

فوائد مختارة من الكتاب المبارك:

صفحات مضيئة من حياة سيدي الوالد العلامة محمد عوامة

بقلم ابنه: الدكتور محيي الدين عوامة

Shaykh Muhammad 'Awwamah (hafizahullah) is considered to be the grand Muhaddith of our era.

His full name is أبو الفضل، محمد بن محمد بن عبد القادر بن عمر بن علي عوامة النعيمي الحسيني. His lineage links back to Sayyiduna Husayn (radiyallahu 'anhu). He was born in Aleppo, Syria in an environment of knowledge and piety. From a very young age he had an extreme desire for knowledge, attending the lessons conducted by Shaykh Muhammad Salqini (rahimahullah). Later in his life he became one of the most profound students of Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin and Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah (rahimahumallah). His son, Dr Muhyuddin, seeing it to be a right of the ummah, wrote a book specifically about the life of his father titled صفحات مضيئة من حياة سيدي الوالد العلامة محمد عوامة. His life and habits are a real encouragement and inspiration for students who are also treading the same path. There are many lessons that one can learn from just reading his biography. Each chapter in this book explains a different part of his life, from his youth through adulthood, and it specifically emphasises the things that helped him become the person we know him to be today. I have attempted to produce a short summary of some parts of the book, highlighting the points that can benefit all; whether we are students, teachers, or even parents.

HIS UPBRINGING AND LOVE FOR KNOWLEDGE

It was the blessing of Allah that he was raised in a religious environment. Being brought up in a proper religious environment is very important for all children because of the immense impact it can have on someone. Good environment and company can be the determining factor of a child growing up to be a good person or a bad person. Part of the reason why Shaykh was able to become who he was, was because of the good environment he had in his youth. From the very young age of 10 years old, he was in the company of righteous scholars and attended the different gatherings that were being conducted specifically by Shaykh Muhammad Salqini (rahimahullah). Shaykh Muhammad Salqini (rahimahullah) was his first teacher. Due to his sincerity and his pure heart, anything which Shaykh Muhammad Salqini (rahimahullah) did served as a source of tarbiyat for this young child. Shaykh's son says that he would teach his children the same lessons that he learnt from Shaykh Muhammad Salqini (rahimahullah) at that young age. He even raised his own children with those same teachings. How was he still able to remember what his teachers taught him at that young age? This is only because of the sincerity and love with which they taught him with. This is the effect of words that are spoken with sincerity-- they become engraved into the hearts of the listener. Years can go by but those words will always remain in

one's heart. But if those words had been spoken to show off, without any regard, then forget it being remembered for years and years thereafter—it would have been forgotten even before the listener stands up from his place.

THE REASONS FOR HIS EXCELLENCE

This chapter discusses the different factors that helped Shaykh climb to the heights that he has reached. Comprising of his family support, personal traits that he was blessed with, friends he had, and the teachers who guided him on this journey, each factor had a profound effect on his excellence. There is no doubt that when Allah Ta'ala wants to use someone for Himself and His Din and sees the desire and sincerity of someone, then He takes it upon Himself to put everything into place for that individual so that he may reach his full potential. This was the case of Shaykh 'Awwamah. Allah Ta'ala Himself divinely arranged his life for him. May Allah Ta'ala also make us from His chosen and sincere slaves and also accept us to be leaders of the Din, Amin.

FAMILY SUPPORT:

Shaykh 'Awwamah was fortunate to have parents that understood the value of knowledge. Seeing his love for knowledge, they did whatever they could to help him. They freed his time so that he could devote it to pursuing knowledge. They did not make him do any extra work like the rest of his brothers, thereby eliminating any distractions that could hamper his progress. This is very important for any student of knowledge that he removes all obstacles that can get in the way of his studying and that he makes sure that 100% of his attention is on what he is learning. Shaykh writes in one of his books that: things get in the way of carrying out duties as a student should be considered to be a tripwire in him attaining his goals and success. Shaykh's mother saw that things were getting difficult on Shaykh's father and she thought that he would need someone to help him, but instead of going to her son, she herself learned how to sew for a living. She used this to help the family meet its expenses. Allah Ta'ala never wastes the deeds of His servants. Allah showed her the fruits of her sacrifice and effort in this dunya by prolonging her life enough to see what a great leader her son had become. The effort of his parents had a great part in making him who he is. If a parent wants to see their child attain success in this life and the next, then they must be willing to make sacrifices and do whatever is necessary to ensure that their child reaches success.

