can you please arrange for the food to be served earlier. But they refused to eat and began to strike. They were three hundred students. This habit of striking had reached the madrasahs from the colleges. Was this ever the practice of the friends of Allah? Public money and public donations are wasted. How can this ever be permissible? Anyhow, I thought to myself, “What should I do? If I eat, three hundred students will beat me up.” The students knew that I had a close relationship with Maulana Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ and that he loved me a lot. So I finally decided not to eat. Opposing three hundred students is quite difficult. All would decide to beat me up for eating. I decided not to eat just to save myself from their harm. I was not part of any of their discussions. However, because I was very close to my Shaykh (who was the principal), some teachers had certain reservations about me, as they suspected that I was carrying tales about them to him. That day, they found an opportunity.

Maulana Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ was informed that the students were striking. He was also given the news that Hakeem Akhtar had also taken part in the strike. He arrived at the madrasah. He scolded the students very loudly. The three hundred students were all called up and made to stand in the field. He lifted up his stick known as Abdul-Jabbar. He said, “You worthless ones! I will send you from here as corpses. I will give you such a hiding that you will land up in hospital. Understand. We don’t need you. If I find one pious student to teach, I will teach him. Otherwise, I am prepared to lock the madrasah doors. Our object is to please Allah. We don’t need such unworthy students.” When he lifted his stick, the students began to cry and

plead for forgiveness. He said, “We can’t forgive you so easily. You will all be required to write an apology, in which you will promise to humble yourselves at the feet of your teachers and that you will never behave in such a foolish manner like college students again. All wrote their appeals for forgiveness, and Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ signed it. They were all forgiven. I also filled in a form, and thought that I was also forgiven.

But my test started when I went to Phulpur. I would go every Thursday night. When I reached there, Maulana ﷺ said, “Oh. So you too had taken part in the strike? Go back right now! You have no permission to even make musaafahah (shake hands).” At ten o clock that night, I returned from Phulpur. I had lost my senses. I could hardly eat. The world seemed dark and gloomy to me. The earth and skies narrowed and became constricted for me. Ask that person who has been blessed with the gift of love what grief he experiences over the anger and displeasure of his Shaykh.

I wrote a letter to him, pleading for forgiveness. The reply was, “You are not allowed to visit me in Phulpur. You are not allowed to sit in my lessons when I come to Baytul Uloom. (He ﷺ would come daily to teach Sahih Bukhari). You are not allowed to make salaam to me, nor to shake hands with me.” Understand! What severe restrictions! From then on, every letter I sent would come back with no reply. This was another test. I would receive no answer, but the envelope would be sent back to me. However, Maulana ﷺ would not return it by post. He would give it by hand to the vice-principal. He knew that I was a poor student. Where will I be able to afford to buy another envelope. He knew that I did not have that much money. So he would return the envelope without writing any reply. Two months passed like this, in which I sent 8 letters to him. I would send one letter a week to him. I received no reply, nor any salaam or the chance to speak to him. But I didn’t give up hop. I would cry to Allah ﷻ. I would only eat as much as I required to live.

The enjoyment of life was finished. I would cry continuously. I had shrivelled till I became like a thorn.

After two months, Maulana ﷺ replied. He did not reply on the letter, but instead sent a verbal reply through the vice-principal, who was asked to tell Akhtar that he is now allowed to make salaam from far. He is still not allowed to make musaafahah, and he is still not allowed to sit in my lessons. I was grateful for that also. That too was something. I would then make salaam from a distance, and Maulana ﷺ would reply.



I continued seeking forgiveness for the next two months. I would send one letter weekly. This totalled another eight letters. I was then allowed to make salaam and musaafahah (shake hands). I was still not allowed to sit in his lessons. Shortly thereafter, I was also given permission to sit in his lessons. But I was still not allowed to visit him on Thursday nights in Phulpur. This was after four months.

I continued writing letters, pleading for forgiveness. Two months later, Maulana wrote back that I could now come to Phulpur. It was after six months that my punishment ended and I was completely forgiven. On receiving such a punishment, someone may think that there are many friends of Allah. It's not that this is the only friend of Allah ﷻ in the entire world. But I thank Allah ﷻ who granted me this favour that I had never been unloyal and unfaithful to the friends of Allah. Alhamdulillah. This is the kindness and favour of Allah.


It was this which Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ referred to when he said to the grand Mufti of Pakistan Mufti Muhammad Shafi' and Dr. Abdul-Hayy Aarifi ﷺ: "I had thoroughly grinded him."¹⁷⁶


¹⁷⁶ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.128-130


Simple but sincere gifts

Maulana  says: When I was still studying, I had even gifted Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri  a miswaak from a neem (aloe) tree. Where does a student ever have money to spend? I sometimes would buy a few cents of elaichi (cardamom seeds). Sometimes, I would give him as a gift a few mud lumps which he could use for istinja. He would smile and accept it.¹⁷⁷

Serving his Shaykh

Maulana  attached himself strongly to his Shaykh for seventeen years. He spent ten of those years serving his Shaykh in the most remarkable manner.

Maulana  narrates: For twelve years, I listened to my Shaykh while he would be engaged in zikr. I would wait for him to utter the name ‘Allah’. When he would do so, I would say ‘Allah’ in my heart, synchronizing the zikr of my heart with the zikr of his tongue. At that time, my only work was to synchronize the zikr of my heart with the zikr of his tongue. It never occurred that he was in the masjid, while I was lying down elsewhere or talking to someone else. I would just sit in one corner, with his shoes and other items in my hands. When he would leave the masjid, I would fit on his shoes for him.¹⁷⁸

Maulana  narrates: Massaging my Shaykh required a lot of strength and energy. I thank Allah that I served him during the day and night, at home and on journey. If he did not eat, I would not eat alone. I would only eat when he would. The world is a witness that Akhtar remained with his Shaykh for ten years in such a condition that he never ate breakfast. From the time of Tahajjud till one o'clock in the afternoon, I would not drink one drop of water, nor

¹⁷⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.82

¹⁷⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.134

would a single grain of food enter my stomach. I would really feel the pangs of hunger. But my Shaykh would not eat breakfast on account of old age, so how could I eat? He had even asked his family to send breakfast for me daily, but I refused. Sending food for me daily would be a cause of inconvenience for my Shaykh's family. Instead, my breakfast would consist of salaatul-ishraq, salaatud-dhuha, tilaawah and zikr, as well as watching my Shaykh and hearing his cries, his pleas to Allah ﷻ and his du'as. But what can I tell you? I would get such enjoyment in the company of my Shaykh that I feel that enjoyment in my heart. I would sense such anwaar (spiritual effulgence) that till today, my heart and soul can still sense those anwaar. On those starry nights when I would sit with my Shaykh in the moonlight and remember Allah ﷻ, I would enter into a different world of a wonderful spiritual atmosphere and ecstasy.

We would sleep at 12 or 1 in the morning. I would wake up at 3 o'clock with my Shaykh. It never happened in that entire period of time that he woke up and I was unable to awaken. When he would wake up, he would clear his throat, and I would wake up immediately. My eyes would open on just hearing the sound of his voice. He was 70 years old at that time. I passed seventeen years of my youth in this manner; I was responsible for filling water for him to make istinja, helping him to make wudhu, washing his clothing and arranging water for him to bath. I would continue sitting for as long as he was engaged in ibaadah-worship. When he engaged in ibaadah-worship, I would move back a little and sit waiting so that there may be no disturbance to his ibaadah-worship. My Shaykh would perform tahajjud, make zikr of the name of Allah 12000 times, recite 5 ajzaa (paras) of the Qur'an, and complete the recitation of the entire Munaajaat Maqbool and Qaseedah Burdah. He would engage in worship for approximately seven hours daily, from tahajjud till midday.

There were no delicacies available by Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ. At one o'clock in the afternoon, we would both partake of lunch, the Shaykh and the disciple together. Maulana Phulpuri possessed a unique state of love, absorption and ecstasy. There was no toilet or bathroom at his residence. One had to go to the jungle to relieve himself. There was a pond close by for making wudhu and ghusl, but it was filled with leeches. During the winter days, the water would become ice-cold like snow. When I would take my first dive in, my body would go numb for a short while. It felt as though scorpions were stinging for as long as one minute. I had to bath quickly. Whilst bathing, the leeches had to be removed with one hand so that they did not attach themselves to any part of the body. There was no toilet there. But my Shaykh also lived like this. It was not as if he had something built solely for his comfort. He too had to go to the jungle to relieve himself. There was a well close to the masjid, but he ﷺ would not use water from there. It was used by the Hindus and other non-muslims, who would also draw water from it. He would say, "Although using water from here is completely permissible, my heart is unable to make zikr after using this water. So I would daily fetch water for my Shaykh from a stream one mile away, even in the intense heat."¹⁷⁹

Meer Sahib ﷺ narrates: During one journey, I met Janaab Ilyas Qurayshi who had come to Karachi from India. He narrated an incident and said that he witnessed this incident with his own eyes. He says, "In 1958, Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ visited our house in Delhi. Hadhrat Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ﷺ was also with him. Hadhrat Hakeem Akhtar was in the prime of his youth. It was extremely cold. My mother was alive and was quite old too. My father had already passed away. Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ said to me, "Tell your mother to heat the wudhu water for tahajjud and give it to us at isha time. She should not take the

¹⁷⁹ Rashke-Awliya Pg.78-79

trouble to wake up at night. Hakeem Akhtar will take care of that.” The water was heated on a daily basis in a utensil made from metal and given to them. Hakeem Akhtar would wrap it in a dark brown blanket and keep it on his side. He would throw a blanket over himself (and the water) so that through his body heat and the heat of the blanket, the water would not become cold. He would keep it like this for the entire night. I do not know how he slept. But when Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ would wake up for tahajjud, the water would be warm and Hakeem Sahib would assist him to make wudhu. Maulana remained in our house for many days and I witnessed this scenario daily. I would be astonished. Really, it is the miracle of love that facilitates even the most difficult tasks.”
180

