

IMAM SHAH AHMAD NOORANI SIDDIQUI (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh) (1344-1424 A.H, 1926-2003 C.E)

Imam Shah Ahmad Noorani Siddiqui (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh), popularly known as Mawlana Noorani, traces his spiritual roots to our Beloved Holy Prophet Sayyidina Muhammad al-Mustafa ﷺ through Ghawth al-A‘zam ash-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani ؒ, and he traces his genealogical roots to Sayyidina Abu Bakr as-Siddiq ؓ, the first Khalifa of RasulAllah ﷺ.

Naf‘anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

He is a Shaykh al-Islam who was born in Meerut, India in Ramadan 1344 A.H, 1926 C.E, and became Hafiz al-Qur‘an at the age of 8. Then he went on to become an ‘ālim (Muslim scholar) in the Hanafi school of sacred Muslim law in the Ahl as-Sunnah wa‘l-Jama‘ah tradition. His family emigrated to Pakistan in 1950.

Naf‘anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

His first teacher was his father, Ad-Dā‘ī al-Kāmil, Mawlana Shah Muhammad ‘Abdul ‘Alim Siddiqui (Rahmatullahi ‘alayh), (1310-1374 A.H, 1892-1954 C.E), a world-renowned ‘ālim who toured dozens of countries in the five continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and South America to propagate Islam, **Al-Hamdu Lillah** (all Praise is for Allah ﷻ). Mawlana Noorani worked in the footsteps of his illustrious father.

Naf‘anAllahu bihima

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from them both, Ameen).

Mawlana Noorani gave his whole life **waqf Lillah**, in the service of Allah ﷻ.

Naf‘anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

Mawlana Noorani is an international personality who founded his organization, the World Islamic Mission (WIM) at Dar al-Arqam in Makkah in 1972; got married to a noble and pious lady from Madina; was a visiting professor who taught Islam at a university in Baghdad for a number of years; laid the foundation stone in 1981 of Masjid Taibah, the first Jami‘ Masjid in the Netherlands; led Tarawih prayers in his home town of Karachi and elsewhere for 64 years; and travelled world-wide for over fifty-five years to propagate Islam, **Al-Hamdu Lillah** (all Praise is for Allah ﷻ).

Naf‘anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

Mawlana Noorani loved to talk about the reality of **nūr** (Light, spiritual light). At one of the **Milad-un-Nabi** conferences organized by the World Islamic Mission (WIM) in Toronto, he quoted verses from the Holy Qur'an to explain that Allah ﷻ is **Nūr**, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is **nūr**, the Holy Qur'an is **nūr**, and Muslims are on **nūr**. He explained that Allah ﷻ is **Nūr** as we learn from Surah an-Nūr, verse 35.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (24:35)

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is **nūr**.

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ

Indeed, there has come to you from Allah, a light (Prophet Muhammad), and a luminous Book (the Qur'an). (5:15)

The Holy Qur'an is **nūr**.

فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

.....so those who believe in him (Prophet Muhammad) and honour him and help him and follow the light (the Qur'an) which has been sent down with him, they are the ones who are the successful. (7:157)

And Muslims are upon **nūr**.

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۙ

Is he whose heart Allah has opened to Islam so that he is upon a light from his Lord (the same as he who is a hard-hearted)? (39:22)

So, Mawlana Noorani's du'ā' (supplication) was:

رَبَّنَا أَنْتَ لَنَا نُورُنَا وَأَعْفِرْ لَنَا إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Our Lord! Perfect our light for us and forgive us. Indeed, You are All-Powerful over everything. (66:8)

Allah ﷻ accepted his du'ā' and turned him into **nūr** (spiritual light) so that once he was seen in waking vision as a chandelier of light descending in the middle of Masjid Noor-ul-Haram in Toronto from up above.

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

Indeed, these opening couplets of a **manqabat** (poem of praise) by Professor Muhammad Anwar in honour of Mawlana Noorani are along similar lines.

خدا نے دین نورانی دیا قرآن نورانی
 امامِ انبیاء کی مومنو ہے شان نورانی
 مسلمانوں کے سینے میں ہے روشن نور کی مشعل
 خدا نے خوب بخشا ہے ہمیں سلطان نورانی
 ہے یہ صدیق کا بیٹا اس سے بس وفا ڈھونڈو
 حیا و حلم کا پیکر سخی انسان نورانی

God gave us a shining religion and the Luminous Qur'an
 O believers! The eminence of the leader of all the Prophets is resplendent

In the hearts of the Muslims is a brightly shining torch
 God has bestowed us very well with Sultan Noorani

He is the son of Siddiq, look towards him for faithfulness
 The embodiment of modesty and gentleness, a generous person Noorani

Indeed, Mawlana Noorani was very generous and charitable. Professor Ahmad Siddiqui informed us that once when Mawlana Noorani received a lot of money in Baghdad, he at once had it distributed to the poor.

