

Oceans of Tranquillity

Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Fazil

Al-Naqshbandi Al-Bandyalwi

Introduction

Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Fazil Naqshbandi Bandyalwi, may Allah preserve and protect him for the betterment of the ummah, is a senior scholar, jurist and teacher who currently resides in the city of Bradford, England.

He has dedicated his entire life to Islam, and has spent the last two decades teaching students – who wish to travel upon the path of seeking sacred knowledge – the traditional Islamic sciences.

God willing, we hope this short biography will be benefit those who are searching for the best of role models and for heavenly inspiration in such testing times.

His Upbringing

Hailing from a pious family who gave precedence to studying the religion, Mufti Fazil was born in the year 1965 in Azad Kashmir, Pakistan.

His honourable predecessors were noble farmers who resided in the deep mountains of the district of Kotli. Yet, despite being surround by harsh conditions and rough terrain, this did not stop Mufti Fazil aspiring to inherit from the Prophet ﷺ.

His father, Sufi Muhammad Alam, was a pious gnostic and humble servant of Allah who would spend his time in worship and servitude; and his mother – who nurtured him and instilled within his heart love for the religion - was a very pious and God-fearing lady who spent her days and nights in worship and devotion. She became the embodiment of the phrase 'the mother is the first university'.

His grandfather, Sufi Imam Deen, was well known for his wisdom, judgement, and rulings for the local and wider community; he was a highly regarded and well-respected individual.

Mufti Fazil has five brothers and two sisters, with the eldest sister having left this temporary abode (Allah grant her Jannah al-Firdaus). All of his five brothers are notable scholars and Huffaz, their names are;

1. Qari Muhammad Shafi;

2. Hafiz Qari Ghulam Nabi;
3. Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Aslam;
4. Hafiz Qari Fazal Hussain;
5. Hafiz Qari Noor Hussain.

His Early Studies

Mufti Fazil completed his hifz under the tutelage of his eldest brother, Qari Muhammad Shafi. Often, when Qari Shafi would wake the hifz students for their morning recitation, he would find his younger brother, Mufti Fazil, already prepared and engrossed in his recitation of the Holy Qur'an.

This eagerness and attachment to the Holy Qur'an is still seen in him today. As far back as I can remember, and for every blessed day where I have sat at his feet, I have witnessed him reciting the Noble Qur'an in optional (nawafil) prayers. In fact, it is Mufti Fazil's habit to finish the whole of the Holy Qur'an in forty days during his (optional) prayers - displaying an unparalleled love for prayer and the esteemed Qur'an.

For more than 15 years I have had the honour of praying tarawih behind Mufti Fazil, where we have witnessed his resolute memory and recital: Not once was there ever a need for the huffaz to correct his recitation.

His Scholarly Studies

Upon memorising the Holy Qur'an in its entirety, Shaykh Mufti Fazil was eager to quench his thirst of seeking knowledge. Thus, he travelled to Baseerpur where he found one of his first teachers; Imam al-Sarf, Shaykh Hashim, who was the son in law of the great jurist of Pakistan; Mufti Nur-Ullah Naeemi.

Often when studying in the madrassa, Mufti Fazil would need money for his books. He would seek permission from his teachers and only then find work. Such was his dedication, he would work for the duration of time it took for him to earn enough money for his books and then return back to his studies.

Having completed his studies under Shaykh Hashim, Mufti Fazil was still thirsty for seeking sacred knowledge, so he left Baseerpur and made his way to Mianwali. Here, he was to study under the master of the logical and transmitted sciences, a direct student of Malik al-Ulema Allama Ata Muhammad Bandyalwi (Allah sanctify his secrets); Allama Shaykh Ata Muhammad Mateen.

From the moment Mufti Fazil arrived, Shaykh Ata Muhammad Mateen saw greatness in his new student and realised that he was dedicated, sincere, and supremely gifted. Mufti Fazil soon became Shaykh Ata Muhammad Mateen main student and graduated from the dars e nizami curriculum according to the methodology of the Bandyalwi scholars

Even to this very day, Mufti Fazil's thirst and reverence for the sacred knowledge remains. Whenever Mufti Fazil visits Pakistan, he still finds time to sit at the feet of Shaykh Ata Muhammad Mateen and study.

His Teachers

Mufti Muhammad Fazil has studied under various notable scholars. At a very young age he met and benefitted from Mufti Azam Kashmir, Shaykh Abdul Hakeem of Mirpur (Allah sanctify his secrets), whilst he was studying in school.

Another teacher was the great scholar and speaker of Mirpur, Allamah Muhammad Bashir Mustafwi (Allah sanctify his secrets); a very humble scholar with immense knowledge of the Sunnah. Mufti Fazil studied Persian under him and attributed the following to him: "He was a great teacher with a lot of simplicity. Whatever lesson Allamah Muhammad Bashir would teach, he would teach in such a manner that there would be no need for the student to repeat the lesson after its completion. It is unfortunate that the people did not benefit from his teachings and involve him with other affairs of this religion."