While living with his Shaykh, Maulana ﷺ had only a single pair of clothes. When it became dirty, he would wash it and wear it again. Due to excessive use, the knee section would become worn out. He would then patch it and continue using it. During that period, he would wear a lungi (as his lower garment). He would conduct himself so humbly in front of his Shaykh that people mistook him for a menial worker who was employed to serve Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ. They did not even know that he was an aalim (a scholar of Deen).¹⁸¹

Maulana ﷺ narrates: On one occasion, my Shaykh had attended the jalsah of a Madrasah which was about 5 miles away from Phulpur. It was twelve o'clock midnight (when the jalsah ended), and my Shaykh had not eaten anything. I thought to myself that he will go to sleep hungry. Without asking him, I quietly got onto my bicycle and rode to Phulpur which was five miles away. Had I asked him whether I should bring for him food from Phulpur, he would have

¹⁸⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.79-80

¹⁸¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.80

refused and said that there is no need to take that much of trouble. There was the danger of being held up by robbers on the road. Therefore, I took my stick with me, thinking that if I happen to die on the road, I will die while serving one friend of Allah, I will die as a Shaheed (martyr) and Maulana Phulpuri will make du'a and cry for me, which is all that I need."¹⁸²

Relationship with his Shaykh

Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said, "Akhtar remains attached and close to me day and night like a breastfeeding child remains attached to its mother."

Maulana رحمۃ اللہ علیہ explained: I could not manage to stay away from my Shaykh for even a short while. Actually, I was unable to do so... If, for any reason, I had to go far away from him, I would become feverish, the effects of which could be even seen in my urine.¹⁸³

At the same time, Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had special affection and love for Maulana رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Sometimes, it happened that Maulana needed to go somewhere. If Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ called for him and did not find him, he would become restless like a mother who was searching for her child. He would say, "Call him quickly! Where has he gone off to?"¹⁸⁴

The extent of his sacrifices in serving his Shaykh

Habeebul-Hasan Khan Sherwaani, a wealthy chief and a khalifah of Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ once said to Maulana, "The

¹⁸² Summarized from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.133

¹⁸³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.81

¹⁸⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.82

sacrifices and difficulties you underwent when serving your Shaykh was such that we would not be able to bear it for even one day.”¹⁸⁵

Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq رحمہ اللہ علیہ said to his younger brother Asraarul-Haq, “What I had read about in the books about the extent to which disciples who lived centuries ago used to serve their spiritual mentors, I saw it in Hakeem Akhtar.”¹⁸⁶ He once said to Maulana in Jeddah, “The great service of Islam which is being taken from you is on account of your service of Maulana Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ.”¹⁸⁷

One great cause for barakah in knowledge

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ said: I would do whatever Maulana Phulpuri would instruct me to do. The Ulama thought my knowledge had all faded away. He does not teach, nor does he do anything else. His only work is to massage the head of his Shaykh with oil. Today, those people are witnessing the miracle of my Shaykh. Alhamdulillah. Understanding these kitaabs is not easy. Many Ulama are unable to grasp the meaning of the text of Ruhul-Ma’aani. What I am saying is that I am convinced that serving the friends of Allah is most beneficial in developing Imaan, Yaqeen and barakah (blessings) in knowledge.¹⁸⁸

How he entered into the permanent service of his Shaykh

Maulana رحمہ اللہ علیہ narrated: Maulana Phulpuri رحمہ اللہ علیہ was staying over in Azamgarh at the house of Dr. Abdul-Qadir. I left my in-laws house in Kotlah at eleven pm and came to the Khanqah in Phulpur. Upon reaching, I came to realize that my Shaykh and Maulana Abrarul-Haq had both went to Azamgarh, which was between 30 to 40 miles from Phulpur. I became so uneasy and restless that I could not stay

¹⁸⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.131

¹⁸⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.131

¹⁸⁷ Tazkirah Majma’ul Bihaar

¹⁸⁸ Summarized from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.134

here. I didn't sleep here, even though a sleeping place was available for me. I immediately went to the station. I stayed awake for the entire night at the platform, and caught the next train which was on its way to Azamgarh at three in the morning. I reached Azamgarh in one and a half hours. There was still an hour left for the Fajr azaan. I quietly entered and sat down next to the bed on which Maulana Phulpuri was sleeping. Maulana Abrarul-Haq was sleeping nearby. The sleep of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was such that his eyes would open every now and again. He would make zikr of the name of Allah and fall off to sleep again. It was as if the zikr of Allah had become his nourishment. The zikr of Allah was the basis of his life. As soon as I heard him saying 'Allah, Allah', I said, "Assalaamu alaikum." He asked in surprise, "Oh! How did you reach here at such a time? It is still night. It is not even morning yet." I submitted, "I came to Phulpur looking for you. Since I didn't find you there, I was restless. I took the next train and came directly here." I then recited the following couplet:

صبا به لطف بگو آن غزال رعنا را که سر بکوه و بیابان تو دادی مارا

O morning breeze! Kindly inform the deer who we run after, searching for it through the forests and the mountains that you made me wander around in restlessness through the mountains and forests, and then too I was unable to find you.

Upon hearing this, Maulana Phulpuri was overcome with a state of ecstasy. Maulana Abrarul-Haq was very touched by this. He said to Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, "Since Akhtar has such great love for you that he is restless without you and he notes down all your advices, can't we make arrangements for him to stay permanently with you?" Maulana Phulpuri was pleased with the idea, but asked, "How will that be possible?" He replied, "We will send a monthly allowance for him from Hardoi." Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ asked, "Will you really stay with me permanently?" I replied, "Hadhrat! What does a blind man want, except two eyes. What does a hungry man want, except bread."

I immediately moved over to Phulpur with my wife and children. I closed my medical practice. Every month, Maulana Abrarul-Haq would send 60 rupees for me from Hardoi. This continued for many years. It was a miracle of my Shaykh that it was sufficient for all our expenses. The mother of Maulana Mazhar owned some farms. The wheat and grains (which we consumed at home) were our own. For tea-leaves, milk, sugar, etc. 60 rupees was more than enough at that time. It was from that time that Maulana Abrarul-Haq had directed his special kindness towards me. At that time, he was not my Shaykh. He had established an islaahi relationship with my Shaykh. He would treat me as his contemporary. We would both take lessons in the art of stick-fighting from Mualna Phulpuri. He would attack and we would defend. Sometimes, we would attack and Maulana Phulpuri would defend. He would teach us how to defend ourselves and how to attack.¹⁸⁹

Involuntary Mujaahadah in the service of Maulana Abdul Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ wrote: During the long period of time which I had spent in the service of my Shaykh, I was unable to accomplish voluntary mujaahadah to the extent which I should have. But the grace of Allah made arrangements for my spiritual progress from the unseen through the process of involuntary mujaahadah. The extent of those involuntary difficulties was that my heart reached my throat. The effect of those involuntary difficulties was that I was blessed with a broken heart brimming with love. In my undersrtanding, this is such a grweat bounty that I am not prepared to exchange it for the kingdom of the seven continents... However, I feel it inappropriate to explain the details of those forms of mujaahadah. My poetry contains some subtle indications to those conditions of mine...¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Summarized from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.132

¹⁹⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.120

The love of his Shaykh prevented him from earning

Maulana ؒ explained: I had a great liking for Maulana Phulpuri ؒ. Wherever he would be, I would find my way there, even if it happened to be twenty miles or more away. I would try to spend my days and nights in his service. I had no means of income. I opened a medical surgery on three different occasions (to treat patients), but sold it on all three occasions without any profit and went back into the service of my Shaykh. In Karachi too, in the area Azizabaad, I opened a large surgery. However, I was unable to bear separation from Maulana Phulpuri ؒ. So I donated it to another Hakeem. From then onwards, Maulana Abrarul-Haq would send a monthly allowance for me from Hardoi. Some of my Elders advised me, “What will happen to you after your Shaykh passes away. How will your wife and children live? (You have made no arrangements for their future)” They wanted me to leave my Shaykh and practice medicine. They loved me and there was no shortage in their sincerity. I didn’t answer them, as they were my Elders. But I thought to myself, “You have spent your entire life in the service of your Shaykh. Now, when he is at the end of his life, how can I leave him and open a medical practice. Maulana will think that Akhtar turned out to be so disloyal. After staying with me for years, he now leaves me, when I have no one to care for me, I am immobile and my children are all in India.”¹⁹¹

The jealous ones

Certain jealous people caused me great harm. Wherever I would go with Maulana Phulpuri ؒ, he would sit at the back of the cart, with his back facing towards me. Those who were jealous would come in front of me and would make funny faces, wink their eyes, point to me and say, “




مالٹا چوسی مرغی کھائی شیخ کو چھوڑ کر کابے کو جائی

¹⁹¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.123

(Because of his Shaykh) He enjoys and he feasts upon chicken, that's why he never leaves the Shaykh to go anywhere.

