



## ASHRAF ALI TAHAONI: HIS LIFE AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

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### Abstract

This article describes the life and scientific activities of Ashraf Ali Tahanawi. In addition, there is information about his parents and teachers who contributed to his development as a scientist.

**Keywords:** Ashraf Ali Tahanawi, Tahana, Darul-ulum Deoband, Mujaddid, Sharia, Tariqat.

### INTRODUCTION

Ashraf Ali Tahanawi, a great scholar, a mature sheikh of his time, the author of more than five hundred books, a preacher, judge of the Ummah, his full name is Ashraf Ali Tahanawi ibn Munshi Abdulhaq ibn Hafiz Fayz Ali ibn Ghulam Farid Shahid ibn Jalal ibn Rahmatullah ibn Amonullah ibn Atiqullah Khatib ibn Hafiz Habibullah ibn Adam ibn Muhammad Jalal ibn Sodrjahan.

Allama Ashraf Ali Tahanawi was born in the year 1280 Hijri (1863 AD) in the village of Tahana located in the northern part of India. From a young age, God instilled in his heart a love of preaching and words. He liked to pray before he was eight years old, and by the age of 12, he made it a habit to do night prayers without delay. He woke up in the middle of the night to find his uncle's husband, young Ashraf Ali, always praying. He was so engrossed in his prayers that he did not even pay attention to the cold of winter and the heat of summer. Allah protected him from his youth until he reached the level of a religious scholar and gave him tawfiq so that he could acquire the knowledge of religion deeply. His mother died when he was 5 years old. Few people remember what happened to them at that age. His mother was intelligent and saintly. His uncle Pir Ji Imdad Ali Sahib was also a saint. Following the advice of Majzub Hafiz Ghulam Murtaza, he went to Hyderabad, Deccan, and later became a disciple of Mirza Sardar Begim Sahib. After the death of his mother, his father took him in his arms and took care of his upbringing and education. For this reason, he considered it necessary to send his son Tahanawi to a madrasa so that he could learn Arabic and Persian languages. His father, Mr. Abdulhaq, was a rich man who was educated in Persian, knew the Qur'an very well, and was very intelligent in understanding people. Tahanawi says about the upbringing given by his father: "It was a custom to distribute sweets in the mosque after the Qur'an was recited during Taraweeh prayer. My father would never allow us to participate in this. Instead, he would go to the shops that day, buy sweets and give us more than what we got at the mosque. He used to say: "Going to the mosque to buy sweet meat is the most impure." It was a great style that saved us from greed and taught us the lessons of self-respect and appreciation. When I was still a student, I used to have a simple conversation with my father. During the conversation, I unknowingly said about the former head of "Darul-ulum Deoband" Mawlana Rafi' ad-Din Sahib: "Mawlana does not study well." It was true. Because Maulana did not learn much about external sciences. Yes, he was a good administrator and a pious person. But when my father heard this, he got angry and said, "Does anyone say such things about pious people?" he scolded. He got so nervous that he got up to hit me, but he didn't. So he was alert to our

character. At the same time, he showed us a lot of love. Parents play a big role in every child's development. It is a parent's duty to start a child on the right path, to guide him according to his interests and abilities. In the same way, Tahonaviy's parents were able to give proper education and guide young Tahonaviy by making good use of his interests. As a result, a great Muslim scholar grew up. After receiving his initial education in Mirot, he returned to the place where he was born and raised. He entered Deoband in 1295 AH, graduated after 5 years in 1301 AH at the age of 19-20, and mastered Arabic and religious sciences thoroughly. Every mature person needs a mentor to reach a high level.<sup>1</sup> Also, the role of Imam Tahanawi's mentors in reaching such a mature level is very important. Ashraf Ali Tahanawi began his religious and secular studies in the village where he was born and raised. At that time, Tahana was the homeland of outstanding scholars in various fields. He memorized the Holy Qur'an from Ohundji, who was the head of Mirot. Then Hafiz Husain Ali, who was a citizen of Delhi, perfected the Qur'an. He took Mirot as his homeland and studied Persian language and elementary books from some scholars of Mirot. In the village of Tahana, he studied secondary level books from teacher Fath Muhammad Tahanawi. In addition, he learned the basic Arabic language, nahw and sarf rules. Then he studied with his uncle, Sheikh Wajid Ali, who was a master of Persian language and literature.

The Indian scholar Tahanawi traveled to Deoband at the end of the month of Zul Qada in 1295 AH(after hijrah) and entered Dar ul-Ulum Deoband. The scientific journey here lasted 5 years until he graduated. Tahanawi mastered the Arabic language, literature, intellectual and verbal sciences. For a long time, he had no other occupation than reading books and serving his teachers and sheikhs. He had many relatives in Deoband, and they invited Tahanawi to visit him. Tahanawi always refused them. The reason is that he came here to study and learn. He studied diligently and along the way acquired dignity, manners and morals. Ashar Ali Tahonaviy says: "When I thought about teaching in the future when I was a student of science, I could not see a salary of more than ten rupees. I did not consider myself entitled to more than ten rupees."<sup>2</sup>

Ashraf Ali Tahanawi studied with several scholars. One of them was Muhaqqiq Allama Muhammad Ya'qub bin Sheikh Mamluk Ali Nanutvi, who was one of the famous teachers in the Indian land. He was born in 1249 Hijri (1833 AD). Allama learned the books on the mind and the naqli sciences from his father Sheikh Mamluk Ali. Maulana Muhammad Yakub Nanutvi was the closest to Hazrat Tahanawi among his teachers.<sup>3</sup> Maulana Tahanawi had the rare fortune of studying under Qasim Nanutvi, one of the founders of Dar ul-Ulum Deoband. Because the time when that person entered the madrasah was the last years of the scientist's life. Even so, Maulana Tahanawi participated in Qasim Nanutvi's "Tafsir ul-Jalolayn" (spiritual commentary on the Qur'an written by Jalaluddin Al-Malihi and his student Jalaluddin Suyuti) when he had the opportunity. Qasim Nonutvi, known as Hujjat ul-Islam, was born in Nanota, one of the small villages of Saharanpur. This village is also one of the famous villages that produced scientists.

