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The Love of the Scholars of Deoband for the Messenger ﷺ **By Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad (db)**

In this period of the *ummah* (Muslim nation), the name of Darul-Uloom Deoband and its scholars stand out among all the religious institutions of the world. *Shaykh* Ata'ullah Shah Bukhari ؒ said that it appears that Allah ﷻ held back a few spirits (*ruh*) of the *Sahabah* from their caravan in order to send them later during our times. The later generations of Muslims could hence catch a glimpse of the lives of these earlier people.

Their actions shone in every aspect of their lives. When speaking, they would look and sound like Junaid and Bayazid. At one front they were seen leading the war of independence against the British in the battlefield of Shamli, and on another front their work of *Tabligh* has touched the entire world.

Deoband fashioned many great scholars of the Holy Quran and *hadith*, at the same time that it was fashioning many leaders and warriors. Through these services, Deoband has successfully engraved its name in history. These people were the true inheritors of the Prophets and true lovers of the Holy Quran and sunnah, the ways and habits of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They did not merely rely on rendering oral praise to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, but revived his sunnah through application in their own lives, hence proving their love. Their lives sparkled with love for Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

Always surrounded by Allah's ﷻ love and guidance, they never strayed into excess or deficiency in their religion. These people were true embodiments of *سطها او مور لا ا*.

*O Cool Breeze! Give this message to my beloved,
Repetition of his name on my tongue is second only to Allah's ﷻ.*

Following are a few examples of their love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

Hujjat ul-Islam Maulana Shaykh Qasim Nanotvi ؒ

When proceeding for the Pilgrimage (*Hajj*), *Maulana* Nanotvi ؒ refused to wear shoes in the land of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ for fear of disrespecting the places where he may have walked.

Maulana Nanotvi's ؒ traveling companion, Hakim Mansur Ali Khan ؒ said, "When we neared Madinah, *Shaykh* Nanotvi ؒ took off his shoes from where we could see the dome of Masjid-e-Nabawi ﷺ and walked barefoot. Walking thus he entered the Masjid in the darkness of the night."

Hadrat Madni ؒ said this regarding the journey; "*Hadrat* Nanotvi ؒ would not ride despite having a camel available to him. The rough road and stones injured and bloodied his

feet. He used to say that he could not imagine stepping with shoes where the Messenger of Allah ﷺ might have walked.”

Hadrat Madni ﷺ wrote in “*Shahabe Thakib*” that green shoes were popular in the *Maulana*’s town of Nanota. Someone once presented a pair of such shoes to him as a gift, which he accepted but never wore in his life. When asked about this later, he said that he could not wear something on his feet that had the same color as the dome of Masjid-e-Nabawi ﷺ.

After the Battle of Independence of 1857, the British set out to punish and kill the scholars and issued warrants against *Maulana* Nanotvi ﷺ. His followers hid him away in a safe house, but he would not stay hidden for more than three days. His followers expressed their fear for his life, to which he said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ and *Hadrat* Abu Bakr ﷺ only stayed in the Cave of Thaur for three days. Remember that when a tailor is given a blueprint from which to sew, the closer he adheres to the blueprint, the better the price he will get. Our blueprint is the life of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Whoever adheres the most to this blueprint, the more love and attachment to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ he will earn. Life and death are in the hands of Allah ﷻ; our work is to follow the sunnah.”

He used to present himself with great humility in the Masjid at Madinah. Once he came out with his face sparkling and someone said, “Today it looks like something special happened.” In reply, *Hadrat* Nanotvi ﷺ said;

*My beloved has favored me so abundantly,
He fulfilled all my desires even before my asking.
This continuous shower of blessings is so fascinating,
This intoxication shows effect before the wine is consumed.*

When returning from Madinah, *Hadrat* looked at the Green Dome of the Prophet’s Masjid ﷺ and said in a poem:

*May I be sacrificed a thousand times for you O Madinah,
Whatever the sacrifice, I would not leave you even after my death.*

Hadrat Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi ﷺ

Hadrat Maulana Gangohi ﷺ had in his possession a piece of the green cloth that had been used for the grave of the Prophet ﷺ. Whenever anyone wished to see it, *Hadrat* ﷺ would first apply it to his own eyes and then place it on the person’s head.

Hadrat Maulana Gangohi ﷺ would often receive dates from Madinah, which he would keep in a safe place and only eat them on special occasions. He would also keep the seeds in a safe place, and regarded anything from Madinah with great value.