When I would walk with my Shaykh, many people would whistle at me... When I would eat with my Shaykh, they would stand at a distance and point to me and they would say, "Enjoy yourself now with your Shaykh. When his eyes close (at his demise), you will then see (what will happen to you)." This was not a matter of one or two days. This was the treatment I received for fifteen years, day and night. Those who were jealous taunted me for my entire life, "We will see what happens to him after his Shaykh." Today, they have seen what my condition is. Even after my Shaykh, I still enjoy and I am not only still eating chicken, but Allah has granted me such blessings that I enjoy the opportunity of feeding chicken to others as well.¹⁹²

The value of serving the Friends of Allah - an amazing proof

Maulana  said: Allah  will not let one's efforts to serve his Friends go in vain... The example of serving them is like that of a wealthy owner of a factory, who has only one dear son. One worker devotes himself to serving this son. The owner may object to the tasks of any other worker in the factory, demanding to know why he had done a certain task. But he will not object to the service which this worker is rendering to his dear son. Serving the friends of Allah can be compared to loving and serving the child of a person. The entire creation is the family of Allah  (as stated in a Hadith). From the creation, those who are special servants of Allah are the most prominent ones from His family. Therefore, serving them will be

¹⁹² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.123

most appreciated by Allah. My entire life's earning is only this; I served the friends of Allah.¹⁹³

Du'as for those who caused him harm

In the Khanqah, I had brought my own personal mattress, bedding, blanket, pillow, shoes, etc. In India, the cold during winter was severe. If one did not wear leather socks during winter, one's feet would crack and bleed. At twelve or one in the morning, after serving my Shaykh, when I would come to sleep, I would find that someone has taken away my mattress, my bedding and my pillow. Outside the masjid, there was a spot where some grass would be kept. I would lie down on the grass and throw some grass over myself (to gain some warmth). I would see snakes and scorpions moving past me. But I never once complained to Maulana Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. I would do nothing about it. I would remain silent and bear it patiently. Those who were jealous of me would take away my mattress, bedding and pillow and toss it away in different directions. At that time, I composed these couplets:

جفائیں سہ کر دعائیں دینا یہی تھا مجبور دل کا شیوہ زمانہ گزرا اسی طرح سے
تمہارے در پر دلِ حزیں کا

Bearing all harassment and giving du'as This is the habit of a heart
which is bound (by love)

The heart of a grieved person at your threshold Passed a long time
in this condition

Thorns are inseparable from roses

My heart had no other option, for I could not leave my Shaykh. When love is formed, leaving the beloved and absconding becomes difficult. If I began fighting, I would have been expelled from Phulpur. I never cursed those people, nor did I ever complain about them to my Shaykh. I feared that if I complain about them, I may be told, "If you do not have the ability to bear it, then go somewhere

¹⁹³ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.124

else.” A true disciple and lover will never be one who curses those who stay at the khanqah of his Shaykh. The thorns which throng around a rose should not be cursed. They are the guards of the rose. However, I did once mention my grievances to Maulana Abrarul-Haq رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, “I am staying with Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. There are some people who are jealous of me. They cannot stand it that I remain close to Hadhrat. They harm me and inconvenience me in different ways, hoping that I will leave and abscond. But I will not run away. But I am asking your mashwarah (suggestion) regarding this situation.” At that time, I had not pledged bay’ah to him. Actually, he was my peer-bhai (fellow disciple of the same Shaykh). Maulana Abrarul-Haq رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said, “Look! If those jealous ones are harming you, do not ever leave Maulana Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Wherever roses are found, thorns will also be found. If you wish to drink the milk of a cow, you will have to bear the urine and dung of the cow as well. If you want to remain in the company of the Ahlullah, you will have to face some difficulties, hardships and grief.” Hearing this, I was consoled. The words of the Ahlullah contain miraculous effects.¹⁹⁴

Those who were jealous of me even plotted to kill me. Sufi Ghulam Sarwar, who was also my peer-bhaai and the khalifah of Maulana Abrarul-Haq رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, said to me, “Their jealousy has intensified to the extent that they are plotting to kill you. Your life is now in danger. You should now rather leave Shaykh.” I replied, “Sarwar, my brother! Life will have to come to an end one day. But if I leave now, Maulana Phulpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ will think in his heart that Akhtar was unfaithful and disloyal, for he abandoned me in my old-age and left. Whatever has to happen to me will happen. I am ready to bear anything and I am even prepared to give up my life, but I cannot bear to take upon myself the shame of being unfaithful and disloyal to my Shaykh... I have the greatest degree of hatred for

¹⁹⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.124,125

unfaithfulness. And then you expect me to be unfaithful to a friend of Allah, and more so my own Shaykh.” By the Taufiq of Allah, from the time I met my Shaykh till the end, I never left him in the lurch. For sixteen years, I served my Shaykh day and night. Finally, the soul of my Shaykh was lifted right in front of me.¹⁹⁵

A discussion with Shaytaan

I was bound by love. I was unable to leave the company of my Shaykh. Shaytaan had whispered into my heart, “What they are saying is true. Where will you go after Hadhrat passes away?” I replied to Shaytaan, “Yes, my Shaykh will definitely pass away one day. By My Master, for whose pleasure I am serving my Shaykh, is alive and will always remain alive. He will take care of me.” I ask you; am I not receiving food after the demise of my Shaykh? Has my Allah, my Provider and Nurturer, for whose sake I passed my life in the company of my Shaykh, forgotten me? My Shaykh was not a family member of mine. He was not from the same city as mine. I loved him only for the sake of Allah, for he had sacrificed his day and night for Allah and was a true lover of Allah. If I loved this lover of Allah, it was only for the sake of Allah. I knew that Allah would not let my efforts go to waste and go in vain, In-sha Allah. I thank Allah that I am still eating food till today, and Allah is also feeding my friends at my table-cloth.

Shaytaan then said to me, “But this world is Darul-Asbaab (a world of adopting means). When you have nothing in your possession, how will you eat and live?” I replied, “If nothing else, I should manage to get some chick-peas, which I can roast (over a fire) and munch on.” He said to me, “And where will you get clothes to wear? Will you move about naked? And what will you do without shoes on your feet?” I replied, “My Aurah (private area which is compulsory to conceal) is from my navel till me knees. I will wear an izaar (a

¹⁹⁵ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.125

lungi). My aurah will be covered, and my salaah will be valid. If I can't afford shoes, I will wear wooden planks as my shoes, and if I can't even afford that, I will move around barefoot.”¹⁹⁶

On one occasion, I made du'a to Allah in a condition of idhtiraar (absolute distress). I placed my head in sajdah and cried uncontrollably. At that time, there was no person present there. Only the heavens and the earth witnessed it... Those who were jealous of me were threatening to hand me over to the police. If it was one drop, it could have been hidden under the sand. But it was a river of blood (flowing from my heart). How much of a river can be concealed by sand? Has sand ever covered a flowing river anywhere in the world? I thank Allah that all those jealous ones are today regretting, after realizing that their efforts all failed.¹⁹⁷

The preservation of the Uloom (divinely-inspired knowledge) of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ would record his spiritual mentor's knowledge, his discussions pertaining to recognition of Allah and his statements with great love and effort. Maulana himself writes: After recording the advices and statements of my Shaykh, when I would read it out to him, he would say, “Maa shaa Allah” and become extremely happy. On one occasion, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ said to another disciple of his, “Akhtar understands records my deep and intricate topics well and he then records it. Maa shaa Allah, he has been blessed with the understanding of Deen.” On one occasion, I was reading out some discussions from Ma'rifat-e-Ilaahiyyah which I had recorded (from the advices of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ) in a gathering. Mufti Muhammad Shafi' Uthmaani, the Grand-Mufti of Pakistan, was also present there. He said to my Shaykh, “Hadhrat! There is an amazing effect in the pen of Akhtar. He records your

¹⁹⁶ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.126

¹⁹⁷ Summarized from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.126-127

intricate discussions in a manner which is easy to grasp.” Maulana Phulpuri ؒ turned to me, pointed his finger at me and said, “Beware! Don’t ever consider it to be your achievement! This is the blessings of a Shaykh.” He then turned back to Mufti Muhammad Shafi’ and said, “Why wouldn’t there be effect? We had thoroughly grinded him.”¹⁹⁸

Meer Sahib ؒ writes: The various aspects of knowledge with which Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ was inspired with was presented to the public by Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar ؒ. In the lifetime of Maulana Phulpuri ؒ, Ma’rifat-e-Ilaahiyyah, Ma’iyyat-e-Ilaahiyyah, Baraahin-e-Qaati’ah, Sharaab ki Hurmat, Malfoozaat-e-Hadhrat Shah Abdul-Ghani and other books reached the Ummah from Maulana’s pen.



After completing Ma’rifat-e-Ilahiyyah, Maulana sent it to the publishers for printing. Those who were jealous of him rushed over to the printers and had his name removed from the book. They were very happy and amused that they had obliterated his efforts. Maulana said, “It is all right. Allah ﷻ is watching.” After some time, Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ؒ enquired regarding the compiler of this book, as he was aware that Maulana Phulpuri ؒ had not compiled any book during his lifetime.¹⁹⁹ Maulana explained, “Hadhrat! This book was compiled from beginning to end by Akhtar, no one else.” Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ enquired, “Then why did you not write your name?” Maulana then explained what had happened and the joy which his antagonists had expressed.





¹⁹⁸ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.127

¹⁹⁹ The only book which he may have compiled is a book by the title ‘Usoolul Wusool’ regarding the principles of Tasawwuf, upon the instruction of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ. This book was translated into English by the title ‘A Treatise on the Principles of Tasawwuf’ by Haafiz Yusuf Gundiwalla and published by Akhtari Publications Krugersdorp.


