

THIRTY-FIVE

SHAYKH ‘ABD AL-BĀRĪ ﷺ



DATE OF DEATH: 6th or 28th Muḥarram or 11th Sha‘bān 1226 AH
PLACE OF BURIAL: Amroha, district Moradabad

SENDING REWARD FOR THE SAINTS OF THE ORDER

I will briefly mention the saint to be discussed in today’s gathering, as he will also be waiting. The booklet which contains the practices of this order states that one should recite Sūra Yāsīn for [the reward of] the saints of the order. If you are amongst those who do so, they will be familiar with you, and if you recite punctually, they will remember you even more.

SEEING THE NOBLE PROPHET ﷺ IN A DREAM

I had a room-mate at Saharanpur called Shaykh Furqān Bāra Bankwī. His maternal uncle is well-known amongst the tablīghī brothers. He is the nephew of Brother Khālid ‘Alīgarhī of Aligarh Muslim University. He once fell extremely ill with a severe fever and had not eaten.

After finishing my studies late at night, I prepared some tea for him. He got up and began crying. I assumed that he was crying because he was ill and weak, and thus I consoled him.

He calmed down after a short while and then told me his

practice was to invoke peace and blessings upon the Prophet ﷺ a certain amount of times before sleeping. He mentioned a very small number, probably twenty-five. He said that he could not invoke blessings on that night, because of his illness, and he saw the Noble Prophet ﷺ in his dream. “Why do you cry over this? It is something to be happy about, knowing that the Prophet ﷺ remembered you. You invoke peace and blessings upon him on a daily basis, but were unable to last night, so he ﷺ came [in your dream] to visit you,” I said.

DARUL ULOOM APPEARING AS A BRIGHT STAR

Those who have passed away recognise those who send them the reward of recitation of the Qur’ān and other acts of worship, and even those above who did not recognise the senders in their lifetimes recognise these places.

We used to have a student here from London called Abdāl Miā who would stay here during the holidays. He once related his dream to me in which he saw his late paternal-aunt who told him, “I know your Darul Uloom.”

He asked her, “How do you know our Darul Uloom when you passed away in Bangladesh?”

She replied, “Just as you people recognise the different stars above, we too see from above the places that shine with light, one of which is your Darul Uloom.”

SHAYKH ‘ABD AL-BĀRĪ ﷺ

The saint of today’s gathering, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Bārī Amrohī ﷺ, will also be waiting. He was the spiritual mentor of Shaykh ‘Abd

al-Raḥīm Wilāyatī ؒ, regarding whom I mentioned that he initially pledged allegiance to Shaykh Raḥm ‘Alī Sādhorī ؒ. After Shaykh Raḥm ‘Alī Sādhorī ؒ passed away, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Wilāyatī ؒ pledged allegiance to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Bārī ؒ. After his demise, he pledged allegiance to Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ when he passed by on his travels. I previously mentioned the incident of him and his attendant with Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ.

AN ATTENDANT OF SHAYKH ‘ABD AL-BĀRĪ ؒ

I mentioned his name to be Ghulām Rasūl. Actually, his name was ‘Abdullāh Khān. He questioned him, “Tell me, your connection with Allāh is very strong, so why then did you pledge allegiance to him? Your connection is stronger than that of whom you pledged allegiance to.” He replied, “Never mind connections (*nisba*), I received and acquired ṣalāh through him.”

THE ORDERS OF TAṢAWWUF

Because the orders of Taṣawwuf had gradually become very distant from the Sunna and had lost the colour of Sunna, when he returned to his home town, Panchlāsa (where the grave of Shaykh Raḥm ‘Alī Sādhorī ؒ is located), he gathered the people (who had gathered due to his return anyway) solely to announce, “We used to celebrate the ‘urs [commemoration of a saint’s death anniversary] of our spiritual mentor and it would also take place before my arrival. After I arrived, I really promoted it. However, Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ came and informed us that it is a bid’a [innovation]. Thus, we should let go of this impermissible

practice as it is a bid'a." Everyone got up and dispersed, saying, "He is not a ḥājī but a pājī (scoundrel)."

