

In the Name of Allah Ta'ala, The Most Merciful

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MASIH AL-UMMAH MUHAMMAD MASIHULLAH KHAN (RAHIMAHULLAH U TA'ALA)

Name: **Muhammad Masihullah**

Father's Name: **Ahmed Sa'id Khan**

Title: **Masih al-Ummah**

Date Of Birth: **1329 AH (1911 CE)**

Date Passed Away: **Friday, 17 Jumada al-Awwal 1413 AH (13 November 1992 CE),
Jalalabad U.P. India**

Birth Place: **Barlah, Aligarh U.P. India**

Lineage: **Sayyid branch of Sherwani Pathan**

“O Believers! Fear Allah and acquire the company of the Sadiqeen (The true friends of Allah).” (Surah At-Taubah 9:119)

Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah, Mawlana Muhammad Masihullah Khan Sherwani (R.A.) was a true Sadiq and Faqih, a shining example of knowledge and action in all the Islamic sciences, pertaining to both the inner and outer dimensions of the blessed shariah.

Ibn Abbas (R.A) reported that Rasulullah (sallalahu alaihi wa sallam) said: “One person learned in fiqh is more severe upon Shaytan than a thousand worshippers”.
(Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

Ancestry

Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah, Mawlana Muhammad Masihullah Khan (R.A.), was one of the greatest of authorities in *Tasawwuf* of our times and hailed from the renowned and distinguished Sherwani family of Pathans. Although the Sherwani clan is famed as Pathan, in reality is Sayyid in its origin, for its ancestral progenitor was Sayyid Husain Ghauri (R.A.) who migrated from Ghaur during the reign of Khalif Abdul Malik Bin Marwaan (d. 65 A.H.) and settled in the region neighbouring '*Koohe Sulaimaan*'. Sayyid Husain Ghauri (R.A.) settled among the Pathans and married the daughter of Batan Bin Qais Abdur Rashid. She bore him two sons, Lodi and Sherwani. The descendents of Sherwani became known as Sherwani. It is then to this family of Sayyids that Hadhrat Masihullah Khan Sahib (R.A.) belonged.

Born a Waliullah (Friend of Allah "Saint")

Hadhrat Masihullah Sahib (R.A.) was born in 1329 at Sara'i Barlah, District Aligarh, India. Born a *wali*, he was from early childhood the repository of piety and sterling qualities.

- Once the young Masihullah started crying uncontrollably and nothing could console him...it transpired that a group of men were playing musical instruments in the village and this sinful behaviour was the cause of his tears. Upon request the loud music was stopped and immediately he ceased crying.

His virtue, excellent character, simplicity and dignity were acknowledged by all those who came into contact with him even during his childhood. A considerable part of his time during childhood was spent in *Zikr* and optional acts of *Ibadah* including *Tahajjud Salah*.

- From the age of ten the worshippers in the local *masjid* would await his arrival before the Imam would lead the *jama'ah* (congregation) - such was his punctuality for the five compulsory *salah*.

A favourite occupation of Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) during his early youth was to sit in the company of the *Saliheen* and *Auliya* (Friends of Allah). In this regard the companionship of Hadhrat Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas (R.A.), the Khalifa of Hadhrat Shaykh ul Hind (R.A.) is noteworthy. It was this companionship which introduced the young Masihullah to the books, lectures and advices of his beloved Shaykh, Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (R.A.).

Marriage and Children

Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah (R.A.) married twice, his first wife passed away within a few years. Thereafter Hadhrat remarried, and his second wife commonly known as "Ammijan" passed away in 1395 A.H. (1975) after a lengthy illness. Conveying the news of her demise, Hadhrat wrote the following in one of his letters:

- *"That grateful, pious, generous and God – conscious lady has returned to the abode from which she had come".*

Haji Faruq Sahib (Rahimahullah) used to remark: *"I say without exaggeration, that this humble servant had seen in Jalalabad a Jannati (heavenly) couple in the form of Hadhrat Wala and Ammijan!"*