Naf'anAllahu bih
 (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

The Mawlana was an orator and, at religious gatherings, he used to be the key-note final speaker. Even if there were ten or more speakers, his speech was the most outstanding, definitive, effective, memorable and inspiring, without any repetition. He spoke at the level of the audience and he said that his theme was the link with RasulAllah ﷺ in Madina.

Naf'anAllahu bih
 (may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

He nurtured:

* love for Allah ﷻ through weekly gatherings of **Zikrullah** (remembrance of Allah),

* love for RasulAllah ﷺ through Milad-un-Nabi programs,

* love for the **Ahl al-Bayt** (the Prophet's Household) and the **Sahaba** (his Companions ﷺ) through his speeches, and

* love for the **Awliya' Allah** (Friends of Allah, sufi masters) and the **salihin** (the pious), by holding their '**Urs sharif** (anniversary celebrations).

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

When we study Hadith (Sayings) of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, we realize that each of his close Companions thought that his relationship with the Prophet ﷺ was so special that none of the other Companions could match it. Mawlana Noorani was one of the Shaykh al-Islam who fulfilled even this Sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ. If you talk with his close companions or read what they have written, you realize that each of them feels his relationship with Mawlana Noorani was more special compared to that of the rest.

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

Mawlana Noorani is a Shaykh al-Islam who could sit in the hearts of the **muhibbin** and the **muridin** (loving disciples). This phenomenon is well-known as it has been explained by sufi masters over many centuries. Shaykh 'Afifuddin al-Yafi'i al-Yamani said that ash-Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani used to roam in the hearts of people. Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi writes in his **Mathnawi** to be careful and have proper respect for a shaykh as he sits in the hearts of people. Sultan-ul-'Arifin, Sultan Bahu writes in **Chambay Dhee Bootee** (The Jasmine Plant) that a shaykh pitches fourteen tents in the heart of his **murid** (disciple). Al-Habib Imam 'Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi said in a **qasida** (poem) that a shaykh pitches a tent in the heart of a loving disciple. Mawlana Noorani was one such shaykh, and anyone who knew about it could have a heart-to-heart conversation (telepathy) with him.

Naf'anAllahu bihim

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from all the shaykhs mentioned, Ameen).

Blessed are those who at a historical gathering in Nairobi had an opportunity to kiss the hand of my own shaykh Al-Habib Ahmad Mash-hur bin Taha al-Haddad and the hand of Mawlana Shah Ahmad Noorani Siddiqui. Blessed are those who were embraced by either of them.

Naf'anAllahu bihima

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from them both, Ameen).

Blessed are his **muhibbin** and **muridin** (loving disciples) and especially those who

* stood beside Mawlana Noorani to pray Salah,

* stood respectfully before him,

* sat beside him to recite the mawlid al-Barzanji or Qasida al-Burda,

* sat beside him at a gathering to distribute an Islamic journal, or

* sat beside him to eat together with him.

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

According to one estimate, Mawlana Noorani has more than half a million **muridin** (disciples) all over the world in **Tariqa al-Qadiriyya**. He is unique in that some of his disciples like to do things exactly as he did them, such is the love that he generated. Blessed is the **murid** (disciple) who

* keeps a beard resembling the beard of the Mawlana,

* talks as he talked,

* recites the verses of the Qur'an in Salah that he heard him recite, or

* recites the Qur'an, as he recited it in his Noorani voice.

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

The Muslim Khilafat is alive and well and it is based on love. The Khilafat of RasulAllah ﷺ is over the hearts of all the Muslims while the Khilafat of the sufi masters like Mawlana Noorani is over the hearts of their **muridin** (disciples). **Al-Hamdu Lillah** (all Praise is for Allah ﷻ).

Mawlana Noorani's legacy is many-fold.

* Hundreds of thousands of his **muridin** (disciples) have become '**ābidīn** (worshippers of Allah), **zakirin** (who remember Allah ﷻ), **muhibbin** (who love RasulAllah ﷺ) and **salihin** (pious). Many have become Hafiz al-Qur'an who know the whole Qur'an by heart, and '**ulama**' (learned scholars). Some have become **Rijalullah** (men of Allah) and **Awliya' Allah** (Friends of Allah). **Al-Hamdu Lillah**. (All Praise is for Allah ﷻ).