This book was written in the condition of wudhu and after performing two rak'ats of salaah.²⁰⁰

Becoming his Shaykh's step-son

Maulana  writes: My Shaykh was a great Aalim (scholar). By the favour and grace of Allah, he was also my teacher. He had taught me most of Sahih Bukhari. He was also my step-father. This is a fact which is known to only a few people. After his respected first wife passed away, he married my mother. She passed away about four years after I had built up contact with my Shaykh. One day, he said to me, "It is very difficult without a wife. Sometimes, one is afflicted with certain sickness. Only a wife can serve one in (private matters like) urinating and passing stool. I consulted with my mother regarding marriage. (Once she agreed) I then put the proposal before Maulana Phulpuri . He became very happy."²⁰¹

Meer Sahib  narrates: Ummul-Mu'mineen (The Mother of the believers) Sayyidah Safiyyah  had seen in a dream that the moon had fallen in her lap. Rasulallah  married her soon thereafter. This was the interpretation of her dream. The respected mother of Maulana had also seen a dream in which she saw the moon falling into her lap. This was a glad-tiding that she would soon be wedded off to a man who was a true inheritor of Rasulallah .²⁰²

Criticism over the marriage of Maulana's mother

In India, due to the influence of Hindu culture, the marriage of a widow is frowned upon and is regarded as very evil. This is more so amongst those Muslims who live in the villages. Maulana's nephew narrated that when he returned to his home-town some time after marrying off his mother to Maulana Phulpuri , his family

²⁰⁰ Summarized from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.130

²⁰¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.82

²⁰² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.82

members scolded him harshly and made hurtful statements. He did not respond. He immediately proceeded to the masjid, where he made wudhu, performed two rak'ats of salaah and fell into sajdah. Hardly an hour had passed when a certain woman fell to the ground, a child was gripped with severe fever and some elderly couple fell extremely sick. The family went into a state of panic. They rushed over to Maulana and humbly begged his forgiveness. This was a miracle which was manifested at this hands.²⁰³

The final days and conditions of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ writes: Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ came over to Karachi in 1960. He passed away in 1963. The people of Karachi had only seen him when he had become very weak. I thank Allah ﷻ millions of times that Allah ﷻ had granted me the opportunity of seeing his condition for many years; his miracles, his worship, his crying and sobbing like a baby who cries and holds on to its mother, to the extent that his cries in one corner of the masjid could be heard from a distance away.

Ghulaam Sarwar Saahib, a special attendant and lover of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, had repeatedly requested Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ to come over to Lahore and to stay for a while in Lahore. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ finally consented and said to him, "I have intended to put up by you for two or three months." Brother Ghulaam Sarwar was overjoyed. On the 23 April 1963, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ left for Lahore with my respected mother. The weather and climate in Lahore agreed with Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, as a result of which his health improved day by day and his weakness which he had experienced in Karachi was now replaced by strength. Many sincere seekers began attending the majaalis (gatherings), where Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ would share different pearls of knowledge and

²⁰³ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.83

recognition. But by the end of May, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ asked Brother Ghulaam Sarwar to take him back to Karachi, as his heart is repeatedly yearning to return to Karachi. Brother Ghulaam Sarwar, his father and his other family members were hesitant to let Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ leave their house after such a short stay, so they individually requested Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ to stay a bit longer, to which he consented, considering their sincere love for him.

On the 9th Muharram, 2 June 1963, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ went to the bathroom to wash his legs, as he had some doubt that some urine droplets may have splashed onto them. It was the will of Allah ﷻ that he slipped, due to which he fractured his left hip-bone. The doctors advised that since it was a minor fracture, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ only required two months of complete bed rest for recovery. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was now confined to his bed, where he was instructed to even pass urine and stool. Any movement would cause him extreme pain. He would frequently let out an ‘aah’ out of extreme pain.

I was in Karachi at that time. He would often ask Ghulaam Sarwar Sahib, “Has Hakeem Akhtar not come?” I had already sent a letter to him, requesting permission to come over. He would therefore ask every now and again if I had arrived. Ghulaam Sarwar Saahib had sent a telegram in reply, asking me to come over. On the 6th June, I reached Lahore by the evening. Ghulaam Sarwar Saahib said to me, “Hakeem Sahib! Hadhrat is frequently asking about you and is waiting anxiously for you.” When I saw Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ in such pain and restlessness, my heart was overtaken by an overwhelming sense of grief. To comfort me, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ said, “There is othing to worry about. All this is the mercy of Allah.” I felt a great sense of relief when I heard this.

Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ was extremely weak, and would every now and again fall into a state of semi-consciousness. It was most probably on the 10th June that he fell unconscious for 24 hours continuously. When he regained consciousness, he asked, “Hakeem Akhtar! Did you make the necessary arrangements for kafn (enshrouding) and burial?” I asked, “Hadhrat! Whose kafn and burial should I arrange?” He replied, “The one who has died.” I submitted, “Hadhrat! Maa shaa Allah, all the people here are alive and well. Nobody has died.” He said, ‘Are you telling me the truth?’ I said, “I am telling you the absolute truth.” He asked, ‘Didn’t I die just now?’ I replied, “No. Hadhrat, by the grace of Allah, you are still alive and well.”

He fell unconscious again. After about 3 hours, at almost 8 pm, he again said to me, “Didn’t I die yet?” I replied in the negative. He asked me, “What is the proof that I am still alive?” I remained silent. He himself said, “The proof that I am still alive is that I am still reading this du’a: *اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ ذَنْبِيْ وَوَسِّعْ لِيْ فِيْ دَارِيْ وَبَارِكْ لِيْ فِيْ رِزْقِيْ*. I asked him if he would write down this du’a. He asked Ghulaam Sarwar sahib for a pencil and wrote with his own hands *اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ*. His hands then began shaking and he was unable to write clearly. (When Dr Abdul-Hayy ﷺ heard of the above incident, he commented, “The realm of the Barzakh was being exposed to Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ at that time.”)

By the 15th June, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ had recovered significantly from his injury. He asked to be taken back to Karachi. Habeebul-Hasan Khan Sherwaani, who had come to visit, asked Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ if he wished to return to India. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ refused. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ finally returned to Karachi on 26 June. Here too, he was instructed by the doctor to remain in bed and pass urine and stool there. After three weeks, the doctor finally allowed him to make an effort to walk a little. But practicing on this recommendation was quite difficult, due to his extreme weakness.

His chest was filled with phlegm, which caused him difficulty in breathing and a wheeze which left him in a disturbing condition. Initially, he stayed in a flat on Burns rd. for purposes of treatment. On the instruction of some Elders, it was decided that it would be more comfortable for him if he is treated from home, putting out trust in Allah ﷻ. He was subsequently taken to his home in Naazimabad. By Allah's grace, he began to greatly benefit the attendants of his gatherings with his precious advices.

His last gathering was on 13th August, a Saturday, from Asr to Maghrib. In his talk, he severely reprimanded and rebuked the Ulama-Soo (evil scholars) and benefitted those who attended with beautiful advices. Near the time of Isha, he was visited by Maulana Nur Ahmad, the Naazim (HOD) of Darul Uloom Karachi. Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ asked Maulana Nur Ahmad three questions; "a) How long will Munkar and Nakeer question one in the grave? b) How long will one stay in the Barzakh? c) There was something which I was supposed to have done, but I forgot to do it. What should I do about it now? Ask Mufti Muhammad Shafi' and inform me of his answers to these questions." This was his last majlis.

At about 4 am the next morning, Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ suffered paralysis on the left side of his body. I saw that his mental condition was unstable and that his tongue was quivering. He said to me in a trembling voice, "Remind me of the kalimah." I recited, "Laa ilaaha illAllah. Muhammadur Rasulullah." He recited it with me. After reciting the kalimah, his tongue fell silent forever. From then onwards, he would indicate with signals if he needed anything. This remained his condition for the next two days, after which he fell completely unconscious. For the first three or four days, he swallowed the food with difficulty. Through a drip, he was then fed with glucose. The doctors tried hard to treat him. But the time of his death had approached.

On Monday, 21 Rabi'ul Awwal 1383 (12 August 1963), his pulse was very weak, from the morning. The doctor tried to administer a glucose injection to him, but could not do so, as his veins had practically dried up due to the weak bloodflow. The doctor checked his pulse and informed us that his condition was now very delicate. We were overtaken by a strange state on seeing him in this condition. Dr. Abdul-Hayy came at one o' clock and said, "His condition is now very delicate." Another doctor came at three o' clock, felt his pulse and said, "Maulana is now going to rest." At five o' clock, I gave Maulana a spoon of Zamzam and honey to drink. At quarter past five, his Sakaraat (pangs of death) began. At five to six, the soul of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ left from this temporary world and met up with its Rabb. Innaa lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'oon.

At those last moments of his life, eight of us were present. Without any news report or announcement over the radio, crowds of people who loved him or had some form of contact with him began assembling. At the time of Isha, a mind-boggling crowd had gathered. He was enshrouded and buried in complete conformance with the Sunnah, under the guidance and supervision of Mufti Rashid Ahmad Ludhyanwi. In actual fact, he himself gave ghusl to (and bathed) the body of his Shaykh, along with a few helpers. It was at about ten o' clock that his janaazah left his house. It was drizzling lightly. A large number of Ulama, students and pious people of Karachi attended the janaazah. From amongst them were Allamah Yusuf Banuri and Maulana Ihtishaamul-Haqq Thanwi. Dr. Abdul-Hayy, who was his close friend and associate for a number of reasons, was appointed to perform the janaazah salaah. Mufti Muhammad Shafi' was unable to be present, due to severe illness. The janaazah salaah was performed at around half past eleven in the

night. At twelve o' clock that night, he was buried in the Paaposhnagar graveyard.²⁰⁴

It is amazing to note that Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ had pledged bay'ah at the hands of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi on a Monday during Rabi'ul-Awwal. He received khilaafah (permission to lead others towards the path of Allah's love and to carry out their spiritual training) on a Monday during Rabi'ul-Awwal. He finally also passed away on a Monday during Rabi'ul-Awwal.²⁰⁵

The Du'as of Maulana Abdul-Ghani ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ narrated: Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ was bedridden for over six months. He was unable to go to the toilet to relieve himself. His hip was fractured. My nature was so sensitive that I had never once even cleaned the urine or stool of my own children. (He ﷺ would normally feel nauseous and vomit at just the sight of urine or stool – Meer Sahib) But I saw that nobody was prepared to come forward for this work. What else could I do? I would serve him, clean and dispose of the urine and stool. I did that work which a toilet-cleaner does, which I had never even done for my children. However, I am grateful to Allah Ta'ala for that. One day, after doing whatever I had to do, I requested Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ to make du'a for me. He raised his hands and made du'a for me. What du'a did he make? The old man didn't even tell me. But I am today seeing the effects of his du'a for me in the entire world.