All the surviving children of Hadhrat Wala are from his second wife (one son and three daughters). Hadhrat's son Mawlana Muhammad Safiyullah Khan Sahib, popularly known to all as "Bhaijaan", is the principal of the *Madrassa Arabia Islamia Miftahul Uloom* (Key to Knowledge Islamic Seminary) in Jalalabad. Bhaijaan (*Hafizahullah*) was granted *Ijaza-e-Bay'ah* (Authorisation to take the pledge and guide the seekers of Allah) by Hadhrat Wala himself. **(After a long period of illness Hadhrat Bhaijaan (Rahimahullah Ta'ala) passed away on Friday, 9 Rabi ul Thani 1433 - 2 March 2012. May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala forgive his sins, envelope him in His mercy and grant him a place in Jannat ul Firdaws).**

The eldest daughter known as "Apajaan" is married to Mawlana Sayyid Abdur Raheem Sahib (*Hafizahullah*), a notable student of Hadhrat who has now retired from his teaching post in Miftahul Uloom due to ill health, he was granted *Ijaza-e-Bay'ah* by Hadhrat Shafiq al-Ummah (R.A.), a senior *Khalifa* of Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.). The second daughter is married to Mawlana Wakil Ahmed Sherwani (*Hafizahullah*) who teaches at the famous Islamic seminary known as *Jamia Ashrafiya* in Lahore (Pakistan). The youngest daughter is the wife of Habibur Rahman Khan Sherwani (*Hafizahullah, known as Munnu Miah*).

Physical Features and Dress

He was an epitome of beauty and handsomeness – of medium height, lean in build with well proportioned limbs, a fair complexion with a reddish brown tinge, an oblong face with radiant eyes and a full forehead. Upon setting eyes on the *nurani* face of Mawlana Masihullah (R.A.) one was inspired to make *Zikrullah*, for the majestic outer appearance was accompanied by the radiance of inner spiritual beauty.

He always wore a five-hemmed, round *topi* (skullcap) which clung to the head and his white *kurta* (long shirt) used to reach till below the knees whilst the white Moghul-styled cotton pants he wore came down to the middle of the shin. In winter he would don a thick cap, a half sleeved quilted waist coat with cotton wool stuffing, and a light shawl. On Eid days he would don an *abaya* (cloak), turban and other forms of dress for the occasion.

Education and Spiritual Training

Hadhrat Masihullah's (R.A.) initial educational training commenced in his hometown. The greater part of the Islamic syllabus up to the stage of *Mishkat al Masabih* was acquired from Hadhrat Muffi Said Ahmad Lucknawi (R.A.), a great jurist and *hadith* scholar. Thereafter in 1347 Hijri (1926 CE) he enrolled into the famous Islamic institute of learning, *Darul Uloom Deoband* from where he graduated. He had the invaluable opportunity to study under Shaykh ul Islam Mawlana Husayn Ahmad Madani (the famous tutor of the *Sahih al Bukhari* who lectured on *hadith* for eighteen years in the Masjid un Nabwi Sharif in Madinah al Munawwarah), Shaykh ul Adab Mawlana I'zaz Ali, Mawlana Asghar Husayn Deobandi, and Allama Ebrahim Balyawi, amongst others (*Rahimahullah Alaihim*). His student days passed in perfect solitude and he was totally engrossed in the acquisition of Islamic knowledge.

It was also in the same year that he took *bay'ah* on the hands of the *Mujaddid* (reformer) of the era, Hakim al-Ummah Hadhrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (*Nawwarallahu Marqaduhu*). Thus began a period of '*Islahi*' (spiritual rectification) training under Mawlana Thanawi (R.A.) which gave him exceptional spiritual strength and as a result he occupied a distinguished position of honour and respect amongst students and scholars.