On one occasion he was presented with the dust from a corner of the Prophet’s ﷺ tomb. He added this to his *kohl* and applied it daily. Another time he was presented with clothes from Madinah. One of his students said, “What use are these clothes when they have been stitched

in a foreign land?” *Hadrat* Gangohi ﷺ replied, “It is enough for us that this cloth felt the breeze of Madinah.”

Hadrat Gangohi ﷺ used to teach in the courtyard of the Darul-Uloom. One day there was a heavy downpour and all the students ran for shelter. *Hadrat* Gangohi ﷺ spread his shawl, wrapped the students’ shoes in it and carried it in on his head. The students felt deeply ashamed and protested that a man of his status should not be doing such work. *Hadrat* Gangohi ﷺ replied, “What should Rashid Ahmed do except carry the shoes of those who study the Word of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ?”

It is sunnah to exit the masjid with the left foot, but also sunnah to wear the right shoe first. Whenever *Hadrat* Gangohi ﷺ would leave the masjid, he would lead with his left foot and put it on top of his left shoe, and then wear the right shoe on the right foot. He used to become angry when met with a half or improper greeting (*salam*). As a last will and testament, *Hadrat* ﷺ advised his family never to stray from the sunnah and to regard even a slight deviation as the enemy.

***Hadrat* Shaykh ul-Hind Maulana Mahmoud al-Hasan ﷺ**

Shaykh al-Hasan ﷺ used to pray the night’s final two *rakats* sitting down. A student of his noted that praying while seated earned only half the reward of praying while standing. The *Shaykh* ﷺ acknowledged this but added that praying these final two *rakats* while seated was proven through the life of the Prophet ﷺ.

*Servitude is our purpose. Reward and punishment we know not,
The lovers know not how to calculate the reward of deeds.*

Even the *Shaykh’s* ﷺ long-time and loyal household servants could not point out a single incident in his life in which he committed an act outside of the sunnah. Day or night; in sickness or in health; at home or during travel, *Shaykh* al-Hasan ﷺ paid close attention to the sunnah and always warned others to be weary of it.

Shaykh al-Hasan’s ﷺ particular habit was to seek out and closely adhere to every sunnah. Scolding students was not in his nature, and whenever anyone presented him with a fruit, he would put it against his eyes and then give it away to a child as a gift.

While imprisoned on the island of Malta, the *Shaykh* ﷺ requested to buy a goat for *Eid ul-Adha*. He sacrificed it while loudly calling out “Allah ﷻ is great!” He later explained that one should fulfill everything within one’s capacity, even in such dire circumstances as being imprisoned.

He would have vinegar with every meal because of a *hadith* that mentions vinegar as the best food. The *Shaykh* ﷺ had reached the status where it became easy for him to follow every sunnah.

Hadrat Maulana Khalil Ahmed Saharanpuri ﷺ

It is written in the book “*Tadhkhiratul Khalil*” that the ground of Mina was covered with tents and *Hadrat Saharanpuri* ﷺ was praying late night prayers (*tahajjud*) in the midst. Dawn broke and the guides started announcing and calling for everyone to get ready to go to Arafat. *Hadrat* ﷺ was so involved in his prayer that he was oblivious to everything around him. When he finished his prayer the guide urged him to hurry, saying that his Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) would be voided if they delayed anymore because the camels would leave and they would be unable to get to Arafat. He further added that it was improper to sacrifice an obligatory act (*fardh*) for a sunnah.

Hadrat Saharanpuri ﷺ became very angry at this and said, “I have accepted you as my guide and not my teacher. Our purpose in bearing difficulty on the *Hajj* is to be able to perform the *Hajj* according to the sunnah, and we will not be hurried or ordered around. Let them take the camels. You have not let me pray in peace so now I will let you go. Go tend to the others and let me be. Arafat is not far and I am not lame. If the camels leave I shall walk. I will not sacrifice the sunnah at just anyone’s saying.”

Hadrat Syed Ahmed Shaheed ﷺ

Hadrat Shaheed ﷺ used to warn everybody he accepted for allegiance to adhere strictly to the sunnah. He told one of his students, Imam Hai, to warn him whenever he would act contrary to the sunnah. Imam Hai said to this that he would not even be with *Shaykh Ahmed* ﷺ anymore if he were to see anything like that. This shows how deeply their lives were enveloped in the sunnah.

Hadrat Syed Ismail Shaheed ﷺ

It is written that the first row of Atebari Masjid would become muddy due to excess water flow. People would therefore stand in the second row when organizing the lines for prayer. However, *Hadrat Ismail Shaheed* ﷺ would nevertheless stand in the first row despite the mud because of the sunnah of standing in the first row.

