

HADHRAT MAULANA
BASHIR AHMAD
DIWAN DAMAT BARAKATUHU



BIOGRAPHY

BY: MUFTI MUHAMMAD IRSHAD MOTARA

Translators Preface

حامدا و مصليا و مسلما

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The below is a short biography of our beloved grandfather Hadhrat Maulana Bashir Ahmad Diwan Sahib *damat barakatuhu*. The information has been taken from the recently published Urdu book “Islaahi Bayanat”.

The actual Urdu book is a compilation of various lectures which our respected Grandfather had delivered over a period of time in Fiji and New Zealand. Insha Allah with the help of Allah Ta’ala in the near future these lectures will also be translated into English.

The book commences with the priceless gems of great giants and luminaries such as Shaikhul Hadeeth Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Ahmad Khanpoori Sahib *hafidhahullah* and Shaikhul Hadeeth Hadhrat Mufti Abbaas Sahib Bismillah Dhabeli Sahib *hafidhahullah*.

The biography has been taken from the writings of Master Muhammad Ali, a student of Hadhrat Maulana Bashir Ahmad Diwan Sahib *damat barakatuhu*. May Allah Ta’ala reward him tremendously for gathering all these scattered pearls.

May Allah Ta’ala reward Hadhrat Qari Abdul Haq Diwan Sahib *damat barakatuhu* and Mufti Dabeer Aalam bin Ishaq Qasmi Sahib *damat barakatuhu* who were instrumental in composing and publishing the Urdu book.

The following is only an abridged translation and therefore several sections have been omitted and others were summarised. To make the article more-reader friendly, an idiomatic translation was adopted in many places

Together with this, may Allah Ta'ala reward my Uncle Rashid Ahmad Diwan and my honourable colleague Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Rayhaan Diwan Sahib *damat barakatuhu* and my respected brother Ustaadh Muhammad Ashfaaq Motara for editing the below English translation.

May Allah Ta'ala accept and grant long life to my parents and grandparents. Ameen.

Ahqar Muhammad Irshad Motara (Mufti)

24th Rajab 1437

5th May 2016

Respected brothers! Indeed the coming of Hadhrat Maulana Bashir Ahmad Diwan Sahib *damat barakatuhu* to Fiji is a very great blessing of Allah Ta'ala.

We make Shukr to Allah Ta'ala who through his grace and mercy had sent Ustaadh Muhtaram to us (the people of Fiji).

Hadhrat Maulana had served the Deen of Allah Ta'ala in Fiji with great sacrifice for approximately forty five years.

Dear readers, Allah Ta'ala mentions in the Noble Qur'an:

و اما بنعمة ربك فحدث

And mention the blessings of your Lord.

و قليل من عبادى الشكور

A few of my slaves are grateful.

In accordance to the above verses I am expressing my shukr that this lowly slave Master Muhammad Ali has been granted this auspicious opportunity to present in front of you a concise biography of Ustaadh Muhtaram Maulana Bashir Ahmad Diwan Sahib *Damat barakatuhu*.

The Diwan family.

The family hail from the town Lajpoor which is situated 12 Miles from Surat which is a well known city in Gujarat, India. Lajpoor is mostly inhabited by Muslims and a famous family from this town is known as the Diwans. Many great and high ranking Ulama and Huffadh were from this family, from amongst them was a very pious saint by the name of Hadhrat Shah Sufi Suleiman Diwan *Rahimahullah* (born 1803 passed away 1924). He was well known as Sufi Sahib and was regarded

as one of the great pious Awliyaa of Gujarat. Together with this he was known to be a person of Karamaat¹.

From this very same family another Alim by the name of Hadhrat Maulana Yusuf Diwan sahib *Rahimahullah* (born 1885 passed away 1937) was born. He was also well known in Gujarat for his knowledge and piety. He had spent his life in the service of Deen, He was engaged in teaching at the Madaris (Islamic Institutions) of Gujarat together with making Tableegh (propagating the message of Deen).