Khilafa

In Shaban 1351 Hijri, Mawlana Masihullah (R.A.) completed his Islamic studies at Deoband and on the 25th of Shawwal of the same year Hadhrat Thanawi (R.A.) conferred upon him the *Ijaza-e-Bay'ah* (Authorisation to take the pledge and guide the seekers of Allah). Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) became the *khalifa* (spiritual representative) of Mawlana Thanawi (R.A.) at the age of 21, an astoundingly early age to receive such an honour. Despite his youth, Hadhrat Thanawi (R.A.) listed him amongst eleven of his most eminent *khulafa* (spiritual representatives).

Hadhrat Thanawi (R.A.) had great confidence in his methods of spiritual training and once commented:

"There is order and arrangement in his temperament, hence order and arrangement in his instruction."

- Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Thanawi (R.A.) had once expelled a person from the *Khanqah* and excused himself from having any further dealings with him...after numerous requests Hadhrat Thanawi finally relented with the instructions: *"Very well, he has permission to enter the Khanqah provided he establishes an islahi connection with Moulwi Masihullah and the monthly letter he writes together with the relevant replies should be shown to me!"* Thereafter, for nearly three years Hadhrat Hakim al-Ummah (R.A.) inspected the correspondence and raised no objections against any of Mawlana Masihullah's replies.

Hadhrat Thanawi (R.A.) also said :

"Isa and Masih have surpassed (the others)."

(Isa here was a reference to Hadhrat Mawlana Muhammad Isa (R.A.), who was also amongst his group of eminent *khulafa*. - Mawlana Isa (R.A.) is the compiler of the famous *kitab* on the teachings of Hadhrat Hakim al-Ummah (R.A.) on *tazkiya* entitled "*Anfas e Isa*").

'Al-Mubashshirat'

Narrated Abu Huraira (R.A): I heard Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) saying: "Nothing is left of An-Nubuwwah (Prophethood) except Al-Mubashshirat." They asked, "What is Al-Mubashshirat?" He replied, "The true good dreams (that convey glad tidings)."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Qutbul Aalam Hadhrat Gangohi (R.A.) via one such dream instructed Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) to deliver wa'z (lectures).

In a dream Hadhrat Khwajah Muinuddin Chisti (R.A.) directed:

"We transfer dua to you. Whoever comes to you for dua, make dua on their behalf."

In this directive was the tidings of Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) being '*Mustajabud Da'wat*' (someone whose *Duas* (Supplications) are readily accepted by Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala).

The Honorary Title "Masih al-Ummah"- "comforter to the nation of Rasulullah sallallahu alaihi wa sallam"

"*Masih*" has numerous meanings, but perhaps the most apt would be "comforter", for the kind words and advices of Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) were like a soothing balm on the anguished hearts of the distressed slaves of Allah Ta'ala. This title was conferred on him by his teacher Mufti Sa'id Ahmad Lucknawi (R.A.) and Hadhrat (R.A.) used to say that if it had been given by a student or contemporary of his, he would not have permitted its usage.

Jalalabad, Madrasa Miftahul Uloom, Khanqah Masihiyah

In 1357 A.H., as directed by his *Shaikh* Hadhrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (R.A.), Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) settled permanently in Jalalabad (a small town close to Thana Bhawan) and took charge of the small two roomed *Madrasa Miftahul Uloom (Key to Knowledge Islamic Seminary)*, a hugely befitting name chosen by Hadhrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi himself.

This inspirational choice of Hakim al-Ummah (R.A.) bore fruit as within thirty years the small *Madrasa* had developed into a full-fledged Islamic institution imparting Islamic knowledge right up to *Aalim-Fadhil* and *Ifta* level to a few hundred students from all parts of the world. Mawlana Masihullah's teaching style was simple and effective, and he would constantly say,

"I am only presenting this through the benevolence and mercy of Allah Ta'ala."

In 1407 A.H., after fifty years of exceptional service total responsibility for running the *Madrasa* was handed over to his son due to an increase in the large number of people coming to stay in the *Khanqah* (Spiritual Hospice) for their spiritual reformation. Every morning from Monday to Thursday, Hadhrat would conduct a special two to three hour *Islahi Majlis Khas* for the *salikin* seeking *tazkiyah* (rectification). On Fridays there would be a general *Majlis* for all the people after *Salat ul Jum'a* – attended by hundreds from Jalalabad and surrounding areas.

