

IN LOVE OF THE BELOVED MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

A PAGE FROM THE LIVES OF THE SCHOLARS OF DEOBAND

*O Cool Breeze! Give this message to my Beloved,
Repetition of his name on my tongue is second only to Allah!*

THE BOND OF LOVE

The bond of love between a believer and the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ is unique and unparalleled. This connection serves as a spiritual energetic connection which motivates a believer towards preserving his Iman and undertaking his religious duties.

Whilst all believers maintain a level of relationship with the Prophet ﷺ the strength of this link varies according to individuals. The love of the Prophet ﷺ is what differentiates the believers in the perfection of their Imaan and Deen.

In an authentic Hadith related in Bukhari and Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ said: *"None of you believes until he loves me more than he loves his children, his parents, and all people."*

In another Hadith in Bukhari he said: *"None of you believes until he loves me more than he loves himself."*

The commentator of Bukhari, Hafiz ibn Hajar R.A. writes: *"An evidence of this love is if somebody were to favour losing something extremely precious rather than lose the chance to see Prophet ﷺ if indeed it was possible to see him. Missing out on an opportunity to see the Prophet ﷺ is harsher and more heart-breaking for a person than losing an extremely precious thing. If this was not the case, then the description of love would not be applicable to such a person."*

THE EXAMPLE OF THE PIOUS PRECEDESSORS

The pious predecessors of every era have illustrated to the Ummah the practical expression of the meaning of these Hadith in various ways and forms.

There are examples in Islamic history of the lovers of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who forewent everything, including their lives, beloved families, valuable possessions and all those things for which man strives for in this world.

The only reason for undertaking such sacrifices was their deep absorption in the love of Messenger of Allah ﷺ and their unshakable connection with him.

THE SCHOLARS OF DEOBAND

The love of the scholars of Deoband for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stands out amongst all the institutions of the world. Whilst, adherence to the prophetic way of life was a feature of their lives and their time was engaged mainly in the propagation of the Prophetic teachings, in the form of teaching Hadith, delivering discourses and Dawah work, as though these were their assignments in life.

Withholding these noble tasks, discretely they were sublime beacons absorbed in deep love of the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Their thoughts were always occupied with the Beloved ﷺ and when they would speak, it was nothing but about him, as if, the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ has become the epicentre of their survival and existence in this world.

As an example, I hereby mention three distinguished scholars of Deoband and their love for the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

SHAYKH MAULANA QASIM NANOTVI R.A.

Shaykh Maulana Qasim Nanotvi R.A. was the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband. He devoted his life for the preservation of Islam and the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. His love for the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ was immense which can be gauged from the following incidents.

During the journey of Hajj when the Shaykh departed for the blessed city of Madina he refused to ride on a camel despite it being available. No sooner had he entered the vicinity of the Prophet ﷺ mosque and the dome of Masjid-e-Nabawi became apparent he removed his shoes and started walking barefoot. The rough roads and stones injured and bloodied his feet but he would say that he could not imagine stepping with shoes on the spot where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once walked.

Once the Shaykh was presented with a pair of green shoes which were popular in his home town of Nanota, India. Whilst, accepting the shoes he never ever wore them. When it was once enquired from him the reason for not wearing the shoes, he said, he could not wear something on his feet that resembled the colour of the dome of the Prophet's Mosque ﷺ.

During his stay in Madina he would present himself with great humility and respect at the Prophet's ﷺ grave. Once he emerged from the Masjid with his face glowing with nur (light) and someone asked him what had transpired. He replied in these words:

*“My Master was so gracious and kind to me,
He fulfilled all my requests even before my asking.
This continuous shower of blessings is so fascinating,
The intoxication shows effect even before consuming it.”*

When departing from Madina, the Shaykh looked at the Green Dome of the Prophet's Mosque ﷺ and said in a poem:

*“May I be sacrificed a thousand times for you O Madina,
So that even if I had to die I would not be separated from you.”*

SHAYKH MAULANA RASHID AHMED GANGOHI R.A.

Shaykh Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi R.A. devoted his entire life to the service of Hadith. This proximity to the Hadith had imbued him with immense love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The following episodes manifest his connection to the Prophet ﷺ.

The Shaykh would consider all things from Madina as auspicious and special. On one occasion he was presented with clothes from Madina. Someone commented, what use are these clothes

when they have been stitched in a foreign land i.e. in India? The Shaykh replied, it is enough for us that this cloth felt the breeze of the blessed city of Madina.

The Shaykh possessed a piece of green cloth that has been used for the grave of the Prophet ﷺ, whenever someone requested to see it, he would first apply it to his eyes and then place it on the persons head.

Once he was presented with the dust from the corner of the Prophet ﷺ grave which he added to his kohl and applied it to his eyes daily.

Even the dates of Madina he would treasure and eat only on special occasions, preserving the stones from them in a special box.

The Shaykh would strongly emphasise abundant invocation of blessings and peace (*salawat*) upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to his students, family and friends. He would describe the invoking of blessings and peace upon the Prophet ﷺ as being beneficial for both worlds.

Hakeem al-Ummah Shaykh Maulana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi R.A. would say *“I saw that Maulana Gangohi would always be reciting a wird (litany) of salawat and that he talked very little.”*

SHAYKH AL-HADITH MAULANA MUHAMMAD ZAKARIYYA R.A.

Shaykh al-Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya R.A. was a Muhaddith (Expert in Hadith) and Shaykh (spiritual guide) for thousands of people across the globe. He taught and wrote on Hadith for over 30 years and authored more than 100 books on various topics.

With such service to Hadith and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ the Shaykh decided to migrate to the Blessed City of Madina Al-Munawwarah with the desire to die there and be buried in Jannatul Baqi – the cemetery of Madina.

It was during these days of residence in Madina that he would present himself regularly at the grave of the Master of Both Worlds ﷺ to offer his salutations. During these visits, many a times, it was observed that he would slowly lift his hand towards the gates around the blessed grave taking the dust with his fingers and then rubbing it on his face, eyes and tongue.

As a result of this longing and deep love for the Prophet ﷺ Allah the Almighty accepted his Duas and granted his wish of burial in close proximity to His Beloved ﷺ

THE PATH OF THE SCHOLARS OF DEOBAND

It is evident from these episodes that the love of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ played a pivotal role in the life of these illustrious scholars. It was this very reason that the Grand Mufti of Deoband Shaykh Mufti Mahmood Hasan Gangohi R.A. said,

The path of the ‘Ulama of Deoband comprises of five things;

1. The love of Allah should burn in one’s heart.
2. While refraining from customs which have no place in the Shariah, one should have faith in pure Tawheed (monotheism, believing in the oneness of Allah.)

3. The love of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ should be dominant over every other creation.
4. Every facet of life should be illuminated with the following of the Sunnah
5. There should be a love and desire to spread/propagate the Deen.

CONCLUSION

In short, love of the Beloved Messenger of Allah ﷺ is the core of our belief and religion. Deficiency in it, results in Iman and Deen being imperfect and incomplete.

May Almighty Allah instil the true love of the Prophet ﷺ in our hearts and grant us the ability to follow his footsteps in every aspect of our daily lives.

*Words are not enough, my tongue is unable;
what mention can I make of the Messenger ﷺ.
The ocean has no shore; how can such an ocean be crossed?*

"O Allah, send Your Blessings come upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as you have blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as you have blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly, You are Praiseworthy and Glorious."

***"By the gate of your generosity stands a sinner, who is mad with love.
O best of mankind in radiance of face and countenance!
Through you he seeks a means [tawassala],
hoping for Allah's forgiveness of slips;
from fear of Him, his eyelid is wet with pouring tears.
Although his genealogy attributes him to a stone [hajr],
how often tears have flowed, sweet, pure and fresh!
Praise of you does not do you justice, but perhaps,
in eternity, its verses will be transformed into mansions.
My praise of you shall continue for as long as I live,
for I see nothing that could ever deflect me from your praise."***

From the Diwan of Hafez ibn Hajr Al-'Asqalani R.A.