Maulana ﷺ wrote: One day, a few days before his demise, I asked him, "Hadhrat! Are you happy with me? He replied, "I am very happy with you." I requested, "Please make du'a for me that Allah

²⁰⁴ Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri, Maulana Shabbir Ali (the nephew of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi), Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmaani and the mother of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar are all buried in this graveyard. May Allah shower his mercy upon them all.

²⁰⁵ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.100-105

grants me the bounty of Deen (true adherence to the commands of Allah Ta'ala in every sphere of life).” He commented, “You have received that bounty already.” May Allah accept this glad-tiding of my Shaykh and his good thoughts about me and make it a reality. Aameen. I then requested, “Hadhrat! Also make this du’a that Allah ﷻ takes from this useless one a great amount of Deeni work, in such a manner that is pleasing to Him.” The moment I said this, he lifted his hands and instructed my mother to say Aameen to his du’a. I have no idea what du’a he made. That was between him and Allah ﷻ.²⁰⁶

Maulana ﷻ once said: I will tell you a secret. I once made du’a to Allah ﷻ (after his demise): O Allah, I cleaned the waste of this special servant of yours. By the blessings of that, cleanse my heart of all (spiritual) filth and dirt.²⁰⁷

Maulana ﷻ narrated: On 6 July 1963, the two sons of Maulana Phulpuri ﷻ had to leave Karachi to go to India for some urgent and necessary work. On that day, Maulana was overtaken by an extremely emotional condition of crying and sobbing, from nine o’ clock in the morning till nine o’ clock in the night. While crying and sobbing, he was continuously repeating:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

On some occasions, I would fear that this extremely severe emotional outburst may cause his soul to leave his body. It seemed as if his chest was bursting. Every now and again, he would recite these couplets from the Mathnawi of Maulana Rumi:

ذکرِ حق است چوں پاکی رسید رخت بر بندد بروں آید پلید
چوں در آید نام پاک اندر وہاں نے پلیدی ماند و نے آن وہاں

The remembrance of Allah is pure. When purity arrives, impurity is forced to depart with all of its luggage. When the pure name of

²⁰⁶ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.109

²⁰⁷ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.110

Allah enters the mouth, neither can filth remain, nor can the mouth remain. Everything is converted into nur (spiritual effulgence).

His severe sobbing and crying caused us a great amount of grief and worry. He was not even eating food. This increased our worries. Some friends commented that this seems to be due to his sadness over the departure of his sons. I thought to myself that I should rather just find out from him directly. That night, with a bit of fear and hesitation, I ventured to ask him, “Hadhrat! Today, from the morning till now, why have you just been crying?” He replied, “The matter is between me and my Master (Allah ﷻ). I am crying in the remembrance of Allah.”²⁰⁸

From about six months before his demise, Maulana Phulpuri ﷻ made it a practice of frequently reciting the following du’a. He would also encourage his friends and associates to recite this in abundance:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

He would also regularly recite:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي وَوَسِّعْ لِي فِي دَارِي وَبَارِكْ لِي فِي رِزْقِي

*O Allah, forgive my sins, expand my home for me (in the Hereafter) and grant me blessings in my sustenance.*²⁰⁹

Two confidential conversations

Maulana ﷻ narrates: Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷻ had said to me, just about a week prior to his demise, on one particular night, “Hakeem Akhtar! I have been martyred.” I asked him to explain how. He replied, “By the sword.” Perhaps he meant that he had been martyred by ‘the sword of Allah’s love’.

²⁰⁸ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.111

²⁰⁹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.110

Maulana narrates: Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ had said to me at the end of his life, “Akhtar! I hand you over in the care of Allah. You also hand me over into the care of Allah.”

I am grateful to Allah Ta’ala for his great favour upon me which I am absolutely undeserving of; that I was blessed with the fortune of serving my Shaykh till his last breath. May Allah Ta’ala accept it out of His mercy. Aameen.²¹⁰

The written impressions of Maulana Abrarul-Haq Hardoi



After the demise of Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ, Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ wrote a letter to Maulana in which he stated, “Akhtar! Today, we have become orphans. Mubaarak (congratulations) over your service to your Shaykh from beginning till the end.”

Precaution in distributing the inheritance of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ

Meer Sahib ﷺ narrated: When Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ passed away, Maulana ﷺ consulted with Mufti Muhammad Shafi’ Uthmaani ﷺ on every step and distributed the inheritance of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ. For the calculation of the estate, he even estimated the value of the cooking pipe²¹¹ (which Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ owned). He carefully dispatched the rightful share of each inheritor to India. In those days, sending money to India was not an easy task. In Pakistan, he paid off the creditors to whom Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ owed any amount of money. It was a great lesson on the

²¹⁰ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.105-106

²¹¹ The women would blow through this pipe to fuel and intensify the fire while cooking. It is something similar to a small hand-held bellows.

importance of keeping one's monetary affairs clear and unblemished.²¹²

Maulana Abrarul Haq of Hardoi ﷺ

Choosing a Shaykh after the demise of one's first Shaykh?

Maulana ﷺ explained: After the demise of my first Shaykh, many senior Khulafa (deputies) of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ were still alive, people of the likes of Mufti Muhammad Shafi' Uthmaani ﷺ and Doctor Abdul-Hayy Aarifi ﷺ. After one's Shaykh passes away, one should only pledge bay'ah (allegiance) to that Shaykh who one has munaasabah (compatibility) with. I regarded myself at that time as a spiritual orphan. Maulana Abrarul-Haq was my spiritual uncle. Upon the demise of the father, the uncle normally takes care of his nephews. When Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ was in his last stages, I asked him, "Hadhrat! Besides you, my heart does not incline towards anyone else. After you, how will I establish a spiritual relationship with anyone?" Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ replied, "After me, you have no need to establish a spiritual relationship with anyone (i.e. your spiritual reformation is complete)."

But one of the principles of this path (of Tasawwuf) is that one should not remain without a Shaykh. For this reason, after the demise of Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ, I established a spiritual relationship with Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq.

Meer Sahib ﷺ adds: Maulana would from then on present himself in the service of Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ﷺ every now and again, travelling from Pakistan (to India) for this purpose. On one occasion, he spent 50 days in Hardoi in the service of his Shaykh.²¹³

²¹² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.122

²¹³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.122

Brief biography of Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq Haqqi

Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq hailed from Hardoi, U.P. India. He was born in 1339 A.H. (20 December 1920). His father was Maulana Mahmudul-Haq Haqqi, a famous lawyer of Hardoi, who was a Khalifah (Mujaaz-e-Suhbat) of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. Their lineage goes up to Shaykh Shah Abdul-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawi, the great scholar of Hadith. He had five brothers and one sister. He had memorized the Qur'an at the age of eight. His initial education of Arabic, Urdu, and Persian started in his hometown. Afterwards, he enrolled at Mazaahirul-Uloom in Saharanpur, and completed the Aalim course there at the age of eighteen. During the course of his studies, his piety was such that it had an effect on his classmates and drew the attention of his teachers. Shaykhul-Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya had said regarding him: From his student days, he was a Saahibun Nisbah (one who has a very strong bond with Allah Ta'ala).

He was also very fortunate to be granted the opportunity to travel to Thanabawan from Saharanpur weekly, where he benefitted greatly from the company of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. During the holidays, he would also stay in the service of his Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi. It is for this very reason that Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi paid special attention to him. He received Khilaafah from Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi at the very young age of 22. He taught for some time in Mazaahirul-Uloom Saharanpur, then for two years in Jaami'ul Uloom in Kanpur and later for two years in Madrasah Islamiyyah Fatahpur.

It was upon the instruction of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi that he went to Hardoi to kindle the fire of the knowledge of Deen, from which the Muslim population is still benefiting from. He founded a Madrasah by the name of Ashraf-ul-Madaaris on his personal

property, which he had made waqf for the purpose. Besides the local students, there were students from Mumbai, Gujarat, Hyderabad, and other various places and countries. Many Ulama from across the world also studied at this institute which became known for its high level of tajweed (correct recitation of the Qur'an). He went on establishing such makaatib in all nearby areas, until the makaatib under his supervision numbered 96 at the time of his demise.

Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had also revived the Majlis Da'watul-Haq that was initially formed by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. It then took a new beginning in Hardoi, and now carries on the work of Islaah (self-reformation), Ta'leem (education) and Tabligh (propagation of the message of Islam).

Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq رحمۃ اللہ علیہ laid particular emphasis on bringing the Sunnah alive in the ummah. He was therefore fondly referred to as Muhyus-Sunnah (the reviver of Sunnah). He would also lay particular emphasis on eradicating evil (nahy anil munkar). He was of the view that by encouraging good alone, evil will not be automatically eradicated. People need to be taught and schooled on what is wrong and how to avoid it. He was especially famous for the emphasis he gave to tajweed – the subject which teaches us the method of reciting the Qur'an with correct pronunciation. He had made great effort in this direction and created an awakening towards this important subject. He oversaw the preparation of the famous Nuraani Qaa'idah, perhaps the most famous primer for those who wish to recite the Qur'an. He was the author of many other valuable books and articles aimed at self-reformation. 'One Minute Madrasah' was prepared by Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ upon his instruction. This is a booklet containing valuable bits of Islamic information which can be delivered in a span of a minute daily. This book is used for adult education in many Masaajid around the world today. Many books were prepared in which his beneficial advices and lectures were recorded.