Mufti Fazil also spent a very short time studying with Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Asgar, who currently teaches at Jamia Nushahiyyah, Jhelum.

His Teaching in Pakistan

After the completion of his studies in Mianwali, Mufti Fazil became a resident scholar at the madrassah and it quickly became apparent that he had truly inherited from the Bandyalwi way and become his teacher's heir, just as Shaykh Ata Muhammad Mateen had inherited from his teacher, Malik al-Ulema Allama, Shaykh Ata Muhammad Bandyalwi (Allah sanctify his secrets).

The secret to Mufti Fazil's inheritance perhaps lay at the blessed hands of Shaykh Allama Ata Muhammad Bandyalwi (Allah sanctify his secrets) whom he met as a young student whilst memorising the Noble Qur'an. It was here where the great Shaykh made a prayer for him and today the fruits of it have been harvested.

Whilst teaching at Mianwali, many students benefitted from his immense knowledge and methods of teaching. Alongside teaching the primary texts of the dars e nizami syllabus, he also taught in the Qur'anic memorisation department where many students completed Hifz Under his guidance. Most notably, a student by the name of Hafiz Muhammad Shareef completed the memorisation of the Holy Qur'an within 6 months. He furthered his studies at the feet of Mufti Fazil and became a notable student and a great scholar.

His Marriage

Mufti Fazil got married during the midst of his studies. This did not deter him from seeking sacred knowledge - a great lesson for us all). In fact, he continued to study with his teachers even after the birth of his first child.

Mufti Fazil currently has four sons and four daughters.

His Spiritual Journey

After marriage, Mufti Fazil decided to take the spiritual path. His thirst for sacred knowledge had awoken a thirst of gnosis. He searched for his Shaykh and found none other than the great gnostic, Shaykh Abdul Wahid (Allah sanctify his secrets), better known as Haji Pir sahib (a title given to him as he born on the day of Hajj). Mufti Fazil pledged himself to his Shaykh in the Naqshbandi order and travelled the spiritual journey at his hands.

Once whilst leading the prayer in a masjid, Haji Pir (Allah sanctify his secrets) prayed behind Mufti Fazil, after which he praised Mufti Fazil and was astounded by his recitation and the ease of recital.

Mufti Fazil is not only a master in the outer sciences but also a master of the inner sciences, most notably the way of Mujjaddid alf Thani; Shaykh Ahmad Faruqi Sirhindi (Allah sanctify his secrets). His spiritual strength can be seen in his teachings and speech.

I have been blessed with many sittings with the Ulema where many matters have been discussed, but whenever I sit at the feet of Mufti Fazil I am always awe-struck. His silence imparts knowledge and his speech resonates like a father with his child.

Mufti Fazil's schooling is the purification of the heart, body, and soul. When he teaches, it is as though the author of the book is speaking and at times, we would feel that some of the details embedded in the book may have not been known by its author.

His Migration

In 1998, Mufti Fazil migrated to England with his family where he served the Bradford Muslim community as an Imam. During his early years, He was not well known amongst the people, something which he personally prefers till this very day. However, despite this, Allah had a greater plan for him to serve the religion.

His Teaching in England

Mufti Muhammad Fazil is particularly known for his mastery in teaching dars e nizami upon the Bandyawli way, which in essence is critically reading every book.

He began teaching students at Jamia Islamia Rizvia, Bradford, a school founded by his elder brother, Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Aslam Bandyalwi. Then, around 2004, he also started teaching the dars e nizami curriculum at the al-Mustafa Centre upon the request of Allama Anwar al-Mustafa Hamdami. His first cohort of students graduated (from dars e nizami) in 2009, where many great scholars attended this graduation, notably Shaykh Alauddin Siddiqi (Allah sanctify his secrets). Mufti Fazil still continues to serve and teach in both of these respective institutes. In recent times, Mufti Fazil has begun teaching the dars e nizami texts for Jamiyat Tabligh ul Islam.

Since arriving in the UK, Mufti Fazil has taught various sciences and notable books in their entirety, some of them include:

1. Sahih al-Bukhari
2. Tafsir al-Qari
3. Tafsir al-Jalalayn
4. Mishkat al-Masabih
5. Ashiat al-Lamat
6. Al-Hidayah
7. Sharh Wiqayah
8. Sharh Jami
9. Kafiyah with Jami al-Ghamudh

Alongside these books, he continues to teach in various other sciences like Arabic grammar, Persian, Sufi Persian poetry, logic, fiqh, usul al-fiqh, hadith, usul al-hadith, asma al-rijal, trigonometry, philosophy, eloquence, rhetoric, ilm kalam, etc.