Sheikh Muhaddis Mahmoud Hasan Deobandi. Among the Indian sheikhs, he is known as the Imam of Muhaddis. He is a pioneer of scientific and political renaissance in India. Sheikh

<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Abdulloh. The life and teaching of maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. – India: Adam publishers, – P.7.

<sup>2</sup> Yorqinjon Fozilov. Majolisi Hakim ul-umma. –T.: Qamar-media, 2021. –B.398.

<sup>3</sup> Majolisi Hakim ul-umma.–B. 307.

lived in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Burhoniddin Marginani's work "Hidaya" was learned from his teachers Allama Mahmud Hasan Devbandi. Zafar Ahmed Usmani said about him: "May God have mercy on him, he was one of the best scholars and righteous and sincere preachers who lit the lamps of renewal in India with a bright and shining flame. He describes the sheikh as a middle-class, broad-minded scholar."<sup>4</sup>

Shaykh scholar and jurist Maulana Manfaat Ali Deobandi, one of the famous jurists, was born in Deoband and grew up there. Shaykh learned science from Maulana Ya'qub ibn Mamluk Ali Nonutwi and Shaykh Sayyid Ahmad Dehlavi and other scholars of Deoband Arab Madrasa.

Sheikh Abdulali ibn Nasib Ali Hanafi al-Mirotahi, scholar, jurist, is one of the famous scholars. He was born and grew up in the village of Abdulfur. He studied under his teachers Allama Muhammad Qasim Nonutvi, Maulana Ahmed Hornafuri, Sheikh Faizulhasan Hornafuri and other scholars. Sheikh Abdulali ibn Nasib Ali Hanafi al-Mirotahi taught at Deoband Arab Madrasah. Then, in 1312, he moved to the Madrasah of Marhum Husayn Bakhshi, located in Delhi. A group of great scholars studied under him, including Ashraf Ali Tahanawi, Sheikh Anwarshah Kashmiri, Sheikh Husayn Ahmed al-Madani al-Faiz Abadi. Abdulali ibn Nasib Ali Hanafi al-Mirotahi, known as Sheikhul Islam, died in 1340 and was buried in the mausoleum of Sheikh Waliullah Dehlavi. Shaykh Ashraf Ali Tahanawi learned some hadith books from him. Tahanawi learned from Sheikh al-Sayyid Ahmad Tahanawi the fields of mathematics and the science of heritage.

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah al-Muhajir al-Makki, scholar of the Qur'an. The Sheikh was one of the famous and well-known reciters in the Arab world. Others looked at him with reverence and respect because of his Qur'an skill in recitation and tajwid and his beautiful voice. Tahanawi learned from him some Tajwid treatises and reciting the Holy Qur'an.

Maulana Noorul Hasan Kakorvi son of Mohsin Kakorvi saw a dream once. The holy Prophet (Salam) was sick and Maulana Thanwi's looking after him. He was curing the Prophet's Ummah. Another saintor doctor was sitting in a distance, he was Imam Mehdi alaihis-salam, who would be the next Mujaddid after him.<sup>5</sup>

Alloma Ashraf Ali Tahanavi died in the village of Tahona in 1362 AH. Five years before his death, his stomach and liver began to malfunction. Sometimes she had diarrhea, sometimes constipation. "He asked his younger wife after Maghrib on Monday if I gave you the monthly allowance. He answered yes. Then he told his wife that he will leave today. He asked where. He said don't you know? Then he was unconscious for more than an hour and his breathing was fast. People saw light coming from the middle finger of his right hand and disappearing with a breath. He wrote Sharia and Tariqat with this finger. He finally died on the night of 16-17 Rajab 1362 AH or 19-20 July 1943. People started coming to Tahana village. Special trains came from Saharanpur and other cities. A deputy saw in a dream that he said that I was given the rank of martyrdom.

## CONCLUSION

Ashraf Ali Tahanawi has been interested in learning since he was young. His parents and teachers greatly helped him to acquire knowledge in the religious field. He grew up in the

<sup>4</sup> Zufar Ahmad Usmani Tahanawi. E'llo us-sunan. – Pakistan: Idarat ul-Qur'an va al-ulum ul-islamiyyat, 1997. – P. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Mohammad Abdullo. The life and teaching of maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi. –India: Adam publishers, –P.11.



# Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 2, Issue 5, May, 2024

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

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circle of scientists from a young age. Education at Dar ul Ulum Deoband gave him immense opportunities. Throughout his life, Tahanawi studied the Qur'an, jurisprudence, hadith, mysticism, and belief and taught students based on them. Throughout his life, he advocated reforming society and living according to Sharia. He served a lot in this way. At the same time, he received the names of "Hakim ul-Ummat" and "Mujaddid".

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