



Ribat



Muftī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid of Lahore

Some recollections by Ḥamzah wald Maqbūl

Rabī‘ al-Awwal 20, 1441ھ - 11/18/2019م

He was of the foremost jurists of the sacred law of his age. When his pen would move, the scholars of the subcontinent took notice. He wrote with mastery and precision on many contemporary issues which other scholars would not grasp until decades later. He was a true representative of the spiritual path, not letting his scholarly engagements interfere with his asceticism, *dhikr* or service to the creation.

He was born on the twelfth of Rabī' al-Awwal, 1369ھ, corresponding to January 1st, 1950م.

He was a physician by training and profession as well as a career military officer. In fact, he would not leave the practice of medicine, and would see the impoverished patients in the Dāta Darbār Public Hospital, up until the last years of

his life, thereby keeping the door of service to the creation open in tandem with his scholarly endeavors.

In the middle years of his life, due to his love of knowledge and keen desire to serve Islām, he resigned his commission and took up study at Jāmi'ah Madaniyyah in Lahore, under the tutelage of its great scholars, most notably its founder and rector Mawlānā¹ Sayyid Ḥāmid Mīan, the youngest of the *khulafā'*² of Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī, after whom he named his institution. During his studies, his classmates noted his seriousness in learning and his veneration of the knowledge he took. Other scholars of note from whom he took in Jāmi'ah Madaniyyah were Mawlānā Karīm-Allāh Khān, Muftī³ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd

¹ Ar. Mawlānā, our master, a title and respectful address term for a qualified scholar of the sacred sciences.

² Ar. Khalīfah pl. khulafā'. Successor, in this case in the initiatic path of Sufism.

³ Ar. Muftī. Jurisconsult.

وَأَنَا لِلتَّوَابِطِ وَالْحَمْدِ

Satyāpūrī, from whom he would take the skill of *fatwā* and Qārī⁷ ‘Abd al-Rashīd, from whom he would take a number of the arts and sciences of the *madrasah*⁴ curriculum, including those which make up the *takmilah*⁵ of the old Dars Nizāmī⁶ syllabus, which is no longer taught at most institutions. He would also learn from a number of other formidable scholars of his age from outside of Jāmi‘ah Madaniyyah, including the renowned *ḥadīth*⁷ master Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Rashīd Nu‘mānī.

He taught in the Jāmi‘ah Madaniyyah after his graduation from 1983 until 2003, at which point he took up the position of the chair of the *Iftā*⁸ program at the Jāmi‘ah Dār al-Taqwā, which was thereafter his primary seat of instruction until he passed from this world.

He would also take the spiritual path

from Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥāmid Mīan early on and be steadfast in his traversing thereof. After Mawlānā Sayyid Ḥāmid Mīan would pass from this world, Muftī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid would put his hands into the hands of Sayyid Anwar Ḥusayn Nafis Shāh, the renowned scribe, calligrapher and striver in the path of Allāh. Sayyid Nafis would give Muftī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid the *khilāfah*⁹ in the path, in the line of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd.

Muftī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid wrote a number of books, articles and *fatwās* on a number of different topics. Many benefitted from his enumeration of the legal issues of Mawlānā Ashraf ‘Alī Thānawī’s *Behishti Zevar*, and his *Fahm-ī-Dīn* series in which he presented a scholarly overview of the core disciplines of Islāmic learning to a college audience without a background in Arabic, including *ḥadīth*, ‘*aqīdah*¹⁰,

⁴ Ar. Madrasah. A place of teaching, especially of the sacred sciences of Islām.

⁵ Ar. Takmilah. Completion. Here it refers to those subjects and books of the original twelve year Dars Nizāmī syllabus which have been left out of the current eight year course in the Indian Subcontinental madrasah system.

⁶ The standardized madrasah syllabus in the Indian Subcontinent which nearly all students of the sacred sciences in traditional institutions will go through in some form or another.

⁷ Ar. Ḥadīth. A tradition of the prophet Muḥammad ﷺ narrated with a named chain of transmission.

⁸ Ar. Iftā. The institution of issuing formal legal opinions based on questions posed to a jurisconsult.

⁹ Ar. Khilāfah. Successorship, in this case in the initiatic path of Sufism.

¹⁰ Ar. ‘Aqīdah. Creed.