Hadhrot Masihullah (R.A.) would still however keep a keen eye on the *madrasa* and teach a few *ahadith* from *Shamail Tirmidhi* and the *Sahih* of *Imam Bukhari* (R.A.). Thousands of people would gather for the final lesson of *Sahih Bukhari* which would lead to the graduation of that year's *Alim Fadhil* class, a lesson which would often stretch from early in the morning till just before *Zuhr* prayers, a period of four to five hours and as was Hadhrot's habit he would sit in the "tashahhud" posture of *salah* and teach patiently.

Abu Darda (R.A) reported that Rasulullah (sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam) said: "Verily, the Ulama are the heirs of the Ambiya" (Abu Daud)

Forgiveness, Compassion, Generosity, Tolerance and Humility.

Hadhrot Masihullah (R.A.) had an overpowering awareness (*istidhar*) that everything and everyone belongs to his Beloved Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala and this compelling awareness made the above noble qualities of Rasulullah (*sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam*) stand out in his personality.

Anas (R.A) reported that Rasulullah (sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam) said: "The creation is (like) the family of Allah and the one who is most good to His family is the most beloved to Allah from amongst His creation". (Baihaqi in Sh'ub il Iman)

- A previous employee of the *Madrasa* made various false accusations against him, Mawlana Masihullah (R.A.) not only forgave him when the opportunity came but even helped him in various ways without showing any displeasure.
- He would arrange for cotton wool filled duvets to be distributed to the needy in winter; there were fixed stipends for various people who would come to collect on a regular basis and no beggar would ever be turned away from his door.
- Once at bedtime a cat was found sleeping in his bed, this man of Allah did not allow the cat to be disturbed but happily slept on the floor! Similarly, once Mufti Nasir Ahmed Sahib (R.A.) was about to chase away an approaching dog to one side whereupon Hadhrot Masihullah forbade him from doing so and said, "Do not

stop the dog. Allow it to come, for this is a public road which all of (the creation of Allah Ta'ala) have an equal right to use."

- His humility was such that he would often personally deliver food to the students in their rooms and gladly massage the bodies of the unwell. If Hadhrat ever felt that he had hurt someone's feelings, he would repeatedly ask, *"Have you been inconvenienced in any way by these words of mine? Brother, if you have been pained then please forgive me!"*

Adherence to the Sunnah

Following the blessed way of Rasulullah (*sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam*) in every aspect of life had become second nature to him.

Say (O Muhammad (*sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam*) to mankind): "If you (really) love Allah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive your sins..." (Surah Al- Imran 3:31)

- He had been ill for many days, once whilst he had a fever he asked for his socks to be removed – someone began to gently pull off his right sock, despite extreme weakness Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) immediately indicated that the left sock should be removed first in line with the blessed *sunnah* of Rasulullah (*sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam*).
- On one occasion Hadhrat (R.A.) was eating at the house of Dr Tanweer Ahmed Khan Sahib in Banno, after the main meal was over the dishes were taken away and the dessert (sweet dish) was brought. Dr Sahib enquired: *"It is generally understood that it is Sunnah for a sweet dish to be eaten at the end of the meal, is this really so?"* Hadhrat replied, *"No! The sunnah is that Allah's beloved Messenger (*sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam*) ended with the dish he had begun with. If both a salty (spicy) and a sweet dish were present, he would begin with the spicy food and end with it as well."* To the utter amazement of Dr Tanweer Sahib, Hadhrat (R.A.) gave a slight smile while exposing the hollow between his thumb and index finger, where he had kept a few grains of rice from the main dish and said: *"I will eat these after the sweet dish, whereby praise be to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala the blessed sunnah will be fulfilled!"*

"Whoever acquires the wealth of arrival and attaining the love of Allah has acquired it by virtue of following the Sunnah." -Hakim al-Ummah-

Perfect Taqwa

With great determination he would try to abstain from the *Makruh* (abominable practices) and *Mushtabihat* (doubtful practices), whilst looking favourably upon *Shar'ee Fatawa*.