TAṢAWWUR AL-SHAYKH

Not only did he purify the orders, but he would not tolerate wavering from the Sunna in the slightest. When he first pledged allegiance to Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ؒ and began his prescribed dhikr and practices, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ؒ instructed him to exercise *taṣawwur al-shaykh*. Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ replied, "If *sulūk* and *ṭarīqa* depends on *taṣawwur al-shaykh*, then I will discontinue everything henceforth, for this will lead me to shirk." This was how frank he was when speaking to his spiritual mentor.

Taṣawwur al-shaykh is to visualise one's spiritual mentor in the heart. It is prescribed as a cure [from ailments]. It is prescribed to release the heart from the love of a beloved one, and its effectiveness in this regard is unmatched. It is normally specifically prescribed; otherwise, there are other cures for this ailment apart from this.

However, there is another *taṣawwur al-shaykh* that occurs of its own accord without any evocation. I had a classmate during my *Mishkāt* year and final year of *ḥadīth* at *Maẓāhir al-‘Ulūm* [Saharanpur] called Shaykh Shabbīr Aḥmad Barelwī. He had a wife and children, and worked at a factory in Aḥmadabad. He studied there [Aḥmadabad] under a pathān scholar till *Mishkāt* and thereafter enrolled at *Maẓāhir al-‘Ulūm*. He would look after my bench, books and exercise books whenever I came late.

Shaykh Shabbīr Aḥmad was from Bans-Bareli. He once expressed a worry of his to me by saying that for the past few days, whenever he started *ṣalāh*, as soon as he recited *Allāhu Akbar*, his shaykh would appear before him. He said, "I try my utmost best

to ponder over the meaning of the recitation, but all that seems to come to me is my shaykh.”

SHAYKH SAYYID AḤMAD BARELWĪ ﷺ

This type of *taṣawwur* is involuntary. Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ﷺ once cast his spiritual attention on one of his disciples. Subsequently, when he left the room, all he could see was his spiritual mentor to his right and left, and in front of him. He uttered, “My spiritual mentor and guide.” Someone asked him what had happened. He replied that all he could see in all four directions was his Shaykh, Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ﷺ. This *taṣawwur* would occur to him involuntarily. What a great statement Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ﷺ made! He said, “You picture a dog like me?!!” This statement brought an end to the disciple’s condition.

I related the incident of Shaykh Zakariyyā ﷺ on numerous occasions. I would push his wheelchair at great speed from the old student campus to his house (*kaccha ghar*). The congregation and children would follow behind, and so would the dogs of the locality. Dogs tend to chase after someone who runs. When the dogs would catch up whilst barking, the Shaykh would address them, saying, “Your brother [referring to himself] is sufficient here alone. Why do you trouble yourself? Go home.” This would be an everyday scenario.

Similarly, Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ﷺ told his disciple to stop picturing a dog like him. Only Allāh knows what state he was in when he uttered this, but the disciple was certainly relieved of his condition; no longer did he picture Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ﷺ.

I have previously mentioned that during this expedition of Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ﷺ, over forty thousand Hindus

converted to Islām, three million Muslims pledged allegiance to him, and it is stated that millions of Muslims were rectified. Shiahs who occupied entire areas became Sunni during this expedition of Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ.

REPENTANCE FROM SHIAISM

How would this happen? Well, Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ was once delivering a speech in the main Akbarī Masjid of Delhi on the virtues of the Four Caliphs, whilst three staunch Shiahs sat listening amongst the gathering of thousands. The three then stood up in the midst of this huge congregation and began laughing aloud, whilst Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ was making a mention of the virtues of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ؓ and Sayyidunā ʿUmar ؓ. Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ exclaimed IllAllāh loudly causing one of them to drop on the spot as if he was shot. The second tried to escape, but fell by the water tank and the third dropped by the stairs.

Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ ordered for them to be brought forward and treated. All three were unconscious. Thereafter, he ordered for them to be told to offer 'ishā' prayers with everyone else prior to leaving. After 'ishā', they came and held the feet of Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ as they cried and repented from Shiaism. Miracles like this occurred everyday. Allāh Most High purified entire regions of Shiahs through Shaykh Sayyid Aḥmad Barelwī ؒ.

INITIATION OF JAMĀ'AT AL-TABLĪGH

In a similar manner, the effort of Tablīgh is proving itself to be very effective. How did this group start? The paternal grandfather of Shaykh Zakariyyā ؒ, Shaykh Muḥammad Ismā'īl ؒ, lived by the Bangla Masjid of the Tablīghī Markaz. He would stay on a bedstead outside the masjid. The route from Mewāt to the city along which people would come to the city in search for employment, ran past the masjid. "Where are you going?" the Shaykh would ask those passing. They would tell him that they were in search for work at which he would reply, "What will you gain from work besides roti [chapatti]? Come, I will give you roti. Come and sit in the masjid and study." He would invite them into the masjid, provide them with food and drink, and teach them about religion. This was how Tablīgh was initiated.

CALLERS TOWARDS ṢALĀH

Then when Shaykh Ilyās ؒ took up the work... Shaykh Zakariyyā ؒ states in [his commentary of] Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, in the Book of Adhān where there is a mention of a consultation amongst the Companions regarding which method should be adopted to invite people towards ṣalāh (by beating a drum, blowing a conch or lighting a fire etc). His uncle's companions suggested that every group should carry a flag with them for people to recognise them to be callers to ṣalāh. He says that his uncle left the decision pending until he arrived at Nizāmuddīn.

Shaykh Zakariyyā ؒ states that when he went and the question was put to him, he replied telling his uncle that the use of a flag to call people to ṣalāh has already been rejected. One of the suggestions [at the time of the Noble Prophet ﷺ] besides beating

a drum, blowing a conch or lighting a fire, was to raise a flag high for people to be notified of ṣalāh times.

Shaykh Zakariyyā ؒ argued that how can something which has been rejected in the gathering of the Prophet ﷺ be used to call people towards ṣalāh?

So, Shaykh Ismā'īl ؒ would invite people to the masjid and teach them how to offer ṣalāh. But their kalima [statement of faith] was incorrect, thus the kalima was set as the first principle [of Tablīgh]. Kalima was the first principle and thereafter ṣalāh. Then, Shaykh Iḥtishām al-Ḥasan Kandhalwī ؒ who spent a long time with Shaykh Ilyās ؒ, wrote a book, titled, “Muslim degeneration and its only cure” which is published at the end of *Fadhā'il e A'māl*.

THIRD PRINCIPLE: QUR'ĀN

The third of the written principles after kalima and ṣalāh was Qur'ān. Regular recitation of the Holy Qur'ān and learning to recite with tajweed was a principle in itself.

SEVENTH PRINCIPLE: ABSTINENCE FROM THAT WHICH IS FUTILE

These were the principles of Tablīgh which were not confined to a particular number by the founders of this effort; not one, nor seven, nor six. Rather, the principles which they focused on later developed into established points like kalima, ṣalāh, seeking knowledge (ilm), dhikr, ikrām al-muslimīn [kindness to the Muslims] and Tablīgh [propagation]. Along with these, there was a seventh principle: abstinence from everything which does not

concern one. This meant that propagation should be done within the boundaries of these six principles and nothing else.

May Allāh Most High employ us for the service of His religion and may He enable us to benefit from the spirituality of these saintly predecessors.

اللهم صل على سيدنا ونبينا وشفيعنا وحبينا وسندنا ومولانا محمد وبارك
وسلم، سبحن ربك رب العزة عما يصفون وسلام على المرسلين والحمد لله رب
العلمين

