

Allamah Shabbir Ahmad al-Uthmani

By Maulana Muaz billoo

There are few individuals whose impact in recent history can be felt through both their academic and political contributions. Amongst those individuals was the great polymath of the 20th century, Allamah Shabbir Ahmad Al Uthmani . Born in the year 1305 AH/1889 CE in the 10th day of Muharram in the city of Bijnor in India, his father, Fadlur Rahman Al Uthmani , was one of the students of the Maulana Qasim Nanotwi and is considered to be among those who laid the foundations for Darul Uloom Deoband. They are called “Al Uthmani” because their lineage goes back to the great companion and the third khalifah, Uthman ibn ‘Affan rdy. Although he is famously known as Shabbir Ahmad, his father had actually named him Fadlullah. He states in the closing lines of his *Tafsir Uthmani*, “The lowly servant, Fadlullah, who is called Shabbir Ahmad, the son of Maulana Fadlur Rahman Al Uthmani.”

He began his studies at the tender age of seven in the Maktab, a educational system that has been used throughout Islamic history for educating young children. He began studying Urdu books under the tutelage of Hafidh Muhammad Azeem Ad Deobandi in the year 1312 AH. Then he began studying Farsi books in the year 1314 under the tutelage of Allamah Manzoor Ahmad , who was an instructor at Darul Uloom Deoband. Thereafter he furthered in his studies of Farsi under the tutelage of Allamah Muhammad Yasin , who was the father of Mufti Muhammad Shafi Al Uthmani . He then began his studies of Arabic and the Islamic sciences in the year 1319 under the great scholars and luminaries of India at the time, such as: Shaikh Al Hind Mahmud Al Hasan , Al Hakim Muhammad Hasan , Maulana Ghulam Rasul , Maulana Muhammad Yasin As Sherkothi , and others.

He went on to excel in the various Islamic sciences, including Qur’anic exegesis, Hadith, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, Islamic creed, logic, philosophy, Arabic rhetoric, grammar, morphology, literature, and others. He went on to graduate from Darul Uloom Deoband with high honors in 1325. His intelligence and retention is demonstrated through the following remark of Allamah Habibur Rahman Al Uthmani : “He used to spend a great deal of time teaching other students during his own student days. The students of the higher years would come to him to study many books of various sciences.”

Soon after he graduated, he was appointed as an instructor for Darul Uloom Deoband. After a few years, he travelled to the Hijaz in order to perform Hajj. In order to fund his trip, he sold his house and his land. This was the sheer level of devotion and dedication given by these great people in order to acquire proximity with Allah ﷻ. Their entire lives were focused on attaining the number one goal of every human soul: to earn the mercy and pleasure of Allah ﷻ. In the year 1348, he transferred over to Jami’ah Islamiyyah Dabhel alongside with his contemporary, the Imam of that era, Allamah Anwar Shah Al Kashmiri . Over there, Allamah

Shabbir Ahmad Al Uthmani was appointed to teach the Sahih of Imam Muslim, the Tafsir of Imam Baydawi, and other subjects. In the year 1354 he returned to Darul Uloom Deoband as the head instructor. Thereafter in the year 1362 he returned to Jami'ah Islamiyyah Dabhel, but due to various illnesses, he returned to Deoband after a few months.

Aside from his proficiency in studying and teaching the Islamic sciences, Allamah Shabbir Ahmad Al Uthmani was also a prolific orator and debater. He was skilled in presenting the truth as the truth, and falsehood as false. His message had echoed to nearly every single town in India. Furthermore, he was also acquainted with politics. He was a part of the Muslim League in India, striving to unite the Muslims of India.

When the movement for the establishment of an independent Muslim state, Pakistan, was presented, Allamah Shabbir Ahmad Al Uthmani was amongst those scholars who were at the forefront of this movement. He continuously voiced the need for the establishment of an independent Muslim state day-by-day until the country was finally established in the year 1947. Although he only lived for approximately 16 months after the establishment of Pakistan, in that short time he was able to push the government of Pakistan to take the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as the foundations for its laws.

He was attached and devoted to the service of the deen of Allah ﷻ. He has been described as having been a man of taqwa, excellent character, kindness towards the creation, humility, tranquility, soft-hearted, fearing Allah, perpetual in the dhikr of Allah, and continuous in his recital of the Qur'an. These are qualities that are found in all of the great luminaries of Islamic history. Some of his famous works include, but are not limited to:

- *Tafseer Uthmani*: This was a Tafseer of the Qur'an that was initiated by Shaykh Al Hind Maulana Mahmud Al Hasan . However, when he approached the end of Surah An Nisaa, he was imprisoned in Malta. From there, Allamah Shabbir Ahmad Al Uthmani was able to complete the rest of the book.
- *I'jaaz Al Qur'an*: In which Allamah Shabbir Ahmad Al Uthmani discusses the miraculous nature of the linguistic style of the Qur'an.
- *Sujood Ash Shams*: An exposition and discussion into the Hadith in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated the sun prostrates before Allah ﷻ and seeks His permission to rise.
- *Tahqiq Khutbah Al Jumu'ah*: A 13 page treatise in which he establishes that the Jumu'ah Khutbah is legislated to be solely delivered in the Arabic language.
- *Fath Al Mulhim Bi Sharh Sahih Muslim*: His revered and celebrated commentary of Sahih Muslim. He had reached up to the end of Kitab At Talaq, which was later completed under the title of *Takmilah Fath Al Mulhim* by Mufti Taqi Al Uthmani hafidhahullah.

He passed away approximately 16 months after the establishment of Pakistan in the year 1369 AH/1948 CE. His janazah salah was led by one of his closest students, Mufti Muhammad Shafi Al Uthmani .