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Ĥāfīz-e-Millat raĥimahullah is a personality of whom the whole ummah can be proud. His efforts are so extensive that by concentrating on only one of them, it becomes clear how tirelessly he worked for Islām and Muslims. One of his specialities is that he seemed so absorbed with his followers that each one of them will claim that Ĥāfīz-e-Millat raĥimahullah was more beneficent upon them than anyone else. Each of his admirers will argue that he loved them most or was most kind to them. Each devotee can give examples from their lives whereby they could provide evidence for their strong relationship with Ĥāfīz-e-Millat raĥimahullah. His manner of dealing and talking with people was such that everyone would claim that he held them in high regard.

### **Birth**

Ĥāfīz-e-Millat raĥimahullah was born in Bhojpūr, in Murādābād [Uttar Pradesh], on a Monday in the year 1894 CE. He was born into a poor but respected household. His father, Ĥāfīz Ghulām Nūr, was god-fearing, pious, religious and a follower of the Sunnah. He named his son after Shāh Ābdul Āzīz Muhaddīth Dihlawī. His name is Ābdul Āzīz; kunya Abu'l Fayḍ and well known titles are *Ustād al-Ūlama*, *Jalālat al-Īlm* and *Ĥāfīz-e-Millat*.

He completed his education at the hands of *Ṣadr al-Sharīah* Mawlānā Amjad Āli Aādhamī [author of *Bahār-e-Sharīāt*] and graduated from Dār al-Ūlūm Manzar al-Islām in 1351 AH. He was granted Khilāfah and Ijāzah by Mawlānā Sayyid Āli Husain Ashrafī Miyan and *Ṣadr al-Sharīah* ālaihi'r raĥmah wa'r riḍwān.

### **Education and training**

He received his initial education from his father and in a local school in Bhojpūr. He completed his memorisation of the Holy Qurān under the guidance of his father. After receiving preliminary education in Urdu and Persian from Ābdul Majīd in Bhojpūr, he enrolled at Jāmiā Naīmiyah in Murādābād and stayed there for 3 years. During his stay, he reached the study of *Sharh Jāmī* and *Qutbi* when his thirst for knowledge reached a pinnacle. He was searching for a new teacher and coincidentally, his search led him to *Ṣadr al-Sharīah* Mawlānā Shāh Muftī Muĥammad Amjad Āli Aādhamī raĥimahullah [author of *Bahār-e-Sharīāt*]. He arrived at Madrasa Muīmiyah, Ajmer in 1342 AH with a few classmates including:

Mawlānā Ghulām Jilānī Mīrthi  
Mawlānā Qādī Shams al-Dīn Jaunpūri  
Mawlānā Qārī Asad al-Ĥāq  
Ĥāfīz Zamīr Husain

Their applications were accepted. The teaching of various books was shared by the teachers. Usūl al-Shāshi was taught by Şadr al-Sharīh during spare time and this continued till studies finished. Utmost effort and hard work was Hāfiz-e-Millat's motto and he completed the whole *Dars-e-Nizāmi* syllabus. His exam was taken by the author of *Hāshiyā Ūmūr-e-Āmmah*, Mawlānā Fazl-e-Hāq Rāmpūri, which included a written and verbal test. Hāfiz-e-Millat answered the questions with such brilliance that the examiner closed the book and stated that he would not examine him any further as his competence had reached a zenith.

He completed his studies of Hādīth in Ajmer Sharīf at the hands of Şadr al-Sharīh but due to some reasons, his graduation ceremony did not place. He received his certificate of graduation [sanad-e-farāghat] in Bareilly Sharīf in 1351 AH.

### **Services**

During the month of Sha'bān in 1352 AH, Şadr al-Sharīh rahimahullah summoned Hāfiz-e-Millat to Bareilly Sharīf and said that because he [Şadr al-Sharīh] had spent so much time away from his home district of Aādhamgarh, it has become corrupted. Hence, he wanted Hāfiz-e-Millat to take up a teaching post at Madrasa Ashrafīya Mişbāh al-Ūlūm. Hāfiz-e-Millat replied that he wished not to work. Şadr al-Sharīh replied, "When did I ask you to work? You will not be working; rather, you will be serving the religion. Do not look at what you will get." The student accepted the instruction of his benevolent teacher. History is witness that Hāfiz-e-Millat accepted a monthly salary of Rs.35 whereas he was offered Rs.100 in Agra and Rs.500 in Calcutta.

On 29th Shawwāl, 1353 AH [14th January, 1934 CE] he was appointed as the head teacher at Madrasa Ashrafīya Mişbāh al-Ūlūm. Pupils were taught up to *Fārsi*, *Nahw Mīr* and *Panj Ganj*. The total budget of the madrasa was Rs.2757, 14 āna, 9 pāi.

### **The Ashrafīya Movement**

From being an empty madrasa, the words *Qālallah* and *Qālarrasūl* soon began to reverberate around it. Students began to flock from far and wide and in a short period, Indian and international students came to participate in the lessons of Hāfiz-e-Millat.