No doubt! Verily, the Auliya (Friends) of Allah, no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve. Those who believed and used to fear Allah much (by abstaining from all evil and by doing righteous deeds). (Surah Yunus 10:62-63)

- A Principal of an Islamic school brought some mangos as a gift for Mawlana Masihullah - on enquiry as to where they had come from, the Principal explained that they were from a mango tree in the grounds of the school. Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) gently remarked that it would not be permissible for the Principal to give the mangos as they did not belong to him. Hadhrat (R.A.) then gave some money as payment for the mangos and requested that the sum be deposited into the school fund, so that he could keep the mangos - much to the delight of the Principal!
- Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) was extremely particular about *hijab*, such that even if an elderly lady would want some help from him he would either deal with her via the male attendant or from behind the curtain.
- Munshi Mushtaq Ahmed Khan Sahib narrates that one year when the final accounts of the *Madrassa* were tallied, it appeared as if the income was in excess of the expenditure by 5,000 Rupees - however this excess amount was not present in the fund. Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah (R.A.) immediately gave Rs 5,000 to the *Madrassa* from his own side. On checking the accounts more thoroughly, it transpired that the books were balanced and there had been an error in the earlier calculation. Mawlana Masihullah Sahib was requested to take back his Rs 5,000. Hadhrat (R.A.) was not happy to accept back what he had happily given for the sake of Allah Ta'ala. Munshi Sahib says that this was at a time when things were cheap and 5,000 Rupees was regarded as a substantial amount of money.

Public Acceptance and Love

Allah Ta'ala had granted Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) such acceptance and love in the hearts of His creation that young and old, Muslims and non-Muslims, all were involuntarily attracted towards him.

Abu Hurairah (R.A) reported that Rasulullah (sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam) said: "If Allah loves a person, He calls Jibril saying, 'Allah loves so-and-so; O Jibril! Love him.' Jibril would love him and make an announcement amongst the inhabitants of the heaven: 'Allah loves so-and-so, therefore you should love him also,' and so all the inhabitants of the heaven would love him, and then he is granted acceptance in the eyes of the people on the earth."
(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

- Once on a visit to the United Kingdom, Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) was travelling by car in Batley, Yorkshire; the driver stopped the car to give way to a contingent of horse-mounted policemen. All the horses abruptly halted to a stand still in the middle of the busy road when they came adjacent to the car in which Hadhrat (R.A.) was a passenger. Despite vigorous attempts by the policemen the horses would not budge at all, causing chaos with a build up of traffic on the road. Hadhrat (R.A.) remarked: *"The horses will not move!"* and requested the driver to drive on. As soon as the car started to move, all the horses in unison lifted their fore legs, standing only on the hind legs and "saluted" Hadhrat's car. Hadhrat (R.A.) calmly commented: *"Even an animal like a horse, one of Allah Ta'ala's creation senses that a Muslim is passing on the road (and takes the opportunity to show their love)."*
- Even on a journey (where he would not be known to the people), he would soon become the topic of conversation and people would crowd around him offering their greetings. Once during a stop at Rohri Railway Station (in Pakistan), a man witnessing a similar scene asked someone next to him: "Who is this person whom so many people are following?" The other replied: "This is a *"Buzrug"*(Wali-Allah) (pious man) who inspires the hearts of people!"

Without doubt, the widespread acclaim and acceptance which Imam Ghazali (*Rahmatullahi Alaihi*) designated as a sign of *wilayat e kubra* (supreme sainthood) could clearly be seen in the noble personage of Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah (RA).

Perfect Balance Between Mohabbat (Love for Allah Ta'ala) & Adab (Respect for the Majesty of Allah Ta'ala)

A unique quality about Shaikh Masihullah (R.A.) was that despite his overbearing love for Allah Ta'ala he never lost sight of respect for Him, generally one finds that overpowering love reduces respect and an abundance of respect reduces love!