*tafsīr*¹¹ and *fiqh*.¹² I looked over the series and feel it is a shame that it hasn't been rendered into an English translation worthy of his scholarship. He compiled a number of *fatwās* regarding medical issues, issues of modern economics and finance and polemical refutations and corrections to his former associate Dr. Isrār Aḥmad, Javed Aḥmad Ghāmidī, various sects of Ismā'īlī Shī'ism and a number of others.

He was of stern disposition due to his veneration of the sacred knowledge. When I was studying in Lahore, he would teach his *iftā* students in the Jāmi'ah Dār al-Taqwā—where he taught from 2003 until his passing in 2019—in the mornings and see patients at the hospital in the afternoon. He would come and teach us for a six-hour block on Sunday mornings, Sunday being the one day off in the work week in most of Pakistan. A car would have to be sent for him, as *Jāmi'ah Madaniyyah's* new campus was far from the city center and he used

to commute by motorcycle, despite his advanced age, seniority amongst the scholars, and professional qualification as a medical doctor and military officer.

The students were uniformly in awe of him, due to the sharpness of his intellect, the majesty of his spiritual condition, and the gravity of his self-mortification in the spiritual path.

He had little care for the empty formalities that were culturally associated with knowledge or Sūfism.¹³ He was once asked why he would not sign the diplomas of the graduating students. He remarked, “Brother, no one wants to study anymore, so why would they care whether or not anyone signs their diplomas?”

I would see him for years coming and going from the *Khānqāh*¹⁴ of Sayyid Nafis Shāh. He would come on his motorbike, sometimes with his worthy son Muftī 'Abd-Allāh,

¹¹ Ar. Tafsīr. Qur'ānic exegesis.

¹² Ar. Fiqh. The jurisprudence of the sacred law of Islām.

¹³ Ar. Taṣawwuf. The spiritual teachings of the orthodox Sunnī tradition of Islām.

¹⁴ Urdu of Persian origin: khāniqāh. The Sūfī lodge where travelers on the spiritual path receive instruction and practice their spiritual exercises.

without fanfare, and would likewise leave, in silence and obscurity. This despite having been invested with the mantle of successorship and being recognized as a master amongst the scholars for decades.

I had the honor of reading the back half of the *Jāmi‘* of Imām Tirmidhī from him. He was loved for his brief and insightful answers to the various questions asked of him, demonstrating his mastery of Arabic, creed, spirituality and the law. His approach to knowledge was one of veneration, but not to the point of not questioning things. There were several finer points of the law relating to *ḥadīth* which he elucidated brilliantly, and I still benefit from their understanding, such as the Ḥanafī position on intoxicants. He would often remind the students not to get riled up by sloganeering and political movements, as they appropriated the symbols of *Dīn*, often times improperly; the representation of Islām was through its

sacred knowledge, and against it would all other matters worldly and political be measured. Unfortunately, many students in the enthusiasm of their youth didn't appreciate the sagacity of this advice right away.

Muftī ‘Abd al-Wāḥid passed from this world on the 18th of Shawwāl, 1440_h, corresponding to June 22nd, 2019_g. If ever there was a teacher whose student was unworthy to write about him it would be on this occasion. He was buried in Lahore's old Mīanī Ṣāḥib graveyard, in the enclosure of Ghāzī ‘Alam Dīn Shahīd, who was martyred by the *farangī* usurper for standing for the honor of the messenger of Allāh ﷺ, which coincidentally is not far from the grave of my maternal grandfather. May Allāh's mercy encompass them, all of our *Akābir*, *Mashāyikh*, *Aslāf*, and all those who were true to the teachings of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ until the Day of Judgment.

¹⁵ Urdu of Persian origin; Farangī: Frank. A term used to describe an antagonistic and unscrupulous non-believer of post Roman national origin, in this case the British colonizer.

¹⁶ Ar. Akābir. The great ones who passed before us in Islām, whose piety, learning and struggles are a model for us. The messenger of Allāh ﷺ said in a ḥadīth narrated by Ḥākim Nishāpūrī, “The blessings are in following your Akābir.”

¹⁷ Ar. Shaykh, pl. Mashāyikh: a master of one or more branches of learning in the sacred sciences of Islām.

¹⁸ Ar. Aslāf. Those who passed before.