He had benefitted from many Mashaayikh. After the demise of his first Shaykh, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمہ اللہ علیہ, he spiritually benefitted from Khwajah Azizul-Hasan Majzub, Maulana Abdur-Rahman Kaamilpuri, then Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri, then Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandehlawi, then Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partabgarhi and finally from Mufti Mahmud Hasan Gangohi. Thousands of Ulama and others took bay'ah (the oath of allegiance) at his hands in Hardoi. In addition, he had left behind about 139 khulafa (spiritual deputies).

He had one daughter, who was married to Hakeem Kaleemullah (daamat barakaatuhu). He had one son, Haafiz Ashraful-Haq, who had passed away at the age of 28 in 1975.

Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq رحمہ اللہ علیہ was the last of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's رحمہ اللہ علیہ Khulafa (spiritual deputies) to pass away. He passed into the mercy of Allah on a Tuesday night, 9 Rabi'uth Thaani 1426 (17 May 2005). That evening, he began bleeding from his nose and mouth. His attendants decided to rush him to a hospital in Lucknow. While in his wheel-chair, he was heard saying 'Allah, Allah' repeatedly. When he was placed into the ambulance, his body shook violently. This seems to have been the last moments of his life. Over 150, 000 people attended his funeral service, which was led by Qari Ameer Hasan رحمہ اللہ علیہ at the Eidgaah in Hardoi shortly after the Fajr salaah. We make du'a that Allah ﷻ fill his grave with noor, accept his great services and grant him Jannatul Firdaus (Ameen).²¹⁴

Hereunder, we will quote some of the experiences and observations of Maulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar رحمہ اللہ علیہ regarding Maulana Shah Abrarul Haq رحمہ اللہ علیہ:

²¹⁴ Adapted from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.137,138, 156, Hayaat-e-Muhyus-Sunnah and annoor.wordpress.com

Acceptance of his du'as

Maulana ﷺ narrates: My Shaykh Maulana Abrarul Haq was mustajaabud-da'waat (a person whose du'a's were readily accepted). He let out this secret on one occasion. A letter came to him in which the writer explained that he was greatly perplexed for the last three years as a result of a court case (wherein some complaint had been lodged against him). Maulana said (spontaneously), "Oh! If only he had informed me three years ago, he would have been freed from this ages ago."²¹⁵

Maulana ﷺ narrates: Maulana Abrarul-Haq showed Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri the administrative systems which had been put into place in his Madaaris. He even explained that he keeps record of the height of the teachers and their descriptions, to the extent of even a mark on the face or a mole under the eye. He showed Maulana Phulpuri the file in which all of their descriptions are recorded. When Maulana Phulpuri ﷺ witnessed the organizational and administrative skills of Maulana Abrarul-Haq, he said to me, "Maulana Abrarul-Haq is fit to run a kingdom. If he had to be appointed as Ameerul-Mu'mineen, he would be able to take control of the administration of the entire country."²¹⁶

His Taqwa

Maulana ﷺ narrated: Maulana Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu) is blessed with a very high level of Ta'alluq ma'Allah (connection with Allah ﷻ). I will narrate to you two incidents:

Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi had arranged a jalsah in Lucknow. Photographs were being taken. Some government officials had arranged for this. Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi was most probably forced into this unfortunate situation. Whatever the reason

²¹⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.139

²¹⁶ Adapted from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.139,140

may have been, when this photography commenced, Maulana Abrarul-Haq stood up, consulted with Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partabgarhi and said, “Such actions are being perpetrated here which are against the Shari’ah. We should leave here. By remaining in this gathering, we are also passive participants of this sin.” Both these pious Elders collected their bedding (and other luggage) and proceeded to Hardoi. The crowd at the jalsah was huge. Ulama were present. The arrangements were being carried out by governmental officials. Maulana Abrarul-Haq was not concerned and deterred by any of these things. It was upon this reaction of his that Maulana Abul-Hasan Ali Nadwi said, “Maulana Abrarul-Haq is a very resolute and steadfast Friend of Allah.”

Similarly, at the centenary jalsah of Darul-Uloom Deoband, where the graduates of Darul-Uloom Deoband had all gathered, Indira Ghandi (the female prime-minister of India at that time) made her appearance. No one had the courage to prevent her. If Maulana Abrarul-Haq had been the organizer, she would have never been able to come. Maulana Abrarul-Haq decided to flee towards Allah. He left Deoband. This is a matter which requires great courage and determination. The Ulama of the world are present. One of Maulana’s Hadith teachers was present. But he said, “Remaining here is not permissible. Attending a gathering in which a woman is sitting between men is against the law of the Shari’ah.” While the entire world was going towards Deoband, a man of Allah was driving away in the opposite direction. To be unconcerned of and undeterred by the entire world before the command of Allah requires a heart which is full of courage and determination. This is the courage of lions. When it came to a matter which Maulana Abrarul-Haq regarded as impermissible, he did not bother about anyone and he kept Allah’s pleasure in front of him. To find an

example of people who have a relationship with Allah like him would be difficult.²¹⁷

Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ, one of the true Abrar

Maulana ؒ said: Hasan Basri ؒ defines the Abrar:

قال الحسن البصري في تفسير الأبرار هم الذين لا يؤذون الذر ولا يرضون الشر (عمدة القاري

(354/1)

The Abrar are those (pious) people who do not even harm an ant and who are never pleased with evil.

My Shaykh Abrar is also just like that. My Shaykh was once making wudhu at a certain spot. He suddenly stood up from there and shifted to another spot. He then shifted to a third spot, where he now completed his wudhu. Someone enquired as to why he had changed his place while making wudhu. He said, “I noticed some ants at the places where I was making wudhu. These ants are family members of one another. They are separated from one another due to the water. My heart pains to see this separation. These ants are also the creation of Allah ؒ. I do not want to cause them any inconvenience or pain.” The name of my Shaykh corresponds with the explanation of Sayyiduna Hasan Basri ؒ. He is a physical expression of his own name (ism baa musamma).²¹⁸





An informal relationship

Maulana ؒ narrated: At that time (during the lifetime of Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ), I had a very informal relationship with Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq, informality like that of brothers. We had a great amount of love for one another. At that time, I treated him like a friend. I would even trouble and tease him. Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq was very handsome and fair in complexion. At that

²¹⁷ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.140

²¹⁸ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.153

time in my life, I would sometimes eat paan (betel-leaves), whereas he would never eat it. (He may have perhaps eaten paan once or twice in his life) So I would prepare the paan mixture and bring it to him. I would say, “Hadhrat! Eat this paan. When the juice of the betel-leaves passes down your throat, we will be able to see it going down (due to your fair complexion).”²¹⁹

Maulana  said: While staying I was staying in Phulpur in the service of my first Shaykh, Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri , my Shaykh Maulana Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu), who had also taken bay’ah (pledged allegiance) to Maulana Phulpuri , would frequently visit Phulpur. On one occasion, he spent the entire month of Ramadhan in the company of Maulana Phulpuri . In those days, I was so informal with him that we would practice stick-fighting with one another, which entailed attacking and defending one’s opponent. He too was informal with me. He was so informal with me that he once arrived in Phulpur, while I was in my surgery in Kotlah, 18 miles away. He immediately boarded a bus and came to Kotlah to look for me. I saw such a great personality like Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq getting down from the bus. I wondered why he had come here. I asked, “Hadhrat! Why have you come?” He replied, “I don’t enjoy it in Phulpur without you. So I have come to Kotlah with my Potlah (luggage) to fetch you.” He showed me his bag which contained his lungi and other essentials. He then said, “Come now with me.” I immediately got ready to go. Although it was my surgery time, I didn’t bother. The blessings of that was that I am today not dependent on a surgery. I got ready and sat down in the vehicle to go to Phulpur with Maulana Abrarul-Haq.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.141

²²⁰ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.141,142

A relationship of respect after bay'ah

Maulana رحمہ اللہ said: When I pledged allegiance to Maulana Abrarul-Haq, I addressed myself and said, ‘Akhtar! Beware! Forget your days of informality.’²²¹

I thought to myself, ‘This relationship of friendship is now over. Now my relationship with him is one of a servant. I am no more his friend. He is now my Shaykh, and I am now his disciple.’²²²

Maulana رحمہ اللہ narrated: When I went to Hardoi, as per his prescribed programme, Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq said to me, “By us, it is required for those Saalikeen who come for their spiritual reformation to correct the pronunciation of each letter of the Qur’an Majeed. So you will need to study Nurani Qa’idah under the guidance of the madrasah’s Qari. However, if you want, Qari Sahib can even come to your room and teach you.” Maulana replied, “No, Hadhrat. I will go to the classroom and learn.” Hence I sat with the children and learnt Nurani Qa’idah. Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq related this incident in many places and recited this couplet poem of Maulana Jalaalud-Deen Rumi رحمہ اللہ:

این چنیں شیخ گدائے کو بکو عشق آمد لا ابالی فاتقوا

Such a great Shaykh has today become a beggar, going door to door. When love comes, it comes in this way that one loses interest in his ego.²²³

During those days, a farmer had sent sugar-cane juice for the students in the Madrasah. Maulana Abrarul-Haq was dispensing it with his own hands. The students all stood in a line. I also joined the line with all the children, for I was also a student of the Madrasah, even though just temporarily. When my turn arrived, Maulana

²²¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.142

²²² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.141

²²³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.142

looked (lovingly) towards me. It was as if a lightning current went through my heart. It seems as if he was happy with this.²²⁴

Serving Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ narrated: On one occasion, we alighted on one platform and needed to go over to another platform to board the train there. I noticed that there was no porter on our platform. My Shaykhs, Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri and Maulana Abrarul-Haq, were waiting for someone to carry all their luggage over the cross-bridge to the other platform. I was only twenty-five years old at that time, in the prime of my youth. Because of the systematic and organized nature of Maulana Abrarul-Haq, he used to have quite a lot of luggage. I said, “Hadhrat! If there is no porter, so what? You wait here by the luggage. I will move the luggage over to the other side.” I then proceeded to carry on my head all the luggage and bedding over the cross-bridge and transported it to the other platform. I then said to my two Elders, “Now you may come.” Maulana Abrarul-Haq said to Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri, “Today, give Akhtar an enjoyable breakfast. He saved us the fees of a porter.”

