

Al-Marhum Irshad Munawwar Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

All Praise is for Allah ﷻ and may He guide us to invoke His blessings and peace upon our Beloved Noble Prophet Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ in greater abundance. Amin!

The most outstanding fact about al-Marhum Irshad Munawwar Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (1346-1431 A.H. / 1957-2010) is that he deeply loved Allah ﷻ and our Beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Tears rolled down his cheeks when he heard the name of the Prophet ﷺ mentioned. He also loved the Sahaba رضی اللہ عنہم, the Ahl al-Bayt رضی اللہ عنہم, the Awliya' Allah, the 'ulama' and the salihin رضی اللہ عنہم. His aim was to strengthen the Ahl us-Sunnah wa'l-Jama'ah tradition in Canada. He was recognized and referred to by Muslims in Toronto as someone pious and a mujahid (striver in the way of Allah ﷻ). He once told me that he had seen (of spiritual realities) what no one else had seen.

He was one of my best friends in Toronto. I shall try to highlight some of his achievements from what I know.

He was one of the founding members of the World Islamic Mission (WIM) in Canada, one of the many branches of WIM which was established in Pakistan by the world famous Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani Siddiqi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, the greatest scholar of Pakistan in his time. He was President of WIM Canada from the second time he was appointed to that post in 2002 by Mawlana Noorani till he passed ahead in 2010.

He had vast vision. He was at the forefront in the committee that established the Annual International Mawlid un-Nabi ﷺ Celebration in Toronto on a grand scale. He brought a huge banner from Pakistan, especially made for the occasion that was so large that it was used as a curtain on the stage. He made the biggest poster for the program of an arm's length. The program was held in the auditorium of Seneca College which could accommodate more than a thousand people. Imam Muhammad Yusuf رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, the first president of WIM Canada chaired the first few of these programs. Well-known 'ulama' were invited as speakers from Makkah al-Mukarramah, Pakistan, India, Canada, U.S.A and U.K. as well as international and local naat khwaan (munshidin).

Brother Irshad worked with the committee to arrange for everything. Donations were obtained to serve food to more than a thousand people at the end of the program. Brother Irshad himself did not sit through the program but was busy elsewhere in the hall arranging for it.

After that, the grand annual Mawlid un-Nabi ﷺ celebration spread to the U.S.A.

He was also at the forefront in holding the annual Mi'raj un-Nabi ﷺ Celebration in Masjid Noor ul-Haram of WIM. He said that if he had enough funds, he would hire a bus to bring the Somali ladies to the masjid for the programs.

After Imam Muhammad Yusuf, Irshad Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was appointed by Mawlana Noorani as President of WIM Canada for a year. After him, Qari Atullah Saheb was appointed for two years. After that,

Brother Irshad was again appointed, and remained President till he passed ahead. WIM Canada has progressed in specific ways in the tenure of each President till today.

After his first tenure, when he was no longer President, Brother Irshad told me that no one was listening to him anymore. I told him to do so much work for WIM Canada that the people there become obliged to listen to him. He did that and after two years was appointed President the second time.

He initiated a whole night Mawlid un-Nabi ﷺ celebration program in Masjid Noor ul-Haram, the first of its kind in Canada. Allahu Akbar!

The Message, an Islamic Journal, was published three times by WIM Canada. Brother Irshad wanted it published every month, that is how committed he was to the spread of Islamic knowledge. Unfortunately, WIM Canada did not have enough workers to do that.

He prepared a remarkable time table for Masjid Noor ul-Haram for the five times daily prayers which is used to this day.

He prayed all the Salah Sunnah mu'akkadah and the Sunnah ghayr mu'akkadah as well as the nawafil.

He was particular in following the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ in sighting the new moon.

Elder Muhammad Ahmad Siddiqui رحمه الله, the son-in-law of Muballighe Islam al-'Allamah Shah Muhammad 'Abdul 'Alim Siddiqui رحمه الله respectfully addressed him with the title of "Hazrat".

Other Muslim organizations requested Brother Irshad to help them with specific tasks, and he did that. For example, he took Mawlana Qazi Bashiruddin al-Faruqi رحمه الله to Montreal as a speaker for a religious program. He was committed and exerted himself in all directions. He tried to help everyone in whatever way he could.

He was at the forefront together with his committee in all the activities and endeavors of WIM Canada. He kept everyone together. He was very welcoming in the masjid and very generous, jovial, and friendly. The congregation increased a great deal. He arranged for the religious programs in the masjid at least once a month. He helped to raise funds to buy the property for Masjid Noor ul-Haram and to run it.

After Salat u'l-Jumu'ah, he would buy food from a restaurant to feed his companions whom he gave a ride to their home.

Qari Ataullah Saheb told me that the elders of WIM Canada really appreciated Brother Irshad's efforts in raising funds for WIM Canada. He told me that even after he was no longer President of WIM, Brother Irshad phoned him regularly to keep him informed and involved in the activities of WIM Canada.

Recently, Brother Noor Hassan, the present President of WIM said that al-Marhum Irshad was one of his mentors.

Even al-Marhum Hajji Shamir Khan رحمته اللہ علیہ, the visionary founder Imam of Masjid Imdad said that Brother Irshad Munawwar has great vision.

He benefited from the du'a' of his parents of whom he took great care. He was with his father, elder 'Abdul Rahim رحمته اللہ علیہ in the hospital when he passed ahead. He maintained a very good relationship with his brothers and sister and the extended family. He treated both his sons Zafar and Uthman equally well.

He followed the advice of Mawlana Noorani رحمته اللہ علیہ and after Mawlana Noorani left his earthly existence, he followed the advice of the other 'ulama' of WIM who took over from him.

He was from a middle-income family, who was one of the fuqara' (needy before Allah ﷻ).

He brought his sons and nephews to our Madrasa al-Hidaya Sunday religious school at home and he sat with the students. That is how humble he was.

He enrolled his son Usman in a full-time Hifz school where he became Hafiz u'l-Qur'an in a short period of seven months. SubhanAllah! Now, Hafiz Usman Munawwar is one of the Imams and Khatibs of Masjid Noor ul-Haram. Al-Hamdu Lillah! One of the dreams of Irshad Saheb was fulfilled.

Brother Irshad attended all the religious programs we organized as Madrasa al-Hidaya, and we attended all the programs of WIM Canada as well as programs which Brother Irshad personally organized at his home. There has always been mutual respect and cooperation.

Once he asked me about ruh (the soul). I told him that the soul is with the Command of Allah ﷻ, and that the Awliya' Allah ﷻ try to make it so powerful through exertion in the way of Allah ﷻ that their soul is present even after they pass ahead.

As Brother Irshad had a heart problem, the doctors advised him to go on a diet. He refused to do that. When he was hospitalized in his final illness, he used water from a bottle to do wudu and never missed Salah.

He passed ahead on 27 Muharram 1431 A.H, 12 January 2010. His passing head was a great loss for the Muslims of Toronto. There was a record gathering at his Salat u'l-Janazah in Masjid Noor ul-Haram. May Allah ﷻ give him, his parents, and all the Zakirin and Zakiraat رحمہم اللہ a high place in Jannah. Amin Ya Rabb al-'Alamin!

O Allah! Shower donations on WIM Canada so that its committee members together with those who associate with the masjid are quickly able to complete the construction of the grand new landmark masjid in Metro Toronto. Amin!

After Brother Irshad passed ahead, I saw him in a dream that he was in the front row of a new masjid.

May we continue to benefit from the du'a' of our parents, shaykhs and murshids. Amin!

Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad

12 Rabi ul-Awwal 1448 A.H / August 2026, Toronto