His Students

Mufti Fazil has many students around the world. Some notable students include:

1. Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Zahoor Ahmad Chishti Attari;
2. Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Abdus Sami Naqshbandi, son of Mufti Muhammad Fazil;
3. Shaykh Syed Azka Jalal ud din Kazmi son of Shaykh Pir Syed Irfan Shah Mashahdi;
4. Shaykh Pir Syed Muhammad Ahsan Hussain Sharafat Naushahi, son of Shaykh Pir Syed Maroof Hussain Nuashahi;
5. Allamah Hafiz Ijaz Ahmad naqshandi sarwari, grandson of Mufti Azam kashmir Abdul Hakim Naqshbandi;
6. Shaykh Hafiz Muhammad Saeed Naqshbandi;
7. Shaykh Qari Hafiz Imran Rizvi Naqshbandi;

8. Shaykh Mudasaar al-Haq Shadhili;
9. Shaykh Muhammad Jameel Naqshbandi;
10. Shaykh Syed Zarkani Shah Ashtafi;
11. Shaykh Syed Samdani Shah Ashrafi;
12. Shaykh Syed Hamdani Shah Ashrafi;
13. Shaykh Hafiz Sudagar Hussain Qadri Attari;
14. Shaykh Hafiz Qari Abdus Salaam Naqshbandi;
15. Shaykh Abdul Hafeez Aziz;
16. Shaykh Muhammad Ishtiaq;
17. Shaykh Sayyid Jahangir Shah Keighley.

His Miracles

I have spent every single day of the past 15 years in the company of Mufti Fazil, where I have witnessed miracles on a daily basis. I narrate some of this miracles below:

- **The blessings and effect placed in his teaching and words:** Many may not understand this to be a miracle, however, I believe it to be the greatest gift and miracle that Allah granted him. Allah blessed him with a powerful way of teaching and speaking such that he would leave an everlasting effect on anyone who sat at his feet. When he teaches, it is as though he engraves knowledge straight into the heart – to such extents that a student does not forget his blessed words.
- **Barakah in time:** When you are in his presence, Allah places blessing within time. He would teach the most intricate matters of religion in great detail in a short matter of time.
- **The earth folding:** A journey that would take 10 minutes would take only a couple of minutes. As though the earth would fold for him to reach his destination. This was a miracle I experienced many a time whilst serving him.
- **Blessings in food:** Mufti Muhammad Fazil is known for his love of the Awliya. Therefore he would make special preparations and invite scholars and students for du'a for the souls of the Awliya. At times, food for 20 would suffice for 50 by his du'a.
- **Reciting the Noble Qur'an in taraweeh without preparation and rest:** Many times, Mufti Fazil would head straight to the masjid, after landing at the airport, and lead taraweeh. On other occasions, I would witness him teach throughout the day and lead taraweeh at night. I rarely saw him taking time out through the day to prepare his recitation of the Noble Qur'an (dawr) with another.
- **An accepted Dua.**
- **Answering questions before they're asked:** something which students witness on a daily basis.
- **Steadfastness upon the deen:** This is probably one of his greatest miracles. Mufti Muhammad Fazil does not comprise with his steadfastness upon the Sunnah, as 'steadfastness is greater than a miracle'. I was once told that Mufti Fazil was on a journey and he wished to stop for prayer. However, the driver was very determined not to stop and reluctantly stopped so that Mufti Fazil could

pray. The driver waited for a few minutes before getting impatient and decided to leave without Mufti Fazil. As soon as he drove off, a police officer stopped the driver to make routine enquiries. The officer carried out his enquiries and as soon as Mufti Fazil sat in the car, the police officer allowed the driver to leave.

- **Seeing him in prayer reminds us of the Salaf:** If you ever get a glimpse of Mufti Fazil whilst they are praying salah, you would immediately feel as though the great predecessors would have prayed in this manner – such prayers that brings tranquillity upon the onlooker (imagine what it does to the one praying). Whilst in prayer he stands as though there is no fear in the world, the sun could rise from the west and it wouldn't deter him from worshipping his Lord.

Finally, I finish this section with the following miracle: Whilst visiting the holy lands, there was a poor man from India who was in need for some money to return home, he stood in front of the blessed chambers of the Prophet ﷺ and said: "O Messenger of Allah! No one leaves your city empty handed! I come to you with this request, please grant me it!" That night whilst sleeping, a man appeared in his dream and pointed towards a man and informed him that he must go to him for his money, as soon as he awoke, he approached that very man and was given the money. That man was Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Fazil Naqshbandi Bandyawli.

Conclusion

All praise is for Allah who granted me the honour of spending more than half of my life at the feet of one the greatest scholars to have graced the west. A man who always inspires with his immense love for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. A man who is as resolute as the highest mountain, never wavering upon his steadfastness upon the Sunnah. A man, who when he teaches, imparts a serene feeling of peace and tranquillity, as if lights are descending from the heavens.

It has been very difficult to pen this article due to the rank of my teacher, Shaykh Mufti Muhammad Fazil, but it should suffice - as my conclusion - that he has spent every second of his life, from morning till night, engrossed in teaching the sacred knowledge, and without doubt is a living embodiment of the Prophetic sunnah.