Never in his entire life did he mention Allah's Name on its own, as a minimum always adding "Ta'ala" (Most High)... *Alhamdulillah Ta'ala, Masha'Allahu Ta'ala, Insha'Allahu Ta'ala...* With regard to everything Shaikh Masihullah's approach was always one of respect, humility and selflessness.

- This perfect balance truly manifested itself at the time of his departure from this earthly existence...Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) turned his blessed face towards the *Qibla* whilst continually reciting the *Kalima Tayyiba* and making *Zikr* by means of *Pas Anfas* (a method of zikr by controlling one's breath) (LOVE)...he remained concerned about his *topi* (skullcap) and raised his hand towards his head many times to check that it was in place (RESPECT). In this condition he took his final breath whilst uttering the word *ALLAH!*

And His (Allah's) Alone is the Majesty in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. (Surah Al-Jathiyah 45:37)

Illness

Narrated Abdullah (R.A): I visited Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) while he was suffering from a high fever. I said, "O Allah's Messenger! You have a high fever." He said, "Yes, I have as much fever as two men of you." I said, "Is it because you will have double reward?" He said, "Yes, it is so. No Muslim is afflicted with any harm, even if it were a prick of a thorn, but that Allah removes his sins because of that, as a tree sheds its leaves." (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Hadhrat's health had deteriorated over the years and often he would say: "Soon this old man will depart, so listen attentively to what he has to say!"

In the month of Ramadan ul Mubarak 1412 Hijri (March/April 1992), despite considerable weakness Hadhrat (R.A.) kept all the fasts, performed the full *tarawih* prayers and carried on with his discourses. Hundreds of *salikin* would come to Jalalabad in the month of Ramadan ul Mubarak to benefit from the blessed company and spiritually charged inspirational (*ilhami*) *majalis* of Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah (R.A). On the 28th of Ramadan, Hadhrat conducted his *majlis* as usual without any undue difficulty. It was the will of Allah Ta'ala that this would be his last complete formal *majlis*, for the next day which also transpired to be the last day of Ramadan,

Hadhrat (R.A.) was overcome by fever and severe weakness. The seven month period of illness had begun and throughout this period Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) was a picture of courage and steadfastness.

- Despite doctors advising total rest Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) would still hold a short *majlis* even if he felt slightly better. Otherwise he would send a message to the *salikin* resident in the *khanqah*: "I seek to be excused today." Visitors and those in the *khanqah* would come to sit by Hadhrat (R.A.) for a short while after Asar and he would often say a few words of great benefit. Once he remarked: "*I have become extremely weak, if people could fathom the level of my weakness they would feel great pity for me. I may be sitting here replying to all these letters and you see me meeting people but I do not have the strength to stand up and walk!*"

Total Absorption towards Allah Azza wa Jalla

Narrated Abu Hurairah (R.A): Allah's Messenger (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said, " Allah said, 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a Wali (pious worshipper) of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have made Fard (compulsory) upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (non obligatory deeds) till I love him, then I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My Protection (Refuge), I will protect him..." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab ur Riqaq)

During Hadhrat's final days a great change overtook his speech, his habits and his nature, it was as if he was cutting himself off from all things and all people.

- Dr Tanweer Ahmed Khan Sahib says: In the past Hadhrat (R.A.) had never gladly given me permission to depart after every visit to Jalalabad, he always used to say, "*If it is possible, stay longer.*" But on my last visit during Hadhrat's final days, he kept on asking, "*Are you not returning home?*"

Hadhrat (R.A.) began to dislike details when it came to any matter or speech.

- Dr Tanweer Ahmed Khan Sahib reports that Hadhrat (R.A.) mentioned to him on two or three occasions, *"Tanweer Ahmed Khan, you have a habit of talking in detail and at length. These days I desire brevity. Therefore, do not go into details about anything, answer me with a simple yes or no. What need do I have with why I should take this medicine or not? Merely suffice with telling me whether I need to take it or not!"*

Hadhrat (R.A.) would remain engrossed in the contemplation of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala and the visualisation of His Divine Being. Recitation of *Salat al an-Nabawi (Durood Sharif)* had also increased tremendously. He remarked a few times,

"Where will I become better now? Do corpses become better? I am now amongst the dead and no longer amongst the living!"