Allah Ta'ala had granted Maulana Muhammad Yusuf *Rahimahullah* five sons. Alhamdulillah all five were Ulama and were well known for their services of Deen. The eldest of the five was Hadhrat Maulana Hakeem Abdul Hay Diwan *Rahimahullah* (born 1908 passed away 1936). He had completed his studies in the famous Islamic institute Jamiah Islamiya Dabhel. He was the student of great giants such as Hadhrat Allama Sayyed Anwar Shah Kashmeri *Rahimahullah* and Shaikhul Islam Hadhrat Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani *Rahimahullah*. Together with this he had acquired qualifications of Herbal Medicine in Luknow from Tayiba College. Hadhrat Maulana Bashir Ahmad Diwan sahib *damat barakatuhu* is the son of Hadhrat Maulana Hakeem Abdul Hay Diwan *Rahimahullah*.

Birth.

Hadhrat Maulana Bashir Ahmad Diwan *damat barakatuhu* was born in the year 1350 Hijri which corresponds to the year 1931 September in the village of Lajpoo. In the year 1936 when he was at the age of five his beloved father had left this worldly abode. انا لله و انا اليه رجعون

¹ Karamat; A miracle which takes place on the hands of a pious person who is not a Messenger.

Thereafter he remained in the care of his mother. At a very young age he had a great desire in seeking the knowledge of Deen. He had learnt the basics of the Noble Qur'an, Arabic, Urdu, Faarsi and Gujarati at his local Islamic Madrasah in Lajpore. After the completion of the above basics it was decided that he acquires secular knowledge. There were no such facilities in his home town for secular studies therefore he was enrolled at a school which was situated three miles from Lajpore near the Sachin rail station. However he did not have any inclination in seeking secular education, therefore he refused to continue his studies after two to three weeks. In reality Allah Ta'ala had destined that he was to serve the Deen of Allah Ta'ala therefore he had a natural aversion to secular studies.

Quest for Islamic knowledge.

In the year 1946 Hadhrat enrolled in the famous Islamic institute Jamia Islamiyah Ta'leem-ud-Deen Dhabel. He remained there for six years in which he studied Arabic, Islamic Jurisprudence, Tafseer and Hadeeth etc. He was fortunate to study under great luminaries such as:

Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Akalwaya Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Shams-ud-Deen Barodawy Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Malik Kandelwi Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Jabbar A'zamy Sahib *Rahimahullah*², Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Rawf Pesharwi Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Fadlul Rahman Pesharwi Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Qadhi Athar Mubarak Puri Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Abdul Quddus Rumi Ilaa Aa'baady Sahib *Rahimahullah*.

² Our respected grandfather would mention that he would travel with Hadhrat Abdul Jabbar A'zamy Sahib *Rahimahullah* in his student days and deliver bayans in his presence. Thereafter his respected Ustaadh would advise him accordingly.

After completion of his studies in Dhabel he enrolled in the world famous institute Darul Uloom Deoband for the final year; the Daura Hadeeth. The enrollment exams were known to be very difficult however through the grace of Allah Ta'ala in the year 1951 Darul Uloom had accepted him³.

Teachers at Darul Uloom Deoband.

Hadhrat was extremely fortunate to study Saheeh Bukhari and Jaami-ul Tirmidhi under the great personality Shaikh-ul Arab wal Ajam Shaikhul Islam Hadhrat Maulana Sayyid Hussain Ahmad Madani *Rahimahullah*.⁴ Shaikhul Islam *Rahimahullah* had taught approximately for fifteen years at Masjid Nabawi by the Rauda (the blessed grave of Hadhrat Nabi *Sallallahu alai wa salam*). The Arab Ulama and students would participate in his lectures on Tafseer and Hadeeth.

Hadhrat had also learnt under Hadhrat Maulana Ibraheem Balyawi Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana I'zaaz Ali Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Fakhr-ul- Hasan Sahib *Rahimahullah*, Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Mehdi Hasan Sahib *Rahimahullah*.⁵

³ Hadhrat Maulana I'zaaz Ali Sahib *Rahimahullah* had taken our respected grandfathers Hidayah exams.