* He founded many Masajid and Madrasas worldwide.

* He encouraged Dr. Shah Faridul Haque to translate A'la Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan's Urdu translation of the Qur'an, **Kanzul Iman** into English.

* He established the World Islam Mission (WIM) in U.S.A. and Canada in 1989, and in Europe in 1998. WIM has branches in 46 countries.

* The Shah Noorani Institute of Technology (SNIT) was founded in Mauritius in 2001. Muslims of Mauritius are proud that the Mawlana visited Mauritius for the first time in 1955 and thereafter visited Mauritius 28 times.

* He established the World Islamic Mission Welfare Trust in U.K. to help poor Muslims. Its aims are to sponsor the education of orphans, provide emergency relief to earthquake victims, provide free cataract operations for poor people, and provide financial assistance to help poor and orphan girls to get married.

* There is a World Islamic Mission web-site in Norway. We should learn Norwegian to refresh our knowledge about Islam from that web-site.

This then is only part of an illustration of the many-fold world-wide legacy of Mawlana Noorani. After all, he was the President of the World Islamic Mission.

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

Mawlana Noorani was a statesman of international repute. He was elected as a Member of Parliament from Karachi in 1970. If some sections of the politicians had not played devious politics against him, he was such a charismatic personality that he would have become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. And if he had become the Prime Minister of Pakistan, we can imagine the heights to which he would have raised Pakistan.

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

He never gave up and never abandoned his people. His contributions are historical.

* He was one of the signatories of the (original) constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1973.

* He was at the forefront in Parliament in having the heretical Qadianis declared as non-Muslims.

* His struggle was to achieve Muslim unity both at the national and international levels.

* He was a senator who was acclaimed as a man of principle and ultimately all the 'ulama' of Pakistan of all schools of thought accepted him as their leader. He came to be called Qaid-e Ahl-e Sunnat, and became Imam Noorani.

Naf'anAllahu bih

(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

He was a **mard-e-mu'min** (fearless mu'min) and a champion of justice, one of the **Rijalullah** (men of Allah) who condemned Russia's invasion of Afghanistan, America's invasion of Iraq, the oppression by the State of Israel against Palestinians, and the oppression of the Muslims of Kashmir by India; and he spoke against the oppression of innocent people and against army dictatorships.

He advised politicians that they should not try to please the political establishments in the U.S.A. and the U.K., but they should try to please Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ.

If you wish to revive your spirits, you should listen to the audio recordings of his Noorani recitation of:

* the Holy Qur'an,

* **hamd** (Praise) of Allah ﷻ whose opening line is:

تجھے ڈھونڈتا تھا میں چار سو
تیری شانِ جلّ جلالہ

I was searching for you in all four directions
Your Glory! Majestic is your Majesty.

or

* **naat** (eulogy) about the birth of the Prophet ﷺ whose opening line is:

آج ہے مولودِ اکرم
الصَّلوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ

Today is the celebration of birth of the Noble (Prophet ﷺ)
(Invocation of) Blessing and (salutations of) peace on him

Officials of the World Islamic Mission world-wide are well aware of their onerous responsibility of maintaining greater **wara'** (scrupulousness) in their work and dealings, as it reflects on the Mawlana. One task that perhaps yet needs to be given priority is to transcribe (and translate where necessary) the speeches of the Mawlana, and get them published.

Many **manqabats** (poems of praise) have been written in his honour. Let us then benefit from the opening couplets of a **manqabat** by 'Atiq Javed Iqbal Noorani.

خدمتِ اسلام میں کئی جن کی ساری زندگانی
وہ حق و صداقت کی نشانی امام شاہ احمد نورانی
ہر ہر لحظہ حبِ نبی ﷺ میں وہ سرشار تھے
ہر میدان میں تھی لاجواب ان کی سحر بیانی

The one whose whole life was spent in the service of Islam
That sign of truth and sincerity, Imam Shah Ahmad Noorani

Every moment he was overflowing with the love of the Prophet
His enchanting speech in any field was matchless.

His passing ahead was mourned by Muslims all over Pakistan and indeed all over the world.

His ‘Urs (anniversary) to celebrate his achievements in promoting piety is celebrated all over the world by **muhibbin** and **muridin** (loving disciples) on 17 Shawwal, the day he was finally laid to rest in Karachi after Salat al-Jumu‘a.

May Allah ﷻ raise his **darajaat** (spiritual ranks). Ameen!

Naf'anAllahu bih
(may Allah ﷻ make us benefit from him, Ameen).

Siddiq Osman Noormuhammad

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