LEARNING DIRECTLY FROM TEACHERS AND TAKING SMALL STEPS:

The method which Shaykh adopted in his studies was تلقي and تدرج which is basically going to teachers and **not self-studying** while learning everything thoroughly from start to finish. His son; Dr Muhyuddin mentions that on many occasions he heard his father emphasizing the importance of this way of study, whilst warning that abandoning this method is the means of being deprived of the reality of 'ilm. Self-studying results in the individual misleading others. Dr Muhyuddin provided an example of this which he physically witnessed. He was in a gathering with his father and Shaykh Ahmad Al-Qallash (rahimahullah) and there was a mention of the statement of a certain scholar. But when it was being said there was a nahw mistake, so both of them said at the same time that this is because he didn't learn Ajrumiyah (a nahw book). This is the outcome of someone who did not take those required steps.

It is incumbent that one goes to a proper teacher for knowledge, as one does not have the ability to just open books and understand them. Ego and pride should not hinder a person in his pursuit for knowledge.

HIS AMAZING MEMORY:

There were many natural abilities which Allah Ta'ala granted Shaykh 'Awwamah. Amongst these great bounties is his memory. His son writes that his father has a habit of mentioning stories of our previous scholars in his majalis but when mentioning them he does it so accurately, it's as if he's reading it directly from a book. Such is the extent of his memory. Mentioning stories and incidents of the past is something that has a very strong effect the hearts. Reading and relaying these stories should become our habit, so that we can constantly benefit from the stories of our pious predecessors.

Imam Junaid (rahimahullah) said:

الحكايات جند من جنود الله، يثبت به قلوب أوليائه

'Stories are an army from the armies of Allah which He uses to strengthen the hearts of His friends.'

His son writes that so many times Shaykh would say, "This is what I read when I was still a student." He was very particular about his two teachers Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajudeen and Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghudah (rahimahullah) when it comes to mentioning them and what they said. He was able to recall minute details from them. He would often say to his son

أنا أحفظ ألفاظ مشايخي

'Memorize the words of my teachers.'

Once, when he was a student, he was taking exams on the subject of tafsir and mufasirun. When he was giving the answers, he added all the dates of demise of the mufasirun. His examiner couldn't

believe it and began searching him for any pieces of paper that he could have hidden. Seeing this, his classmate went to the examiner and said that he's known to be able to do that. After hearing this remark, the teacher became very happy with him and encouraged him even more. Although memory is something that Allah blesses His servants with, one should avoid those things that are known to cause weak memory, the greatest cause of which is abundant sinning.

HIS LOVE FOR READING

Allah Ta'ala had gifted Shaykh with intense love to read. From a very young age he read, finishing books after books. He has the habit of taking note of any interesting point and noting it on the inside cover page of the book making it easy for future reference. His son; Dr Muhyuddin says that it's very rare that you'll see any of his books that doesn't have anything written inside the cover, and his books range in the thousands. This habit is essential for every student.

Shaykh says about his books:

هي أغلى عندي من روحي

'It's more valuable than my own soul.'

لا أبيعها بملك الدنيا

'I won't sell it for the whole world.'

His love for reading was also recognized by his teachers so they would guide him to those books which would be of benefit to him. This really helped him to get a solid base in his studies.

READING WITH UNDERSTANDING:

Along with his love for reading, Shaykh understood and pondered over the meaning of what he read. This gave him a deeper understanding and also resulted in him remembering it. Many a times people finish books after books, but if you asked them what he learned, they wouldn't be able to tell you anything. This is the outcome of lack of focus and not carefully following what the author is saying. If Shaykh came across something that was unclear, he would go to back to his teachers for help or for an explanation. (This is known as *مراجعة*). Just to show the importance of this, Shaykh mentions an incident from when he was a student. He read that the 'Ulama of Samarqand banished Imam Bukhari from

Samarqand because of his so-called view that when a boy and girl drink from the same cow's milk they can't marry one another because they become foster siblings! So, the next day he went to Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) to clarify this. Upon asking him, he replied:

لا تصدق كل ما تقرأ

'Don't believe everything that you read.'

Shaykh Awwamah says about this incident:

فكانت لي درسا عظيما و منهجا قويا قويا لا يقدر قدره

'This was a great lesson for me and straight path whose value cannot be perceived.'

It is very important to go back to your teachers with any questions or for clarification of something unclear. It can open up insights that you weren't even looking for, just like Shaykh experienced with his teacher. He went for a question and came back with a very valuable principle that everyone should keep in mind, especially students of Din.

HUNGER FOR MORE:

Another trait that really helped Shaykh was that he always wanted more. He had an unyielding drive for knowledge and as the years passed, his drive only grew more and more. Because of his thirst for knowledge, his son says that Shaykh is surprised if there is a time a student passes by and he is not reading. His son also says that his father would always tell us the statement of Imam Abu Yusuf (rahimahullah):

العلم شيء لا يعطيك بعضه حتي تعطيه كلك، و أنت إذا أعطيته كلك من إعطائه البعض علي غرر

'Knowledge is such a thing that will not give you part of it unless you give your all and even then it's not certain that it'll give you some of it.'

He was always scared that we become distanced from 'ilm for something of the dunya and he would say to us:

لو تسفون التراب سفا لا تتركوا طلب العلم

“Even if you are sinking in sand don’t stop studying.”

This was his condition only because he truly understood the lofty status of ‘ilm-- that nothing could be equivalent to it.

HIS VALUE FOR TIME:

His son writes, “I’ve been with my father in his travels and when he was at home and when he was healthy and sick but I don’t remember any time going by without him having a book in his hand or a pen and paper or him being involved in an ‘ilmi discussion and if the time or place wasn’t suitable for these then he would have a tasbih in his hand making istighfar and durud.” This should also be the condition of students of Din that they spend their time in two things تعلم and ذكر. He also writes that there is a statement that his father lives by:

الوقت كالسيف، إن لم تقطعه قطعك

“Time is like a sword, if you don’t cut it, it will cut you.”

Therefore, he was always the first to make the move and cut it [by putting time to good use], instead of time making its move and cutting him by just passing by [wastefully]. Once Shaykh and his son visited South Africa. There is a very famous park there where you can drive through and see many different animals [The Kruger National Park]. People come from all around the world just to visit this park. Everyone insisted that Shaykh visit this site. Out of respect for them and their request he went along but he said to his son

أنا ما لي ولهذه الأشياء

“I have no concern for these things.”

He always kept ‘ilm at the forefront of his priorities and nothing else. So, Mufti Ridha ul Haq (hafizahullah), a very senior mufti of South Africa accompanied him on this trip. Instead of looking at all the animals, during the entire journey Shaykh and Mufti Ridha ul Haq were having discussions on Hadith, Fiqh, and other ‘ilmi matters. The entire time he spent was with ‘ilm.

Time was extremely precious to Shaykh, he even wrote on the door of his office:

نعتذر، العمر هو الوقت

‘We excuse ourselves, time is life.’

May Allah Ta'ala also grant us the true value of time and allow us to understand the true status of 'ilm, Amin.

SUPERVISION OF HIS TEACHERS:

Allah Ta'ala had blessed Shaykh with teachers who acted like fathers to him. Understanding his capabilities and his desire, they watched over him and benefited him wherever they could. A teacher can only truly benefit his student when he sees that he is interested. That's why it's very important for students to show their teachers that they really do wish to learn and show their interest so that their teacher can open up to them. Shaykh's teachers saw that he is someone who is dedicated and desirous so he benefited from them where other students did not.

Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin and Shaykh Salqini (rahimahumallah) had the biggest share in this regard during Shaykh's early stages of studies. Shaykh's connection grew immensely with these two teachers. Shaykh would accompany Shaykh Salqini (rahimahullah) when he was in his local area and when he would be in the Madrasah he would stay very close to Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah). He would stay so much in his company that he would even walk with Shaykh Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) every day from the Madrasah to his house. During this short time span, Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) would teach him and give him short advices. This is another point to remember: The benefit that one can get just by staying in the company of his teachers and mashaykh is more than what he can get from a book. One should always try and stay in the company of his teachers when he sees the time is right. It doesn't even necessarily have to be a conversation, just through sitting with them the student will gain a lot of benefit.

HIS FRIENDS:

Your friends will determine who you will be. Our teachers and mashaykh can be working hard, very hard to build us and reform us, but if we don't have good friends and company then all that effort will go to waste. That is why a poet said:

متى يبلغ البنيان يوما تمامه اذا كنت تبنيه و غيرك يهدم

'When will a building reach its heights when you're building it and someone else is destroying it?'

Allah Ta'ala had granted Shaykh excellent friends and companions. They were able to help one another grow and they were able to take benefit from one another. It is very important that we choose our friends very carefully. Shaykh's closest friend during his student days was Dr. 'Abdus Sattar Abu Ghuddah [who sadly passed away in 2020, rahimahullah]. They're described to be one soul in two bodies.

GHURFATUS SAYYAFIYYAH:

As-Sayyafiyyah was the name of a very small Masjid that was right next Madrasah Sha'baniyyah. It had a musallah and six rooms that were given to the students to use. One room was given to Shaykh and Shaykh 'Abdus Sattar. It is very essential for any student that he has a place that's free from distractions solely so that he can focus on his studies there.

LIBRARY:

Something else that really helped Shaykh was the library that was available for him to use. Having many books at a student's disposal is very essential for his progress. They will be able to read and discover new books to benefit from. The students need to build that love of going to the library and take out time to go and discover new books. Many of us are blessed to have them available to us, we just have to take the steps to walk in there! Shaykh had a strong connection with a book in that library called نصب الراية which was very rare, at that time. Later someone came and bought that very book. This made Shaykh extremely sad. The news of this reached Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah (rahimahullah), so he sent him a copy of the book that belonged to Imam Kawthari (rahimahullah). Allah Ta'ala gave him even better than what he had.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF HIS TEACHERS:

Shaykh's teachers had the habit of advising and encouraging their students. When a student is encouraged by his teacher, it inspires him to put even more effort in, and allows him to reach ranks that he could have never thought was possible. Shaykh was also blessed in this aspect, that throughout his studies and even afterwards, he was always getting encouragement from his teachers and mashaykh. Shaykh was once conducting his Tafsir lesson and he came to the verse:

{وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا}

He searched a lot for the clear meaning of the letter ك but didn't find anything besides what was mentioned by the general mufasirun. He saw suitable that the ك could be understood to be كاف مبادرة. When he presented this understanding to his teacher Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) who was a master in this field, his teacher approved of it and was very pleased with it. The next day he sent Shaykh 100 Syrian lira.

HIS LOVE FOR HIS TEACHERS:

Having love for one's teachers makes one successful. The one who doesn't have love for his teachers will never go far. Shaykh had a lot of love for his teachers, especially Shaykh Abdullah Sirajuddin and Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghudah (rahimahumallah). He stayed in the company of Shaykh Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) for 50 years and Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah (rahimahullah) for 40 years. The long length of time he spent with his teachers is a testament to his love for them. As for us, we suffice on just a couple of years in our teacher's company. Shaykh's son, Dr Muhyuddin says, "I remember when it was the time of hajj, my father had delivered a lecture. All those listening were taken aback." Someone from the audience said:

هذا الروح روح الشيخ عبد الله تتكلم

"This soul is the soul of Shaykh 'Abdullah speaking."

This person didn't even know that Shaykh 'Awwamah was actually amongst his very close students. He was later informed that he is one of the closest students to Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah). Then he said:

الآن عرفت السر

"Now I know the secret."

This is the outcome of someone loving another, especially when it comes to the love of teachers and mashaykh. This love leads you to become an exact copy of them. You start speaking the same, walking the same, liking the same things, and more. That is why it is so important to have sincere love for our teachers if we really want to benefit from them.

SERVICE FOR HIS TEACHERS:

Shaykh had completely devoted himself to his two teachers. As discussed earlier, Shaykh 'Awwamah had spent fifty years with Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) and forty years with Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah (rahimahullah). He was therefore able to take a tremendous amount of benefit from them during these years. He was learning, teaching, helping in publishing, researching, editing, and many other duties under their guidance. Allah Ta'ala first granted him the opportunity to be with Shaykh Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) and he had served him in two ways. The first being in Madrasah Sha'baniyyah, and the second was in publishing his books. Shaykh had completely dedicated himself to Madrasah Sha'baniyyah. He would go in the morning to teach and return home at zuhur. Then he would go at 'Asr for the mutala'ah of the students and then go back at 'Isha. He spent more time in the Madrasah than he would in his own home. Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) was

mentioning to Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattah (rahimahullah) about the overwhelming work of the Madrasah and said

ما لي مساعد إلا الشيخ محمد

“Shaykh Muhammad is my only assistant.”

He also said

يا ليت لي عشرة مثل الشيخ محمد

“If only I had 10 like Shaykh Muhammad.”

And another time he said to one of the teachers

لو كان عندي شخص آخر مثل الشيخ محمد، لكفيت جميع الأساتذة

“If I had another person like Shaykh Muhammad then I’ll be sufficed from all the teachers.”

Through his sincere khidmat, he was able to earn the reliance of his teacher. Many of us have the habit of asking for du’as of our teachers. Even better than that is to **earn** his du’as. Shaykh was such that he **earned** the du’as of his Shaykh. We should keep in mind that we need to serve our teachers with true sincerity, out of sincere love for our them. If we focus more on our sincerity towards our teachers, automatically we’ll get their du’as and those du’as will be coming straight from their hearts inshaAllah. Shaykh’s son writes that they went to get ijazat in Hadith by Shaykh ‘Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah), he said to them:

“I gave ijazat to your father so he can give ijazat on my behalf, so take from him.”

The second way in which Shaykh 'Awwamah was of service to Shaykh ‘Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) was by assisting with his books; by helping in editing, finding references of the original source, etc. Shaykh was able to gain a good grip in the field of publishing through this service for his teacher. Once Shaykh presented the revised edition of the book سيدنا محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم but Shaykh ‘Abdullah Sirajuddin’s (rahimahullah) name was on the top of the cover. So Shaykh ‘Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) became very angry that his name is above Rasulullah’s (sallallahu ‘alayhi wasallam) name and commanded that his name be put under. From these small things, Shaykh was able to learn a lot and swiftly progress in this field.

In a very similar way, he spent time with Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah (rahimahullah). Shaykh was such that he would pay attention and memorize everything that his two teachers did - from their statements to even the way they expressed themselves. It is important for students to take lesson from this and spend as much time with their teachers as possible. Even if we can't stay with them for 40 or 50 years, we should make effort to stay in their company as much as possible. Even if it just by staying in contact with them -if we can't physically stay in their company-, and keeping them up to date with what we are doing, it will be enough. Keeping in touch with our teachers is also like staying in their company.

Shaykh's fondly remembers the days of being with his teachers and doing their khidmat with these words:

كنا كأننا علي سرر متقابلين ، أيام لا تشبهها إلا أيام الجنة

“It was as if we were on couches that were facing each other, on days that resemble no other besides Jannah!”

May Allah Ta'ala also grant us the tawfiq to treasure our teachers and may He grant us extreme love for them. Amin.

LECTURING AND TEACHING:

Shaykh began giving lectures in Aleppo at the age of 18. Starting at such a young age also helped him to reach excellence. He did this all the way until he was 40. His habit from a young age was that he would only mention ahadith that were either صحيح or حسن and wouldn't mention those which were ضعيف. Everyone was so confident in him that they knew whatever he says will be something that's acceptable. At the age of 22, he began teaching under the supervision of Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah). He became known for his wide range of research and his hard work. His lessons were not only for students of knowledge, but also for the general people as well. Since he began from a young age he was able to get a lot of practice and be of benefit to many people.

Whenever we do engage in such service of Din, it should be under the guidance of our teachers.

MIGRATION TO MADINAH MUNAWWARAH:

Alongside all of this, Allah Ta'ala blessed Shaykh to migrate to Madinah Munawwarah and reside there. Where he was free from all the strings of the dunya and spent his time in reading, authoring, and research.

TARBIYAH IN HIS LIFE

The amount one learns from staying with those of 'ilm and mashayikh is more than what he acquires from books. Being with them and learning from them helps to set our priorities in life straight. It reaffirms our principles and the way one should conduct one's self. It is transformative for both our inner mindset, and our outer actions. Hearing directly from them is much better than just reading about the different stories and incidents. Shaykh is the way we see him today because of the time he spent with those of nobility. The path that he walks on was laid out by them. This is what is known as tarbiyah. His tarbiyah began from the start of his studies. In his early days, he was taught adab. Adab is having proper etiquettes, and this includes respect for teachers, parents, books, knowledge and everything that Allah Ta'ala has blessed us with.

His son mentions an example of when Shaykh (hafizahullah) was young. Once, someone mentioned a senior regarding whom people had differing views. So Shaykh also began criticizing him. Although his criticism may have been correct, Shaykh's father (rahimahullah) became very angry with him and he feared that this will become a habit in his grandson. So he reprimanded him:

يا ولدي والله لو رأيت قطة تخرج من بيت شيخ لاحترمته

“Oh my child if I saw a cat come from the house of a Shaykh, I would have respect for it.”

Hearing these words from his father woke him up and he understood what he was doing was incorrect. In this manner, he learned how to respect seniors.

Another example is of Shaykh's teacher; Shaykh 'Abdur Rahman Zaynul Abidin (rahimahullah). He was teaching a nahw book by Imam Ibn Hisham (rahimahullah). During the lesson he said to his students who had so much respect for him

“By Allah if Ibn Hisham were to enter right now seeing me teaching his book he would beat me with his shoe and would say to me I never wrote this book for those like you to teach it.”

He taught his students to be humble in front of our scholars and even to the books that they wrote. Just because of these few words, respect and humility grew in their hearts for our aimmah.

Another instance is when Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah Abu Ghudah (rahimahullah) was shown a text from Imam 'Azizi's commentary on Jami'us Saghira, and he wasn't able to make sense of the text. He read it all ways possible carefully looking at all the dhamirs but couldn't figure it out. Despite his stance in knowledge he said

“This is what the author says but we are not worthy to understand it.”

Instead of pointing fingers at the author, Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah (rahimahullah) pointed his finger at himself. Despite his stature, Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah (rahimahullah) said this, which baffled Shaykh 'Awwamah [at that time]. This was a very tactful answer by the teacher to a young student, so as not to interfere with his confidence in the author.

Shaykh's teachers were filled with humility, and he would often hear them as colleagues say about each other:

“He is better than me.”

Staying with his teachers also taught him that just knowledge by itself is not sufficient, as it should be coupled with 'ibadah. He heard Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin (rahimahullah) advising his student to wake up at least 2 hours before Fajr. If he advised his student to wake up at least 2 hours before Fajr, then imagine what time he himself must be waking up.

He also learned to be one of high ambition. He called Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah (rahimahullah) on the phone and as they were speaking he could hear from his voice that he is sick. He tried to excuse himself and asked if he could call another time when he feels better. Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah (rahimahullah) said

قل، قل، كانوا يستشفون ب: حدّثنا وأخبرنا

'Say what you need to say, our scholars were such that they would seek for cure in Hadith lessons [and discussions of knowledge].'

In other words, they would consider engagement in 'ilm as a form of cure for ailments.

Not only was Shaykh a person who learnt from books, but also someone who learnt from the tarbiyah of his teachers. The above are just a few such examples.

These lessons can only be attained by staying in their company.

TARBIYAH WITHIN HIS FAMILY STRUCTURE

Naturally people act differently with their family than they would with others. Shaykh's son opens up to us on how their tarbiyah was made by their father. There were some things that stood out more than others, which all had laudable effects on his sons.

An outstanding aspect of Shaykh's tarbiyah of his children was that he always *advised* his children, but never *forced* them. From the beginning, he tried to build love for knowledge in their hearts and after they attained that love, they were able to choose the path that they wanted. They were never pressured into it. Many people, from the beginning, just get forced into doing things thereby becoming worse than they already were, because they themselves did not choose to do so out of their own will.

Another outstanding feature was Shaykh's (hafizahullah) value of time. He never wanted that any time go without any benefit. This was clearly seen on how he organized his children's time. His son writes that it was summer break and they were visiting their hometown in Syria, but his father did not want that a whole month passes without anyone accomplishing anything. So, he contacted a local scholar and requested that he continue their hifz. Every day they would go to him between 'Asr and Maghrib memorizing and revising. Even during their holiday, they were involved in something beneficial.