⁴ Hadhrat Shaikhul Islam *Rahimahullah* would sometimes arrive in the late hours of the night to teach Saheeh Bukhari. This was due to Hadhrat Shaikhul Islam *Rahimahullahs* extensive journeys and responsibilities. However the students would always be anticipating eagerly for his arrival and his lessons. He would mention that Hadhrat's lehja (accent) was that of an Arab when he would recite the Arabic text and he would have piles of books in front of him which he would quote from.

⁵ Our respected grandfather had spent some time with Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Mehdi Hasan Sahib *Rahimahullah* after his completion of the Alim class. He was also fortunate to sit in the company of other great Akabreen such as Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Kandelwi,

Teaching and Propagation.

Hadhrat had completed his studies and acquired his Sanad in the year 1371 Sha'baan which corresponds to the year 1952 January, he was twenty one years of age at that time. Thereafter he returned back to his home town and began to teach at the very same primary Madrasah which he studied at. Together with the responsibility of teaching he would lead Salaah at the Jaami Masjid and was actively involved in propagating the Deen. He remained in the service of Deen in his local town from the year 1952 to 1956.

Some brothers from South Africa and Madagascar sat in the company of Hadhrat and listened to his lectures, this led to them making an effort in calling Hadhrat to South Africa and Madagascar, however he was not able to get his Visa therefore he remained in his home town.

Travel to Fiji.

Muhtaram Haaji Yusuf Dawood Sahib from Fiji had travelled to Lajpooor with his family and he was fortunate to sit in Hadhrat's lectures. Hadhrat was aware that he was from Fiji however beyond that Haaji Yusuf had not mentioned to Hadhrat anything concerning Fiji. Haaj Yusuf returned to Fiji and spoke with the leader of the Suva Muslim League about Hadhrat. At that time Suva Muslim League were in need of a well capable Alim, however they were very weary as they had issues in the past with calling foreign scholars.

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Shafee Sahib, Hadhrat Maulana Manzoor Nu'mani Sahib, Hadhrat Shaikhul Hadeeth Maulana Muhammad Zakariya Sahib, Mufti Abdur Raheem Lajpooori *Rahimahumullah*. He was also the class mate of Hadhrat Maulana Umar Palanpooori *Rahimahullah* and in the same era as Hadhrat Maulana Anzar Shah Kashmeri *Rahimahullah* in his student days.

Haaji Yusuf had given the details of Hadhrat to the Suva Muslim league and they had written a letter to Hadhrat. After receiving an answer from Hadhrat the Suva Muslim League were satisfied and decided to bring Hadhrat to Fiji. Once Hadhrat received his Visa he began his preparations for his journey to Fiji.

Despite having no knowledge of Fiji and no family Hadhrat began his journey in the year 1957 with his respected wife and his six month old daughter. Hadhrat had left from Bombay by ship and endured the difficulties of the journey which took sixteen days. Hadhrat arrived in Sydney-Australia and took a flight to Nandi, Fiji.

Suva Muslim League welcomed Hadhrat at the airport however due to the bad weather Hadhrat stayed at the house of Haaji Yusuf Sahib. After staying with Haaji Sahib for a few days Hadhrat went to Suva. The Masjid at that time was made of wood and was very small. Hadhrat would teach Deen to the children and initially he was not given the responsibility of Imamah. However after some weeks a pious man who would lead the Jumuah prayers handed over the responsibility of Imamah to Hadhrat. Thereafter he lead Salaah for forty five years Lillah. Hadhrat would lecture after Jumuah salaah and the numbers of the attendee's began to increase week by week until the Masjid became full.

Hadrat would go to the Suva Muslim School during the day which was situated around two and half miles from the Masjid. He would take a Taxi or a bus and teach the children Urdu and Arabic during the day. During the evenings he would teach the children and adults in the Masjid.