It was clear that there remained no visible link with anyone besides the Beloved and this was clear proof of Shaikh Masihullah's *wilayat* and elevated spiritual position.

Journey to the Beloved

Narrated 'Ubada bin As-Samit (R.A): Allah's Messenger (sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam) said, "Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah (too) loves to meet him, and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah (too) hates to meet him." Aishah (R.A.), or some of the wives of the Prophet (sallal lahu alaihi wa sallam) said, "But we dislike death." He said, "It is not like this, but it is meant that when the time of the death of a believer approaches, he receives the good news of Allah's Pleasure with him and His Blessings upon him, and so at that time nothing is dearer to him than what is in front of him. He therefore loves the meeting with Allah, and Allah (too) loves the Meeting with him..." (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab ur Riqaaq)

- Dr Tanweer Ahmed Khan Sahib asked Hadhrat Masihullah, *"Does Hadhrat have any choice in the matter of returning to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala to the extent that it can be revealed?"* When Hadhrat (R.A.) kept quiet, Dr Sahib insisted: *"I will not leave until I receive an answer to my query!"* Finally in the most humble of manners Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) said, *"Some people are given a choice in the matter."* Upon this Dr Tanweer Sahib said, *"Alhamdulillah Ta'ala, I am greatly pleased that my*

Shaykh has been granted this choice!" Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah, surely one of the favoured servants of Allah Ta'ala remained respectfully silent.

- Hadhrat (R.A.) was journeying to the hereafter rapidly but in such a manner that no one else was truly aware of it...When *Bhai Jan* mentioned that there were numerous people at the funeral of his eldest daughter's father in law, Hadhrat remarked: "You will (soon) witness *Jalalabad* becoming the plain of *A'rafah*." Only later did it dawn on *Bhai Jan*, that Hadhrat (R.A.) was referring to his own funeral.
- The day before Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah left this earthly abode he said to Dr Naeem Sahib: "*Zur gibban tazdud hubba*"(Visit me from time to time, this will increase love). A surprised Dr Naeem replied: "But Hadhrat, I am here all the time with you, to check your pulse and give you medicine!" Hadhrat (R.A.) remarked: "Yes, this is not a general statement!" Only later did Dr Naeem Sahib realise that Hadhrat was referring to visiting his grave.
- Shafiq al-Ummah, Haji Faruq Sahib (*alaihiraahmah*) writes in "*Zikr e Masih al-Ummah*": On Thursday 16 Jumada al-Awwal, (12 November 1992), I was in *Masjid e Nabawi* sitting on my normal spot near *Babus Salam* and facing the Holy Enclosure of *Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)*. It was a minute before the *adhan* for *Salat ul Maghrib* when suddenly, wide awake, I was blessed with a vision of *Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)*, who said to me: "A great event is about to happen. Be courageous!" My heart testified that surely something unique is about to happen. Seconds later the *Maghrib adhan* commenced and with tears overflowing from my eyes I thanked my *Rabb (Jalla Jalaluhu)* for this glorious vision. The thought occurred to me that perhaps my Hadhrat Masih al -Ummah has gone on to meet his Beloved Allah Ta'ala. I swiftly dismissed this fleeting thought for I was never ever happy to even think about my Hadhrat's departure from this earthly life, let alone that he had already left us! The night (Friday by now) passed in great anxiety and uneasiness, with no question of any sleep. Upon the *Tahajjud adhan* I presented myself at the court of *Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)* and whilst crying profusely I made lengthy *duaas* on behalf of my beloved Hadhrat. After performing *Salat ul Ishraq*, I returned to my lodgings where I was informed that a telephone call had been received from India with the news that my great teacher had passed away.