Eleven months later in Shawwāl 1353 AH, the foundation of *Dār al-Ūlūm Ashrafīya Mişbāh al-Ūlūm* was laid under his instruction. The first brick was laid jointly by Mawlānā Sayyid Āli Husain Ashrafī Miyan and *Şadr al-Sharīh* ālaihi'r rahmah wa'r ridwān. Soon, this building reached capacity. Therefore, a plot of land outside Mubārakpūr was purchased for this institute of knowledge and in May 1972 [Rabī' al-Awwal 1392 AH], the inauguration ceremony of al-Jāmiatu'l Ashrafīya was celebrated and work began swiftly. Only a year in, teaching began at the new site. It was Hāfiz-e-Millat's greatest wish that instead of serving just India, the institute should serve the whole world. He wanted it to challenge mischief and innovations world over and sought to establish an institute that would be comprehensive to cater for all Islamic needs.

Ĥāfīz-e-Millat once said that it is his desire that his madrasa will cater for branches of Islamic knowledge and sciences regardless but he also wants graduates to have such a strong grounding in Arabic and even English language and be of such a high competency that they could perform their duties of tablīgh and spreading knowledge in any part of the world.

### **Literary works**

Apart from services rendered in building Islamic institutes, written works were also amongst his efforts. Many a time he would exclaim that in the beginning, he wrote extensively but due to engagements in teaching, he had little time left for writing. Nevertheless, he still managed to produce the following works:

Māārif-e-Ĥadīth  
Irshād al-Qurāān  
al-Irshād  
Anbā' al-Ghayb  
al-Miṣbāḥ al-Jadīd  
Firqā-e-Nājiya  
Fatāwā Āzīziya  
Ĥāshiya Sharh Mishkāṭ

Apart from this, the launch of the monthly *Ashrafīya* is his major contribution to literature. The periodical is still in circulation. The number of students that he has left are so many that there are more of them are serving in educational establishments around the world than anyone else's students.

### **Demise**

On Monday, 1st Jamādi al-Ākhir, 1396 AH [31st May 1976], he gave his lesson of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhāri. He taught from Kitāb al-Janāyiz and lectured on the topic of death. During the lecture, he mentioned that today is Monday and this is the day that RasūlAllāh ṣallAllāhu ālaihi wasallam was born and the day he demised. On the night of 31st May, 1976 at 11:55pm, this mountain of knowledge left this world. Innā lillāhi wa innā īlayhi rajiūn.

His life was a shining book of the Sharāḥ by following which people learned the rules of life and the mode of living. The pages of this book are golden and so brilliant that they outweigh volumes that talk about miracles and inspirations. In 1976, he performed Hajj without having a photograph taken due to his compliance with the Sharāḥ. He spent eleven days in Madīna Munawwara and was blessed in the court of the beloved with inward and outward branches of knowledge during this short period. Performing Hajj without a photograph is nothing less than a miracle.

## **al-Jāmiat al-Ashrafiya**

It is not just an institute; rather it is major university of the subcontinent. It is a flag bearer of truth, a memoir of the akābir scholars, a guardian of the Hanafī madhhab and the teaching of Imām Aḥmad Razā, the heartbeat of millions of Muslims, the shield of Islām, an unsheathed sword against the enemies of Islām, the life mission of Ḥāfiz-e-Millat, his final wish and the result of 40 years of his sacrifices and those of the Muslims of Mubārakpūr and an Islamic fortress that will produce scholars that will wave the flag of Islām in the face of falsehood till the final day.

al-Jāmiat al-Ashrafiya has made Mubārakpūr into a unique centre of knowledge. Every year, a team of Ḥuffāz, Qurra' and scholars leaves here as an army that is ready for the opponents of Islām. This magnificent university is another name for Ḥāfiz-e-Millat's sincerity. This torch of knowledge and science is indeed a *Miṣbāḥ al-ʿUlūm* and in 1972, it was renamed *al-Jāmiat al-Ashrafiya* after being known as *Dār al-ʿUlūm Ahle Sunnat Madrasa Ashrafiya Miṣbāḥ al-ʿUlūm*. Graduates of the institute are spread far and wide from Asia to Europe serving the religion. The monthly *Ashrafiya* is published regularly and punctually and is representative of the culture of the Jāmia. Graduates affiliated with al-Jāmiat al-Ashrafiya attach *Miṣbāḥi* to their names to introduce themselves.

al-Jāmiat al-Ashrafiya has become synonymous with its founder and benefactor, Ḥāfiz-e-Millat, such that benefiting it is the same as benefiting knowledge, its progression is the nations progression, promoting it is promotion of the teachings of Aālā Hazrat, loving it is love for Ḥāfiz-e-Millat and helping it is aiding the Muslim ummah. Hence, come, move forward and support this centre of Islamic learning by contributing and calling upon others to do the same.