Hadhlat would also conduct Dars of Qur'aan fortnightly which people would take part with a lot of enthusiasm.

Suva Muslim league was unable to provide the monthly stipends on its appointed time. Sometimes months would pass and Hadhrat would not receive anything, however he would continue to quietly serve the Deen and not mention his difficulties to anyone. Hadhrat would take goods from a Hindu Gujarati shop owner whose shop was near the Masjid, he would happily give Hadhrat whatever goods he needed and would not ask for any payment. Thereafter when Hadhrat would receive his stipends he would pay the shop owner. Hadhrat would never take a loan from anyone and nor would he make apparent to anyone his condition.

Hadhrat's humility in his lectures:

Hadhrat would mention the following poem in his lectures:

شکر ہے تیرا خدا یا میں تو اس قابل نہ تھا

تو نے اپنے دین کے لئے چنا میں تو اس قابل نہ تھا

اپنا دیوانہ بنا یا میں تو اس قابل نہ تھا

جزیرہ فیجی میں پہنچا یا میں تو اس قابل نہ تھا

All thanks are for Allah Ta'ala and I was not worthy.

You have selected me for your Deen despite me not being worthy.

*You have made me your Diwaana (madly in love with Allah Ta'ala)
despite me not being worthy.*

You have made me reach Fiji despite me not being worthy.

Hadhrat's sweet and charming words.

In the year 1957 Hadhrat had his first welcoming Jalsa which took place after Maghrib. This Jalsa was very successful and Suva Muslim League was satisfied that they had selected the correct person and had made the right decision. Hadhrat would at all cost keep his town unified and would remove disputes and disagreements with love and wisdom. He would spread the message of Deen through lectures from the mimbar, Jalsas, radio Fiji and sometimes at the homes. He would mention virtues and apprehensions, he would explain with examples and sometimes he would mention poems with love and affection.

Madrasah Nurul Islam.

Hadhrat taught for approximately twenty years at Suva Muslim School and in the evenings in the Masjid. Thereafter he thought of commencing a Madrasah which could be in accordance to the conditions of Fiji. Therefore he made Mashwara with the responsible brothers of Fiji Muslim League and commenced Madrasah Nurul Islam in the Masjid in the year 1973. Many students from different areas enrolled at the Madrasah. Majority of the students were poor students, at that time there were around ten to fifteen students who would stay on the bottom floor of the Masjid. The Madrasah would organise their needs, such as their food etc and would also provide the students with copies of the Noble Qur'an and other Urdu books for free. The course was for four years and students would qualify together with receiving a certificate after four years and would be geared up with sufficient knowledge that they could take the responsibility of Imamat and teaching children Arabic and Urdu. The Education department of Fiji would recognize this certificate and would grant them an opportunity to teach in schools. Till now there are many who qualified from Madrasah Nurul Islam who are teaching in the various schools.

Construction of the Masjid.

In the year 1963 Hadhrat was appointed as the Chairmen of the Masjid and he travelled Fiji in making collections for the Masjid. In the year 1965 April a very impressive Masjid was constructed. Thereafter the property next to the Masjid was purchased and an effort was made to make separate quarters for the Imam.

A property was purchased in New Caledonia and Hadhrat was called to perform the first Jumuah at the new property. Alhamdulillah presently a Masjid has been constructed and the effort of Da'wat and Tableegh continues.

In the year 1968 Hadhrat contacted Markaz Nizam-ud-Deen requesting the elders to send a Jamaat to Fiji. Markaz Nizam-ud-Deen accepted his request and sent a Jamaat from Zambia. This Jamaat made a lot of sacrifice in spreading the Deen in Fiji. The Jamaat consisted of five Gujarati individuals who were welcomed by Hadhrat and some of the responsible brothers of the Fiji Muslim League at Nandi airport. From then onwards, every forty days there would be an Ijtima at various locations. Hadhrat would lecture in these Ijtima's and there would be a spiritual atmosphere. Hadhrat endured many difficulties while in this effort, certain Masajid were closed to the Jamaat's and others would not allow them to conduct the ta'leem etc. However Hadhrat continued to unify the people with love and wisdom.