On another occasion, during the days of Hajj, Maulana Abrarul-Haq had rented a place to stay. He experienced some difficulty in this place, so he decided to move to another place. His sister had also arrived from Muradabad. Her luggage had to also be transported. Maulana said to me, “I need to move to another place, and I cannot find any porters here in Makkah Shareef.” I replied, “Hadhrat! There is nothing to worry about. The luggage will be transported shortly.” Qari Ameer Hasan and myself were present there. I said to Qari Ameer Hasan, “At this moment, I am the porter of my Shaykh in the city of Allah. May Allah ﷻ accept it through the blessings of this city.” Maulana also became very happy at this service of mine. I immediately received one reward and bounty after this act of

²²⁴ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.142

service; my 12 years old bad habit of chewing paan (betel leaves) with tobacco ended. I would previously keep a paan tin and container with me at all times. When I was blessed with this fortune of going for Hajj, I was still once chewing paan when I heard the azaan begin. This paan in my mouth took me away from the Ka’bah. I thought to myself; ‘If paan is in my mouth, I cannot recite Qur’an or make zikr. Also, if it is the time of salaah, I have to leave the masjid, wading through such large crowds and when I return after gargling my mouth, then even performing salaah is difficult (after losing one’s place right in front of the Ka’bah). This paan is becoming a nuisance between me and my Allah. I have to give up this habit.’ From then till today, for approximately the last 25 years, (I have rid myself of this habit and) the thought of it does not even cross my mind... I made du’a to Allah ﷻ, saying, “O Allah, save us from paan from today onwards.” Subsequent to serving the pious, I immediately received this bounty.

Accompanying and serving Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷻ

Maulana ﷻ explained: When my Shaykh Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu) comes (to Pakistan), I make an intention that I will accompany him wherever he goes, in shaa Allah. Whichever town or area he visits, I join him. Someone asked me, “How far will you go?” I said, “I will go as far as my Shaykh goes, even if he travels until the border (on the other end of the country). Further than that, I will be unable, due to visa laws.” This is a great favour of Allah ﷻ upon me.

I think to myself that I have not really earned anything (for the Aakhirah). But Allah ﷻ has granted me wonderful opportunities of accompanying His beloveds. Alhamdulillah, I was never disloyal to the friends of Allah ﷻ. Allah granted me the ability to always serve them with my body and from my heart. On one occasion, Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq was not allowed entry into the city and was

stopped at the airport. The (Pakistani) police officials did not allow him because he was from India. We tried through various contacts, but were unsuccessful. Everyone finally left my Shaykh and proceeded home. My Shaykh was forced to stay over at a hotel close to the airport. I said to myself, “I will not go home. My Shaykh has come all the way from India and is far away from home here. How can I go home to my wife and children? This is against the demands of love.” So I laid out my bedding there (in his room). The loud noise of the aircrafts taking off or landing could be heard every five minutes. I said to Maulana Abrarul-Haq, “Hadhrat! I can’t fall off to sleep due to the noise of these aircrafts.” He opened his bag and gave me some cotton wool. He said, “Close your ears with this. Then see what an enjoyable sleep you will have.” I put the cotton wool in my ears and Alhamdulillah, I fell off to sleep.²²⁵

Patience in serving the friends of Allah ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ said: We are unworthy, like thorns. The safety of the thorns lies in remaining hidden under the roses. It was for that reason that Akhtar remained attached to Allah’s accepted and beloved servants. In Ilahabaad, I remained attached to Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Partaabghari ﷺ for three years. Then, I attached myself to Maulana Shah Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ until my black hairs turned white (with age)... Now too, I bear the strictness of Maulana Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu). Till now, he still scolds and reprimands with the same vigor and authority. By we understand the scolding of his to be a ni’mah (bounty). The one who is unhappy with the scolding of his father will soon fall into the traps of Shaytaan. A Shaykh is just like a spiritual father... I am grateful to Allah ﷻ that I bore a lot of scolding from my Shaykh Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ﷺ, but I always understood it to be a mercy... One day, I even said to him, “Hadhrat! You show so

²²⁵ Rashke-Awliyya Pg.151, 152

much love and affection to those who come to you from far off, spend two days here with their heads lowered in contemplation and then leave. As for those of us who are living with you day and night, we only receive scolding. Those people seem to be attaining much more benefit than us... He said, "The one who bears the scolding of his Shaykh will finally become a ruby."... I bore that scolding for the sake of Allah ﷻ. Today, I am witnessing the blessings of that. People are sitting here from so many countries. Have I ever advertised or sent out an invitation for anyone to come here? It is stated in a Hadith:

مَا أَكْرَمَ شَابٌ شَيْخًا لِسِنِّهِ إِلَّا قَيَّضَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مَنْ يُكْرِمُهُ عِنْدَ سِنِّهِ

No youngster ever honours an elder due to his advanced age except that Allah will appoint people for him who will honour him in his old age. (Sunan Tirmizi no.2022)

Mulla Ali Qaari ﷻ writes in the commentary of this Hadith that such a person will receive two favours: 1) He will live long. 2) His juniors will respect him. As for the one who disrespects his seniors, his juniors will disrespect him.

However, do not lovingly serve the friends of Allah to receive the love and service of the creation. Lovingly serve them for the sake of Allah.

However, take note of one important point; Never assume that any gift which Allah bestows upon us is the fruits of any action or sacrifice of ours. Don't ever think that because I had served the friends of Allah so much, Allah ﷻ has granted me this bounty. This is the height of ingratitude. Understand that the cause of His favours is His favour and the cause of His mercy is His mercy. The reason

behind His gift is His generosity. No action of ours is worthy of acceptance in the first place.²²⁶

The reprimand of one's Shaykh is for the reformation of the disciple

Maulana ﷺ said: Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ explained, "When one's Shaykh reprimands one, remember that we are not worth anything. Also remember that our status has not decreased by receiving such reprimands, it has actually increased. One's honour increases after bearing the reprimands of one's Shaykh." He also said, "A proud person regards himself to have some worth, and therefore becomes displeased at the reprimands of the Shaykh. Why are you feigning your worth from now? Till the decision is passed on the day of Qiyaamah, remember that we are worthless." I will inform you of a valuable experience of mine; The one who bears the دانت - reprimands of his Shaykh, his dents are removed. And a Shaykh who does not reprimand one over a matter which requires such a reprimand, he is not really a Shaykh, he is actually a Khaa'in (a fraud who is betraying his trust). If one's car is dented, a good panel-beater is he who will use his skills and techniques to fix the problem, by setting or fitting with his tools and instruments. Just as those dents will be removed by those tools, the dents of the nafs will be removed by such reprimands.²²⁷

A lesson to be learnt from Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ narrated: My Shaykh Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu) once reprimanded me over a certain matter in Hardoi. He later called me and said, "Listen! The example of a Shaykh is like that of a gardener. He does not like to see any tree or plant growing crooked. He trims each tree and plant so that his garden may be the most beautiful and attractive. The Shaykh wants

²²⁶ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.145-146

²²⁷ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.146

the same for his disciples; even though I may be worthless, I do not wish that any of my disciples be worthless.” When he said this, I began crying. He then said, The Shaykh thinks to himself that I want my disciple to be better than me. His ways should be fixed made attractive, so that whoever sees him may be attracted to him.” He then added the following sentence, “Remember that you also have your own children.” What he meant was that ‘you also have many people who are your disciples’. This was no ordinary sentence. It was a deep lesson for me. It was as if he had given me a severe lashing with a whip, to teach me; Beware! Don’t take my reprimand badly. If you are not ready to listen to me today, who will listen to you tomorrow? If you will not bear my strictness today, who will be prepared to bear you tomorrow?²²⁸

A karaamah of Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ said: I will inform you of one karaamah (miracle) of Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ. I was unable to speak and express myself. I could not deliver a lecture for even five minutes. It was around 1970 that Maulana Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu) sent me a note, in which he informed me that I should deliver a lecture in Jeddah, at the house of Maulana Abdullah Memoni, a student of Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri ﷺ. I became worried after reading this. But when our Elders send us somewhere, they must be sending us after making dua for us. From that day onwards, my tongue opened... This Qaraar Saahib is a witness that when I first came here, I was unable to deliver a lecture for even five minutes. Alhamdulillah, I now sometimes deliver lectures for up to three hours...

Last year, at the end of the year jalsah in Dabhel, I was scheduled to speak. That gathering was also graced by the head-teacher of Darul-Uloom Deoband, Maulana Naseer Ahmad Khan (mudda zilluhu).