Hadrat Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri ﷺ

Studying the life of *Hadrat Anwar Shah Kashmiri* ﷺ is like studying a biography of the Prophet ﷺ. He adhered to the sunnah in every facet of his life and used to say that his success in life was due only to his close attention to the sunnah.

Hadrat Kashmiri ﷺ used to be very scared of taking or reading any *hadith* out of context, and used to have so much love and respect for *hadith* that he used to study five hundred pages of *hadith* daily, in spite of his old age and failing health. During his daily study he would refuse to lie down or slouch, but would sit in respect as if sitting for prayer.

In the early 1930s, the Qadianis tried hard in the court of Bahawalpur to have themselves declared Muslims. The local Muslims hence invited the most esteemed scholars to the case. *Hadrat Kashmiri* ﷺ was very ill when he received the court summons and his town’s scholars urged him not to go, offering themselves in his place. *Hadrat* ﷺ said in reply, “Do not be angry because I am not agreeing with you, but I am going only because the Messenger of

Allah ﷻ might decline to intercede for me on the Day of Judgment, saying, ‘Why did you not travel when it was a question of my honor?’”

Coming to Bahawalpur he said, “Maybe my coming to speak for my Prophet ﷺ might be accepted by Allah ﷻ.” *Hadrat* Kashmiri ﷺ used to stand and speak in front of the court for five hours at a time, jewels of knowledge flowing from his lips. He said, “If I die before the judgment of this court, call out the judgment at my gravesite.”

Hadrat Kashmiri ﷺ passed away in 1933 and the court did not render a decision until 1935. Honoring his instructions, *Hadrat* Maulana Muhammad Sadiq ﷺ traveled from Bahawalpur to Deoband and called out the court’s ruling at *Hadrat* Kashmiri’s ﷺ gravesite.

***Hadrat* Maulana Husain Ahmed Madni ﷺ**

Hadrat Madni ﷺ graduated from Deoband in 1316 A.H. and went to Madinah with his parents. He became a teacher of *hadith* at the Prophet’s Masjid ﷺ.

Hadrat Qari Muhammad Tayyeb ﷺ wrote that *Hadrat* Madni ﷺ taught *hadith* there for 18 years. He was so drowned in his love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, that one of his greetings at the Prophet’s ﷺ grave was replied to.

Hadrat Madni ﷺ used to sit in the courtyard of Masjid Adjaba and remembered Allah ﷻ often. Sometimes he retired to distant valleys to complete his lessons, and once, after reading a poem he loved, he continued its recitation to the point of fainting. It was then that he would be blessed with visions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

O my beloved, remove thy veil from thy face.

When speaking about the *Hajj*, he told the Pilgrims (*Hujjaj*), “You are going to earn the pleasure of Allah ﷻ, so try to maximize the reward at every moment, and send many blessings upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” He also said, “According to me and some scholars, it is better to go to Madinah first because it is the city of the Beloved of Allah ﷻ.”

Allah ﷻ states in the Holy *Quran*,

If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah’s forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed oft-Returning, most Merciful (4:64)

Hadrat Madni ﷺ explained, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is a blessing and mercy for all creation, and this is why we present ourselves first at Madinah, so that the Prophet ﷺ might pray for our *Hajj* to be accepted. We then go to Makkah so that Allah ﷻ accepts our *Hajj* through His Messenger’s ﷺ intercession.”

Once he explained the following while teaching from *Sahih Bukhari*:

One time a pilgrim (Haji) complained that the milk of Madinah is sour. The same night he saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in a dream, who said, 'Leave this place if you think that Madinah's milk is sour. Why have you come?' This person became very apprehensive and sought advice from the local scholars. The scholars told him to go and supplicate at *Hadrat* Hamza's ﷺ grave so that Allah ﷻ may forgive him. This person did as he was told and cried to Allah ﷻ at *Hadrat* Hamza's ﷺ gravesite. That night he saw *Hadrat* Hamza ﷺ in a dream, and was told him to leave Madinah or risk losing his faith.

Hadrat Madni ﷺ would say that we should not find any shortcoming or fault with anything in, or from, Madinah. All difficulties in Madinah should rather be considered pleasures.

Hadrat Madni ﷺ had an acacia tree planted in the courtyard of the school and people failed to see the point in planting a fruitless and flowerless tree there. However, it was later learned that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sat under such a tree when he had taken allegiance on the occasion of the Treaty of Hudaibiya.