Hadhrat remained as the Ameer of the Jamaat in Fiji for a long period of time. He also served as chairman, Board of Islamic Affairs of Fiji Muslim League for approximately forty years.

The end of a deceptive plan.

When Ayatullah Khomeini took power over Iran he began to send his scholars across the globe in order to propagate Shiasm. Together with

this they began to take the Muslim brothers of Fiji to New Zealand in order to make Zhabah (sacrifice) of the animals there.

These scholars began to lecture in the Masajid in English and people were becoming affected by their speeches. Initially they did not touch on the Shiite belief however slowly but surely their beliefs began to spread in the masses.

Hadhrat was concerned that our Muslim brothers in Fiji should not become inclined towards their beliefs and be lead astray. Together with this an effort was made by the Shiahhs that some of the Muslim Fijian brothers marry some of their Iranian ladies whereby Shiaism could slowly spread. During this time in the year 1984 the Iranian government had invited the Ulama and Imams of different localities to take part in a conference. Hadhrat had regarded this to be an opportunity whereby he could personally examine the beliefs of the Shiahhs. He was full of remorse when he witnessed their incorrect beliefs and he then consulted the Fiji Muslim league on this matter. It was decided that their lectures in the Masajid will come to an end. Together with this Hadhrat made an effort to explain to the masses the incorrect belief of the Shiahhs which Alhamdulillah led to the end of this Fitna. ⁶

The regeneration of the Urdu language.

When the Independence of Fiji drew near, some of the members of the Fiji Muslim League thought that the Urdu language from the Muslim schools should be replaced with the local Fijian language. The reason behind this was that if the local language was taught in the Muslim schools than this could become a means in pleasing the Fijian government and thereby the Muslims could possibly acquire a seat in

⁶ Hadhrat *damat barakatuhu* was also instrumental in the education of the masses with regards to the harms of the Qadiyanism belief together with Hadhrat Maulana Manzoor Chin'notwi *Rahimahullah* and Allama Khalid Mahmood *hafidhahullah*

Parliament. A meeting was held (perhaps) in Nandi in which this issue was discussed and the announcement of replacing the Urdu language with the local language was mentioned in the Fijian Times. Hadhrat was extremely upset when he heard the news that the language of the Akaabreen was being replaced with the local language. On the day of JumuaH Hadhrat gave a powerful lecture against this movement. Allah Ta'ala made it such that his pain and worry echoed across Fiji and many brothers gave support and wrote articles in the Fijian times in support of Hadhrat. Hadhrat continued to lecture on this issue in various Masajid and he had also written an article on the importance of the Urdu language. Hadhrat would encourage the Muslims to be strong and courageous and he would frequently mention the statement of Sultan Tipu Shaheed *Rahimahullah* "A single day of a Lion is greater than a hundred years of a fox". He was also threatened and warned, however he remained firm and kept his reliance on Allah Ta'ala and finally the Fiji Muslim league held a special meeting at the Islamic school on this issue. The attendees were many and Hadhrat delivered a dynamic lecture, Takbeers (Allahu Akbar) echoed in the gathering and it was decided by the Fiji Muslim league that the Urdu language will remain in the Muslim schools.

The outcome of this sacrifice is seen today wherein every Muslim school and college are teaching the Urdu and Arabic language and the government is also giving its full assistance.

The effort of spreading Islamic literature.

The concern came in Hadhrat's heart that the books of our Ulama which are in Urdu, Hindi and English should be ordered from India and Pakistan and given out to our Muslim brothers and sisters. He would sell these books at a very reasonable price to those that could afford them and he would give them for free to the poor and needy, in this way the knowledge of Deen spread to the Muslim families. Many incorrect and non-Islamic practices were prevalent, such as the wearing of Saaris

(A Hindu dress which would expose certain portions of the body) and men would wear shorts and tie handkerchiefs on their heads rather than wearing the Topee. However by this effort of spreading the correct literature to the Muslim houses the masses were slowly educated and incorrect customs and innovations came to an end.

