

INTRODUCTION

The proposed research work "*Life and Works of Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani*" comprises the very early years, academic career, political, religious and various literary activities of Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani; who was born at Bijnur, in 1887 A.D. and died in 1949 A.D. in Karachi.

Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani, completing his primary education under the care of his father, entered in the class of Qur'an when he was a boy of seven, and at the age of fourteen he got himself admitted in Darul 'Uloom, Deoband in 1901 A.D. He engaged himself in linguistic and religious studies. On completion of his student career, he became the Head of the institution of Fathehpur Madrasah, Delhi, from where he was invited to Darul 'Uloom Deoband in 1910 AD. There he taught in the upper classes of that academy. It appears from the record that he had extraordinary knowledge of Hadith specially in Sahih Muslim. He offered his noble services in that Madrasah for a long term from 1910 A.D to 1928 A.D.

Along with his teaching activities, he got himself actively involved to the various political arena connection with the Khilafat Movement, Non Co-operation Movement etc. He was one of the persons to bring into being the Jamiyat-e-Ulama-e-Hind under the leadership of Shaikhul Hind, Maulana Mahmudul Hasan and released 'Fatwa' undersigned by the then 925 renowned religious scholars, wherein the British Government was challenged.¹ He left the Madrasah of Darul 'Uloom, Deoband in 1938 AD owing to some conflicts with the authorities of the Madrasah and joined in Jamiya Islamia, Dabhil with Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (d. 1933 A. D.), Mufti Azizur Rahman Uthmani and others.² On the death of Shah Anwar Kashmiri, Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani became the Head of the department of Hadith Literature (Shaikhul Hadith) in Jamiya Islamia, Dabhil. His absence from Darul 'Uloom, Deoband, caused some anomalies in the administration and in academic atmosphere in the Madrasah and as such he was requested by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawai and other Senior Ulamas to offer his noble services here. Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani later on agreed to serve the Madrasah as the Chief Administrator (صدرالمصنفه) from 1935–1944 A. D, but he

1. *Muslims And The Freedom Struggle* by Prof. Shan Mohammad, New Delhi-25 p 21
2. *Al-Anwar* by Abdur Rahman Kundu, Nadwatul Musannifin p.189

did not neglect to keep his good relation with Jamiya Islamia, Dabhal as a Shaikhul Hadith.

In wit and wisdom, thinking and understanding and in arriving at correct and farsighted decisions, there are very few like Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani .

He was not only an orator and writer, but also was a unique literateur in Arabic as well as Urdu. In eloquence and rhetoric. he was a matchless model of excellence. His writings and speeches were of high standard but could be understood easily by the common people. He occupied the second position after Maulana Qasim Nantawi. the founder of Darul Uloom, Deoband in the field of literary activities in case of personality, standard of writing in elocution and in rhetorical beauties. He had a deep knowledge in the prevailing situation in the field of politics and religion. His Scholastic addresses are often remembered with great reverence by the scholars of the modern age.

Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani achieved a great name and fame in writing commentary on the Holy Qur'an in Urdu while the literal

translation of the text was done by Shaikhul Hind Maulana Mahmudul Hasan in Urdu. In this commentary he summarised all the views of ancient and modern scholars on this subject. The government of Afganistan was pleased to translate his commentary of the Qur'an from Urdu to Persian. The same commentary also has been accepted as an authentic work by Saudi Arabia Government.¹ - In his Fath-hul-Mulhim he interpreted Sahih Muslim in Arabic language in three volumes, according to the Hanfite School.

This valuable work depicts the vast horizon of his knowledge and wisdom to the Islamic world to a great extent. This work was highly praised by Allama Jahidul Kauthari of Egypt and many other Muslim Scholars of Islamic World. Besides these works, he wrote some other valuable books such as Sujodus-Shams (سجود الشمس), Al-Aqlu wal Naqlu (العقل والنقل), Ijazul Qur'an (اعجاز القرآن), Al-Ruhu Fil Qur'an (الروح في القرآن).

Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani started his political career as freedom fighter from the platform of Darul 'Uloom, Deoband, which was

1. Tafsir-e- Uthmani published by " The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud"

founded on the basis of Freedom Movement against Britishers in India.¹

He was an executive member of Khilaphat Committee. He collected funds to help the Turks during the battle of Bulkan which took place in the year 1914 A.D. He also continued to be an executive member of Jamiyat-e-Ulama-e-Hind and in 1914 A.D. he happened to become the President of Jamiyat-e-Ulama-e-Islam and joined the Muslim League. After the partition of India, he was selected as a member of Constituent Assembly to ^{the}present East Bengal and he migrated to Pakistan in 1947 A.D. He was selected as the Chairman of the Muslim Personnel Law and was regarded as a constant guide in the religious as well as political field with the title of Shaikhul Islam.²

The great scholar, religious leader, political figure and literary authority Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani ended his life and took his

1. The Deoband School and The Demand of Pakistan by Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi p 23 published by Asia Publishing House, New Delhi.
2. Shaikhul Islam :- Connected with the Islamic religious figures, the title Shaikhul Islam assumed a more precise and formal meaning during the Ottoman period. The title emerged initially in Khurasan, in the later part of the tenth century it then spread east to India and Muslim areas of China and west in to the middle east. Apparently it was used early both as an honorific title, for ranking Sufis among others, and to denote formal office. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic world by Oxford University Press, New York, 1995, Volume, IV. p.54

heavenly journey on 14th December, 1949 A.D. and his mortal body was buried in Karachi.

In order to give full justice to the present research work I have to depend on published sources which are supposed to enable me to the compilation of the work. Due to inadequate published works, the field works and indirect collection of data from various reliable sources were also used for the preparation of the thesis.

For the conveniences of going through the present work, it has been divided into five chapters which contains some sub-chapters too

The first chapter under the caption of "Early life and Education" deals with the family background, childhood, educational carrier and scholarship of Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani. Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani was descendent of the third Caliph, Hazrat Uthman (d.655 A.D.) after which he got the title 'Uthmani'. His father Maulana Fazlur Rahman Uthmani was one of the founder members of Darul 'Uloom Deoband and Deputy Inspector in the Education Department. As a

brilliant student Allama Uthmani passed the Daura-e-Hadith standing first in first class.

The second chapter entitled as a teacher. deals with the teaching carrier of Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani. He served as Senior Muhaddith of Darul 'Uloom, Deoband, Sadra Mudarrith of Fathehpur Madrasah, Delhi, Shaikhul Hadith of Jamiya Islamia, Dabhil (Surat) and Sadre Muhtamim of Darul 'Uloom, Deoband. Maulana Mahmudul Hassan (d. 1921 A.D), Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (d. 1943 A.D), Maulana Shah Anwar Kashmiri, Mufti Kifayatulla were some of the most prominent contemporaries. Some of his renowned students were Mufti Muhammad Shafi, Maulana Md. Ibrahim Balyawi, Maulana Fakhruddin Muradabadi, Maulana Yosuf Bannauri, Maulana Badra Alom Meruti, Maulana Habibur Rahman A'zami.

The third chapter under the caption "In Political Arena" deals his role as an political activists with special reference to his contribution in Khilafat Movement, Freedom Movement and Jam'iyat-'Ul-'Ulama-e-Islam- Partition of India, as a member of constitution framing committee of Pakistan , contribution in religious field and last part of his life.

The fourth chapter named as "His Works" deals with Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani as a Scholar of Qur'anic Sciences, as a traditionist and as a scholar of Islamic Jurisprudence. His oratory skills and the sound knowledge in Arabic and Urdu language is also dealt with at length. There were many galaxies among his contemporaries who showed their skills in their respective fields. but Allama Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani was considered as one of the best among equals due to his extra ordinary works in the divergent fields.

The last chapter i.e. the fifth chapter includes the concluding observations / findings, bibliography including index.

The present work though neglected by most of the scholars of India, is undoubtedly a tremendous work and it has been held by me not only as an interested topic but also as the most beneficial theme among the learners of various branches of Islamic Knowledge in Arabic and Urdu languages within and outside India. I hope and expect that the present work will certainly open the minds of learners and encourage them to pick off more findings for further development in their field of literary as well as religious activities.