***Hadrat* Shah Abdul Qadir Raipuri ﷺ**

When traveling to Madinah, *Hadrat* Raipuri ﷺ would tell his companions to let him know when the dome of Masjid-e-Nabawi ﷺ came into view. He would walk barefoot from that point onward and advise his companions to send many blessings upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ or remain silent.

In enthusiasm and love, *Hadrat* ﷺ would often ask a student or follower to recite poetry in praise of the Prophet ﷺ. He liked Imam Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya's ﷺ poetry the most, the translation of which is as follows:

*O fresh morning breeze, Start traveling to Madinah
Give salam to the residents, And send my own humble salam
To that special house in Madinah.*

When fatally ill, he used to become restless upon hearing the name of Madinah, and would often cry loudly. *Hadrat* Muhammad Sahib ﷺ was leaving for *umrah* when he stopped on his way to meet *Hadrat* Raipuri ﷺ. *Hadrat* Raipuri ﷺ started crying loudly when the name of Madinah came up in conversation. *Hadrat* Muhammad Sahib ﷺ later said that he never heard *Shaykh* Raipuri ﷺ cry so loudly.

***Hadrat* Maulana Ahmed Ali Lahori ﷺ**

Hadrat Lahori ﷺ, originally from a Sikh family, was a shining beacon who earned his degree from Deoband after accepting Islam. He stayed in India after Pakistan's independence and remained steadfast in his faith. He later migrated to Lahore where he started teaching in the Masjid of Sheranwala Gardens.

Hadrat Lahori ﷺ became so popular through his teaching that the local feudal lords became extremely jealous and accused him of blasphemy against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Hadrat Lahori ﷺ was accustomed to walking home alone at night and so a man by the name of Babu Rehmatullah was hired to kill him.

Babu came to the masjid early one morning so that he could recognize *Hadrat* easily that night. At that time *Hadrat Lahori* ﷺ was speaking about the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His words touched Babu's heart so much that Babu repented from his plan. He told those who had hired him that they would have to kill him first in order to get to *Hadrat Lahori* ﷺ.

*You lived in Lahore but your heart was in Madinah
You became a jewel of the treasure of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ*

***Hadrat Amir-e-Shariat Ata'Ullah Bukhari* ﷺ**

A Hindu named Rajpal published a book blaspheming against the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In 1927, the local Muslims exploded in a furor when the Lahore High Court acquitted Rajpal of blasphemy charges, and people in turn started a campaign of no tolerance for any insults to RasulAllah .

Hadrat Bukhari ﷺ said in a gathering; "Muslims of Lahore, the honor of your Prophet ﷺ is knocking at every door today. Today is even more distressing than when the armies of the unbelievers (*kuffar*) sacked Baghdad and we lost the Caliphate. The Kingdom above the skies is trembling because of this blasphemy. Today honor of the pride of humanity is under attack. Today *Hadrat Khadijah* ﷺ and *Hadrat Aishah* ﷺ are standing at our doors saying, 'Do you not know that the unbelievers are insulting your mothers?'" The people started crying when they heard this.

Hadrat continued, "Do you not know that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is trembling in his grave? Today our mothers are demanding their rights. Do not think it is a small thing if you give your life in their name, for if we die in this cause it will bring us everlasting success."

Thousands of Muslims took oaths to safeguard the honor of the Prophet's ﷺ family the night of that speech. Local women offered their children to *Hadrat Bukhari* ﷺ to use for the service of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. As a direct result of this speech, *Shaykh Ghazi Ilmuddin Shaheed* ﷺ killed Rajpal, sending him to Hell. *Shaykh Ghazi* ﷺ was later hanged for this.

The following are a few examples from some of the speeches of *Hadrat Bukhari* ﷺ:

My faith's goal is to safeguard the Finality of Prophethood and I shall kill anyone who dares to say an insulting word against it. I belong only to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and no one else. He is mine and I am his. The Lord of Kaaba Himself swore oaths upon the Prophet's ﷺ character and beauty, and may I be cursed if I do not defend this with my life. Today all sorts of dishonorable people are insulting the Prophet's ﷺ honor.

Remember, the Holy Quran and our religion exist only because of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. If the Messenger of Allah ﷺ does not exist, then nothing exists.

Even now I remain eager to be sacrificed for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I appeal to all Muslims, I am willing to tend your dogs if only you swear to safeguard the Prophet's ﷺ honor.

Allama Iqbal said, "Shahji (*Hadrat* Bukhari ﷺ) is a walking sword of Islam." Impressed with his speeches that were drowned in the love of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, Maulana Zafar Ali ﷺ said:

*Ears echo with the songs of Bukhari
Birds sing the praises of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ*