



Hadrat Mawlana Shah Waṣi Ahmad Muhaddith Sūrati

Amīr al-Mu'minīn fi'l Ḥadīth

Faiḍan al-Mustafa Qādri

Translated by Abu Hanzala

Mawlana Waṣi Ahmad ibn Mawlana Muhammad Tayyib was born in 1836 in Rāndair, District Surat. His forefathers were from Madina and in the 16th century, they migrated to India. His grandfather, Mawlana Muhammad Qasim, taught and preached in Rāndair and it was him who performed the *Bismillah Khwāni* of Muhaddith Sūrati who then went onto acquiring knowledge from his father.

He was 21 years old when the events of 1857 transpired. Many members of his family were martyred by the British. Along with his parents and his younger brother, he emigrated to Iraq after spending many days in hiding. Three years later, he went to perform Hajj and after spending a few days in Madina Munawwara, he returned to Rāndair. During the journey, his father passed away and after returning to Rāndair, his mother too left this world. After her demise, he travelled to Delhi along with his brother in pursuit of knowledge. They also went to Aligaḥ to partake in the lessons of Ustād al-Ūlama Mawlana Lutfullah and completed their studies. In 1865, they went to Saharanpur to participate in the *Dars-e-Hadith* of Mawlāna Ahmad Ali Mahshi Bukhari and attained their Sanad and Ijazah. Thereafter, they went to Muradabad to take *Bay'ah* with Mawlana Shah Fadle Rahman who bestowed them with both the *Sanad of Hadith* and *Sanad of Ijazah*.

Under Muhaddith Sūrati's leadership over a three month period, many scholars travelled to various parts of the country and undertook successful preaching campaigns. In the first half of 1867, Hakīm Khalil al-Rahman of Pīlī Bhīt - who was also a disciple of Mawlana Shah Fadle Rahman – invited him to Pīlī Bhīt and upon the order of his spiritual guide; Muhaddith Sūrati arrived there to spread knowledge.

A madrasa named *Madrasa Hāfiziya* was built in the mosque that was built by Hafiz al-Mulk Hafiz Rahmat Khan Shahīd and Muhaddith Sūrati was chosen as the head teacher. In 1301 AH, he purchased the adjacent land and in the same year in the presence of scholars, Imam Ahmad Raza laid its foundation and it was named *Madrasat al-Hadith*.

Apart from other sciences, he delivered Dars-e-Hadith continuously for 40 years and it received such acclaim that students travelled from afar to obtain this knowledge. The

Dars would begin after Fajr and would continue throughout the day and into half the night. Apart from other necessities, he would only busy himself with teaching during which he gave utmost importance to being in a state of ablution. His wish was that his demise would occur whilst he was teaching hadith. Hence, on 9th Jamadi al-Akhir 1334 AH – 1916 CE – whilst teaching Mishkāt Sharif, his soul departed from his body. He was laid to rest near the Madrasa in the vicinity of the Mosque.

Imam Ahmad Raza derived the year of demise from the verse of the Qur'an:

يطاف عليهم بأنية من فضة واكواب

Amongst them will be passed round vessels of silver and goblets¹

Muhaddith Sūrati had very good relations with Imam Ahmad Raza. He would refer to Muhaddith Sūrati as *Amīr al-Mu'minīn fi'l Hadith* of the subcontinent. It was Muhaddith Sūrati who introduced Şadr al-Shari'ah Mawlana Amjad Ali A'zami to Imam Ahmad Raza.

Some of Muhaddith Sūrati's literary contributions are *Hashiya Sunan Nasa'i*; *Hashiya Tahtawi*; *Tālīq al-Mujalli Sharh Munyat al-Muṣalli*; *Hashiya Jalalayn*; *Hashiya Mishkāt* and others. His *Jāmi' al-Shawāhid bi Ikhrāj al-Wahābiyyīn án al-Masājid* is the first book to be written regarding expelling Ghayr Muqallid's from mosques and from 1295-1372 AH, 21,000 copies had been published.

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¹ 76:15