

MOULANA ABUL HASAN 'ALI NADWI (RAHIMAHULLAH):

Moulana Abul Hasan (rahimahullah) was an internationally accepted 'Aalim and an outstanding saint of his time. Renowned for his mastery in the Arabic language, he authored many works in Arabic, some of which form part of the basic curriculum of learning Arabic in institutes across the world. Moulana's (rahimahullah) father passed away when he was merely nine years of age. It was thus his mother, Khairun Nisaa (born 1878), who single-handedly raised him and saw to his upbringing. The greatness which Moulana (rahimahullah) achieved is indeed testament to his mother's greatness, as he was a product of her effort and moulding.

AS A YOUNG CHILD:

The early years of a child's life are the formative years in which qualities and values are instilled in the child. These generally form the moral compass of the child which guides him/her for the rest of their life.

There were two glaring aspects in the early life of Moulana's (rahimahullah) mother. One was that she would awaken every morning to the sound of her father departing to the masjid to perform tahajjud salaah. She would then go to her mother's room where she would find her on the musalla, performing tahajjud. She would thus make wudhu and join her mother in tahajjud. When the first thing to which a child awakens is the sound of their parents engaged in tahajjud, we can well imagine the resulting piety in the child's life.

The second was that old women would live within their home. Not necessarily women of the family, but old women who had nobody to care for them. These old women would create the environment of Deen within the home as they were almost perpetually engaged in 'ibaadah. Their qualities and values, such as modesty, and their mindset and attitude would rub off on the young girls of the home.

EDUCATION:

The education of the womenfolk of her family was very carefully controlled and not allowed to exceed a certain level. Their education would be limited to learning the relevant, necessary masaail of Deen and matters which would assist them in running a home and seeing to domestic affairs. While strict control was exercised regarding education and writing, the skills and talents which are prized in a woman were encouraged and imparted to them at a very high level.

COMMITMENT TO THE QURAAAN MAJEED:

She was an excellent haafizah of the Quraan Majeed. Furthermore, she understood that memorizing the Quraan Majeed is a lifelong commitment and would thus recite her dhor with punctuality on a daily basis. In fact, she remained dedicated to her dhor until the very end of her life. Over and above being a haafizah, she would recite the Quraan Majeed with the correct tajweed. Hence her recitation was very beautiful and melodious.

MARRIAGE:

Although she and most of her family had understood that she would marry her wealthy cousin, her father refused and insisted that she marry a man who possessed a very high level of Deen in his life. Hence, when her husband proposed, despite his lack of wealth, her father accepted the proposal. This was on account of him being a Sayyid (from the progeny of Rasulullah [sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam]) and on account of his piety and knowledge.

SERVING HER SPOUSE:

She served her husband until the day of his demise with the same enthusiasm that she served him with on the day of their marriage. Although there was a servant employed for cooking, she would

insist on personally preparing his meals and would go out of her way to present him with exquisitely prepared dishes and desserts. Such was her enthusiasm to prepare the best food possible for him that she became a 'professional' in the kitchen, later on authoring a best-selling recipe book named 'Zaa-iqah'.

IN-LAWS:

Despite the fact that her in-laws were experiencing extreme poverty, and in the initial years of her marriage there were days when there was absolutely nothing to eat, she did not disclose this to anyone. In fact, she went to extremes in concealing their poverty and safeguarding their honour. Occasionally her mother would send someone to her home to see whether there was anything cooking on the stove. Whenever she spotted any of her family members approaching, she would hastily place a pot of water on the stove and light the fire. Hence, the visitor would be under the impression that there was food cooking in the home. In this way she concealed the actual position – that there was nothing at home to cook.

TA'LEEM IN THE HOME:

After her husband passed away, the family underwent a period of difficulty and poverty. In the face of these hardships, she would conduct ta'leem in the home and read the stories of the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu 'anhum) and their sacrifices for Deen to her children. This served to create and instill the sense of gratitude in the children, as they realized that the difficulty which they were undergoing was small compared to the sacrifices which the Sahaabah (radhiyallahu 'anhum) had made.

MOULDING HER SON:

Just as the qualities of piety were instilled in her at a young age, she ensured that she likewise instilled Deeni values in her son, Moulana Abul Hasan (rahimahullah), from his very childhood. There were two

aspects regarding which she was unrelenting. The first was salaah. Even though Moulana (rahimahullah) was still a young boy at the time, she would ensure that he performed all his salaah. If he had gone to sleep without performing Esha, she would rouse him from his sleep and make him perform the salaah.

The second was the treatment of servants and the poor. If Moulana (rahimahullah), as a child, ever ill-treated, disrespected or spoke out of turn to any servant or poor person, his mother would force him to hold their hand and beg them for forgiveness.

These two aspects, in reality, are an emphasis of the entire Deen, as the former pertains to upholding the rights of Allah Ta'ala, while the latter pertains to fulfilling the rights of people.

CHOOSING A CAREER:

When it was time for Moulana (rahimahullah) to select a career, there was much family pressure for him to choose a career in the secular field, especially due to the fact that he was an orphan and the family did not have abundant wealth. At that time, most of his relatives were engaged in secular studies, some in Europe and others in America, and on their return they were securing employment in prominent positions. However, his mother understood the priceless value of Deeni education and thus insisted that he enroll in a madrasah and become an 'Aalim. Expressing her sentiments, she declared, "If I had a thousand children, I would ensure that they all become 'Ulama!"

CONSTANT SUPERVISION:

Even after Moulana (rahimahullah) was enrolled in madrasah and living away from home, she continued to keep a check on him in order to monitor his progress and ensure that he remained focused and dedicated. She would constantly write letters to him giving him priceless advices and even asking him questions regarding his ma'moolaat (daily devotional practices).

FINAL DAYS:

She had advanced in age beyond ninety years during the final days of her life. Despite her weakness and the fact that she was almost completely blind, she was still punctual on her tahajjud salaah and all her other ma'moolaat. Just a few days prior to her demise, she slipped and fell while going to the bathroom in the dark at the time of tahajjud.

During her last illness, she saw a dream in which every limb of her body was making the zikr of Allah Ta'ala. Moulana (rahimahullah) was extremely happy, as this was a blessed dream which showed the high rank of his saintly mother. A few days later, she entered her final stages and began to make the zikr of Allah Ta'ala. With Moulana (rahimahullah) and her children around her, she continued to say, "Allah! Allah!" It was only when the sound of the zikr faded that they realized that she had now left this world. She lived with name of Allah Ta'ala on her lips and in her heart and thus met her end in the same way.

DETAILED BIOGRAPHY:

This is a mere glimpse into the life of this illustrious personality. Being such a prolific writer, Moulana (rahimahullah) wrote a detailed biography on his mother which is currently being translated by Uswatul Muslimah. May Allah Ta'ala allow it to reach completion soon and make it a means of great benefit, aameen.

USWATUL MUSLIMAH

- Uswatul Muslimah is an educational program dedicated to our Muslim sisters.
- Among the activities organised for our honourable mothers and sisters are: lectures on pertinent topics at various venues; a website which posts relevant articles, audios, questions and answers relating to women and a newsletter.
- The Uswatul Muslimah program is run by a panel of 'Ulama under the auspices of Madrasah Ta'leemuddeen, Isipingo Beach.

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