Shaykh also impressed the quality of Adab upon his children. They learned more from the way he conducted himself, more than anything else. His son; Dr Muhyuddin writes that when we would see our father interact with his teachers, we would realise that adab is absolutely essential. Their father would constantly remind them of the statement of the scholars,

ما فاز من فاز إلا بالأدب و ما سقط من سقط إلا بسوء الأدب

"Those who were successful were only successful because of adab and those who were unsuccessful were only because of bad adab."

Shaykh displayed this beautifully throughout his whole life. Our actions are the best form of advice. That's how Shaykh (hafizahullah) taught his children.

MY THOUGHTS

There is so much one can learn by reading the life of Shaykh 'Awwamah (hafizahullah). This is the barakah that Allah Ta'ala puts into the books of our pious elders. I've heard so many times about how a person's life took a complete U-turn because of a book that they read or because of a biography that they read. Alhamdulillah, by reading about his life, I was able to get an enormous amount of benefit. There is so much more written about his life that can be benefitted from by students and teachers alike. I focused only on selected parts of the book where I felt the most benefit could be attained.

From all of the above, two things affected me the most:

1. Shaykh's (rahimahullah) love for knowledge which led to time management.

2. His love for his teachers which led him to good etiquettes. Whilst reading the book, the concept of having adab echoed throughout my head. It seems that out of everything, the love and adab that he had, played the most vital role in his life and his success. His own words are a proof for this,

“If I had any action which I could store by Allah then it’s my sincerity towards these two teachers”.

[i.e, Shaykh 'Abdullah Sirajuddin and Shaykh 'Abdul Fattah (rahimahumallah)]

He was so convinced that if there was nothing he had, he at least had sincere love for his teachers. As an outcome of this love and respect, he would stand up from his spot even when talking to his teachers on the phone. Forget them being in front of him, but even when they were miles away and he merely heard their voice coming from a phone, he had this immense respect. This was enough to break my ego and give rise to the question, "Am I really showing any adab to my teachers? If someone like Shaykh could go to this extent, then what am I doing?"

It’s very terrifying to realize how we actually act. The respect that we show is little to none. Our scholars were very straightforward and said, “Those who were successful were only successful because of adab and those who were unsuccessful were only so because of bad adab”. This adab was not only while he was a student. It continued even when he graduated and became a great Scholar. This also illustrates to us that: no matter who you become, your teachers will always be your teachers.

The way he used his time was another thing that really amazed me. He would never leave his books no matter what. After reading the story of his travels to Turkey, Malaysia, South Africa, etc. I made the intention that wherever I go, I will bring a book with me. I was also amazed to learn that after he would be done reading he would take out his tasbeeh and busy himself with that. Truly the nur of knowledge is something that will save us from disobedience. As long as we sincerely involve ourselves with knowledge, it will definitely come to our aid in the world by preventing us from sin, and in the hereafter.

Lastly, Shaykh is literally a living version of his own book *معالم الإرشادية*. It is as if he just looked into himself and began writing. For sincere, serious students, to read this book of Shaykh’s is absolutely essential.

I would like to end this brief summary of a valuable book with the general advice that Shaykh 'Awwamah (hafizahullah) usually offers to the students:

وصية الشيخ لطلبة العلم الشريف

- Look at knowledge to be a means and not an objective. The objective is to practice on it. So, hasten in practicing on it.
- Don’t make knowledge your tool to attain something from the Dunya.

- Constantly busy yourself with it without slacking, for the ummah is in great need of authentic, well-versed scholars.
- This 'ilm is Din so be steadfast in what you write and say.
- Recite the following three du'as:

1. The du'a of Nabi (sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam) after Fajr:

اللهم إني أسألك علماً نافعاً و رزقاً طيباً و عملاً متقبلاً

2. The du'a of Abu Bakr (radiyallahu 'anhu) which he would recite in the third rak'ah of Maghrib before ruku' [we could recite it immediately after the fard]:

ربنا لا تزغ قلوبنا بعد إذ هديتنا و هب لنا من لدنك رحمة إنك أنت الوهاب

3. The du'a of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (radiyallahu 'anhuma) in his sujud:

اللهم لك سجد سوادي و بك آمن فؤادي اللهم ارزقني علماً ينفعني و عملاً يرفعني