Hadhrat's family.

Allah Ta'ala had blessed Hadhrat with one son Rashid Ahmad Diwan Sahib who has both Islamic and secular knowledge. He has written some books in the English language. One of the books which gained acceptance is the book "Basics of Muslim Worship". Thousands of copies of this book were printed and sent to many places, it is also used in many Madrasah's and schools. Together with this, Hadhrat's son has recently compiled a book on Hajj in the English language.

Rashid Ahmad Diwan Sahib was also blessed with one son Maulana Muhammad Rayhaan Sahib *damat barakatuhu*. Maulana has completed his studies of Deen at Madrasah Darul Uloom Arabia Islamia Azaadville South Africa. Hadhrat's other grandson Mufti Muhammad Irshad Motara has also studied at Madrasah Darul Uloom Arabia Islamia Azaadville South Africa and both are presently engaged in the service of Deen. May Allah Ta'ala accept. Ameen.

Hadhrat's journey to New Zealand.

Hadhrat was engaged in the service of Deen in Fiji from the year 1957 till 2002. However the conditions of Fiji thereafter became difficult and a Coup took place which led to a mass migration to New Zealand, Australia, Canada and America. Hadhrat's children also migrated to New Zealand which led to the migration of Hadhrat to New Zealand.

In the year 2002 Hadhrat went to the office of the Fiji Muslim League and with complete honesty and trustworthiness presented all the accounts of the Madrasah to the President of the Fiji Muslim League.

Hadhrat said to the president “Please look carefully into the accounts of the Madrasah, if there are any mistakes than please inform me”. The president responded “How is this possible? Maulana Sahib! Till this day the services which you have rendered with such sincerity and trustworthiness is an example in itself. We can’t say anything with regards to you”.

After the above conversation Hadrat gave a closed envelope to the President of the Fiji Muslim League to which the President said “If this is your resignation than it is not accepted”. Hadrat replied that this is not my resignation but it is my leave which I am taking for three months to visit my children. The President said that we will accept your leave but not your resignation and if you do not return than this Madrasah which you worked on for twenty five years will close down. Many people have benefitted from the Madrasah and no one will be able to run the Madrasah after you. We do not have any sincere and hardworking personality such as you.

After returning from New Zealand Hadhrat had sent a letter (his resignation) to the Fiji Muslim League in which it was written “It is the demand of my age and the request of my children that I spend my remaining days with them and continue to serve the Deen as much as possible. For this reason I am grateful to you all and I present my resignation. Khuda Hafidh. Remember this low servant in your Duas”.

Many families from Fiji thereafter migrated to New Zealand and Hadhrat continues till this very day to spread the message of Deen through lectures in the Masajid, homes and the radio. Despite Hadhrat’s age he continues to spread the message of Deen.

Hadhrat had performed Umrah twice and one Hajj.

Hadhrat travelled to England to visit his relatives. He also spread the message of Deen in the various Masajid in the United Kingdom.

Hadhrat travelled twice to Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne in connection with Deen.

In the year 2013 Hadhrat travelled to Canada and delivered many lectures at various Masajid.

Together with this, Hadrat on many occasions went to Fiji and lectured and was the special guest in the Darsa and Labasa annual Darul Uloom Jalsas. ⁷

May Allah Ta'ala accept Hadhrat's efforts of Deen and grant him a long healthy life.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us all the Taufeeq to take benefit from such personalities while they are still amongst us.

Ameen.

⁷ Hadhrat *damat barakatuhu* also conducted the first ever completion of Al-Hidayah in New Zealand and Hadhrat is also the President of the UCNZ (The Ulama council of New Zealand).