²²⁸ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.146-147

He first delivered his talk. After his talk, what is the value of my talk. But, Allah ﷻ had granted me such an honour, by the blessings of my Elders, that after completing my lecture, Maulana Naseer Ahmad Khan said to me, “Maa shaa Allah. Please also remember me in your duas... So my tongue opened through the duas of my Elders.”²²⁹

Maulana ﷻ said: When I went to Hardoi, my Shaykh instructed me to sit on the mimbar, while he himself sat in the mihraab. He then instructed me to speak. He announced, “Today, a lecture will be delivered regarding the love of Allah ﷻ.” From here, you can gauge that my Shaykh is fully cognizant of my nature; he knew that I will deliver a lecture related to love...²³⁰

A memorable trip to Hardoi

Maulana ﷻ narrated: When I visited Hardoi in 1976, Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷻ sent letters to (his disciples in) Kashmir, Lucknow, Calcutta and many other areas, in which he wrote: Akhtar has come from Pakistan. All of you should come to Hardoi. Many gatherings will be taking place and there is great benefit being attained.” Maulana Abrarul-Haq invited many great scholars to Hardoi at that time. For my sake, Maulana was daily feeding about 50 guests. Maulana Abrarul-Haq had also invited his teacher, Mufti Mahmud Hasan Gangohi ﷻ. From Ilahabaad, he had also invited Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad Partaabghari ﷻ. In the presence of all these great Ulama, Maulana Abrarul-Haq said to me, “You will speak. First, Mufti Mahmud Hasan Sahib will deliver a lecture, then Maulana Muhammad Ahmad, and thereafter you will deliver your lecture.” When it was my turn to speak, I said to Maulana Muhammad Ahmad, “Hadhrat! Please go to rest.” He replied, “No. I will not go to rest. I will listen to your lecture.” I then clasped my

²²⁹ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.148

²³⁰ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.148

hands before Mufti Mahmud Hasan and pleaded, “Hadhrat! You are an accomplished Muhaddith and Mufti. I feel nervous in your presence. How can I speak (in front of you)? Please proceed and take some rest.” He replied, “Oh! You want to deprive me of listening to your lecture. I will certainly not go. I will also listen to your lecture.” So I took the name of Allah in the presence of all those Ulama and began my talk. On that day, Allah ﷻ, by His mercy, made me deliver an very different and amazing lecture. When I completed my talk, Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad embraced me and said, “Allah ﷻ grants some people a (spiritually developed) heart, but no tongue. He grants some people a (very eloquent) tongue, but they have no (spiritually developed) heart. You should thank Allah ﷻ, for Allah ﷻ has granted you a (spiritually developed) heart a (very eloquent) tongue. Congratulations. You have been blessed with a heart and a tongue.”

231

Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ praises the talks of Maulana ﷺ

Maulana ﷺ also narrated: Maulana Abrarul-Haq (daamat barakaatuhu) was visiting the Darul-Uloom of Khulna (Bangladesh). I arrived from Karachi. In the presence of many Ulama and Muhadditheen, I was appointed to deliver a lecture. Maulana Abrarul-Haq said to the Ulama who were sitting with him, “Don’t sit here with me now. Go and listen to the lecture of Akhtar. Akhtar is now going to feed you the Biryani (of Allah’s love).”²³²

On one occasion, Maulana ﷺ was instructed to deliver a lecture at the home of Nawaab Qaisar Ali Sahib, where Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ was staying during his visit to Karachi. From amongst those present were; Nawaab Qaisar Ali, Hakeem Kaleemullah (the son-in-law of Maulana Abrarul-Haq) and Maulana Shamsul-Haq (the

²³¹ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.149

²³² Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.150

Shaykhul-Hadith of Darul-Uloom Karachi), as well as many other senior Ulama. Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ later said, “Your lecture yesterday was extremely important, extremely beneficial and extremely necessary.”²³³

Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ once said to his Khulafa, ‘What work are you doing?!! If you want to learn how to do work, go and learn from Maulana Hakeem Akhtar.’²³⁴

Maulana Abrarul-Haq ﷺ once said: If the Ummah was not receiving any benefit from Akhtar, then why would so many people attend his talks?’²³⁵

One can spiritually benefit from even those who are junior

Maulana ﷺ said: Those who were jealous of me were pleased with the thought that Akhtar will not gain any honour, as Maulana Abrarul-Haq Hardoi was considered to be from the junior Khulafa and associates of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ. All other Khulafa were senior compared to him. But Allah ﷻ showed us that one should not keep one’s gaze on the size of the doorway. Allah ﷻ is The Giver. People’s gaze was upon Maulana Abrarul-Haq, who was just a doorway. They did not look beyond that; who is giving from behind the doorway... People are surprised that senior Ulama like Maulana Abdul-Hamid and Maulana Yunus Patel of South Africa, and senior Ulama of Bangladesh like Maulana Hidaayatullah and Maulana Muhammad Ali Chandpuri have taken bay’ah (pleadged allegiance) at my hands. Many Ulama who are teachers of Sahih Bukhari have turned to me (for spiritual reformation) in the life of my Shaykh...I can only thank Allah ﷻ for this. But my Shaykh is the actual powerhouse. This is actually only the faydh (spiritual

²³³ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.150

²³⁴ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.150

²³⁵ Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.151

light) of my Shaykh (which is spreading). The current from the powerhouse is one. When it enters a green globe, the current produces a green light. When it enters a red globe, the current produces a red light... This is all the faydh (spiritual light) of my Shaykh (which Allah is outwardly disseminating through me). If there is no current coming from the powerhouse, can any globe give light?²³⁶

A letter to his Shaykh

The following is a rough translation of a letter which Maulana ﷺ wrote to his Shaykh Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ﷺ of Hardoi:

Assalaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakaatuhu

May Allah raise the status of my Shaykh, and make him the leader of the Awliyaa of his era. May Allah ﷻ raise the status of our Hadhrat in both worlds, higher and higher, with a continuous increase and with compounded barakah. Aameen. And may Allah ﷻ continuously shower down upon us servants the fuyudh (spiritual light) and barakaat (blessings) of our Shaykh. Aameen.

By a phone call, I learnt from Hadhrat's associates that Hadhrat's blessed health is not doing too well. I take this opportunity to make du'a from the inner recesses of my heart: O Allah, grant my beloved Murshid (mentor) complete, swift and permanent good health. Aameen.

I humbly request Hadhrat Aqdas to make du'a for success in both worlds on behalf of this lowly one.

Written by: Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar (may Allah forgive him)²³⁷

²³⁶ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.152

²³⁷ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.155

Khilaafat from Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ؒ

Khilaafat literally means ‘to confer another with the responsibilities of being one’s vicegerent, deputy or representative’. In the terminology of the Sufiyaa and Aaarifeen, it is used to refer to the permission or instruction which a Shaykh issues to his disciple to allow others to learn and advance in the science of spiritual reformation under his guidance, in accordance to what the disciple had learnt from his Shaykh. This khilaafat could be compared to a Muhaddith who grants isnaad - permission to his student to narrate Ahaadith from his chain, or a Mufti who grants his student permission to issue Fatwa (legal verdicts), in accordance to what the student learnt from his teacher. This permission is usually accompanied by a silsilah (chain) or several salaasil (chains), which all lead back to Rasulullah ﷺ, from which the Shaykh received his knowledge on the spiritual aspects of Deen. These chains can be understood like asaaneed (chains) from which a teacher had received his knowledge of certain books or certain sciences.

Maulana ؒ received khilaafat in the science of Tasawwwuf and Sulook from two great luminaries:

- a) Maulana Shah Abrarul-Haq ؒ, who was a khalifah of Hakeemul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi ؒ. This khilaafat was from four chains of Tasawwuf; famously known as the Chishtiyyah, Naqshabandiyyah, Qaadiriyah and Suhrwardiyyah chains.
- b) Maulana Shah Muhammad Ahmad Partabgarhi ؒ, This khilaafat was from the Naqshabandiyyah chain.

Maulana ؒ did not receive khilaafat from his first Shaykh. Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ preferred to not confer khilaafat to his children, as was the common practice amongst many bogus Mashaayikh. Since Maulana was the step-son of Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ, he did not grant him khilaafat. However,

Maulana ؒ had seen three dreams which indicated that he was soon going to receive khilaafat.

- a) He had seen in a dream Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri instructing Maulana Abrarul-Haq, “Grant permission of bay’ah (to allow others to pledge allegiance at his hands) to Akhtar.”
- b) In one dream, he had seen Maulana Abdul-Ghani Phulpuri ؒ writing the name ‘Allah’ in the middle of his forehead with his shahaadah (index) finger. He could even later vividly recall the manner in which Maulana Abdul-Ghani wrote this on his forehead.
- c) He once saw himself in a dream proceeding for Hajj from Bombay. He saw himself boarding a ship. He felt in the dream that he was pregnant, and was afraid that he should not deliver the child in the ship. When he mentioned this dream to Maulana Abdul-Ghani ؒ, he interpreted it in the following words: “ This is a glad-tiding for you that your nisbah (relationship with Allah) is muta’addi (i.e. it will pass on from you to others)” In other words, your spiritual states will not remain confined to you, but many others will benefit from it.²³⁸

Maulana Abdul-Ghani ؒ had made a bequest that his disciples should refer to Maulana Abrarul-Haq for their spiritual reformation after his death. Therefore, in accordance to this bequest, Maulana took bay’ah for the purpose of spiritual reformation with Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ after the demise of Maulana Abdul-Ghani ؒ. Two years later, Maulana Abrarul-Haq ؒ visited the Haramayn Shareefain. He requested Maulana ؒ to join him on this journey, but Maulana was unable to join due to certain circumstances. During

²³⁸ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.160

that time, Maulana ﷺ one day received a registered letter from Makkah Mukarramah. In this letter, he received khilaafat from him.

The letter read as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
نَحْمَدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Placing my trust upon Allah Ta'ala, I give you permission to initiate others in bay'ah (the pledge of allegiance) and for talqeen (to educate them regarding their spiritual reformation). If any person who wants to spiritually reform himself refers to you, do not refuse. May Allah Ta'ala allow the creation to benefit from you and accept it (from you).

Wassalaam – Written by: the pen of Abrarul-Haq (may Allah forgive him)

Friday, just before Maghrib, in Al-Masjidul Haraam, between Baabus Salaam and the noble Baytullah, Makkah Shareef. 18 Muharram 1387 (1967)

When Maulana ﷺ read this, he burst out in tears.²³⁹

To be continued in Part 2 In sha-Allah

²³⁹ Condensed from Rashke-Awliyaa Pg.161