On Friday night, 17 Jumada al-Awwal 1413 Hijri (13 November 1992), Hadhrat Masihullah offered his *Esha Salah* with indications of the head. Despite extreme weakness he still performed four *raka'ahs* of *Tahujjud* before the *Witr Salah*. As Hadhrat (R.A.) was having difficulty with his breathing due to excess phlegm and coughing, he was given *Zam Zam* water to drink by means of a spoon. Mawlana Inayatullah Sahib started reciting Sura Yasin...

- Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) was continually reciting the *Kalima Tayyiba* and making *Zikr* by means of *Pas Anfas*. No sound could be heard but with every breath *Zikrullah* continued, as did the movement of his lips and the indications of his noble head towards his heart. He remained concerned about his *topi* (skullcap) and raised his hand towards his head many times to check that it was in place. Hadhrat (R.A.) indicated with his index finger (like in *Tashahhud* - affirming the Oneness of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*), turned his blessed face towards the *Qiblah* and took his final breath whilst uttering the word *ALLAH!* And so the *mubarak rooh* of this *Imam of Suluk*, this soother of broken hearts who having ministered spiritual cure to thousands departed from this earthly body to meet The Friend on High (*Jalla Jalaluhu*).

"Truly, to Allah we belong and truly to Him we shall return" (Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 156)

Shaikh Masihullah (R.A.) was laid to rest after *Salat ul Jumu'ah* in the cemetery adjoining the *Madrasa* now named "*Miftahul Jannah*" (The Key to Jannah), around two hundred and fifty thousand people attended his funeral.

"The tug of love will leave you in a state of restlessness until you attend my funeral or visit my grave!"

When Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi (R.A.) passed away (2 Rajab 1362 AH - 4 July 1943 CE), that very same night Masih al-Ummah Mawlana Masihullah saw him in his dream. Shaikh Masihullah enquired: "Hadhrat! What happened?" Shaikh Thanawi smiled and said: "*Alhamdulillah!* I am in *Jannah* and Allah Ta'ala has elevated me to the station (which Allah Ta'ala has alluded to in the Qur'an ul Karim) -

"Verily, the Muttaqin will be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers (Paradise). In a seat of truth, near the Omnipotent King (Allah, the One, the All-Blessed, the Most High, the Owner of Majesty and Honour)".(Surah Al-Qamar 54: 54-55)

Mawlana Masihullah (R.A.) always harboured the hope that Allah Ta'ala also elevate him to the same station near to his *Hadhrat Wala* Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanawi. Haji Faruq Sahib (R.A.) reports that the first night after Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah was laid to rest one of Hadhrat's students from Delhi saw Hadhrat Masih al-Ummah in his dream. Hadhrat (R.A.) said: "*Alhamdulillah! I have reached my Hadhrat Wala and the station (muqam) which I always used to make dua for has been granted to me by Allah Ta'ala*".

Hadhrat Shafiq al-Ummah further reports that in Lahore one of his friends saw Hadhrat Masihullah (R.A.) in his dream, on enquiry about his state, Hadhrat (R.A.) replied: "*Alhamdulillah! The blessings of Darud Sharif (Salat al an Nabawi) did the work for me! The blessings of Darud Sharif (Salat al an Nabawi) did the work for me!*" Haji Faruq Sahib than remarked that surely Hadhrat Masihullah used to offer *Darud* in great abundance. (Extracted from the *majlis* of Hadhrat Shafiq al-Ummah: "*Mawt mu'min ka tohfa hai*").

Mawlana Masihullah (R.A.) will be remembered for the beauty of his character, his inspiring talks (*majalis*) and especially his lifelong mission to explain and expand upon the reformative teachings of his beloved mentor, Hakim al-Ummah Mujaddid Thanawi, which still serve Muslims today in helping them understand the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

May Allah Azz wa Jal forgive his sins and veil his faults and accept him with honour and beautiful covering and make him dwell in the highest part of 'Illiyin in the company of the Prophets, truthful, martyrs and righteous.

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