

Abdus Sattar Ghauri
(You will be missed!)

Asif Iftikhar

Received news from Dr Shehzad Saleem on 22nd of April that our dear and beloved Abdus Sattar Ghauri *ṣāḥib* (b. 1935) had passed away. Ironically, I also received recording of a couplet by Hasan Ilyas and Dr Aamer Abdullah in which Ghauri *ṣāḥib* had recited these lines of his, albeit in lighter vein:

ملو جو ہم سے تو مل لو کہ ہم بنوک گیاہ
مثالِ قطرہ شبنم رہے رہے نہ رہے

(When we meet, let us greet for at the tip of the leaflet
As dewdrop are we, we might be now or might not be.)

Ghauri *ṣāḥib* (also called Baba ji lovingly by al-Mawrid staff and colleagues) was a senior researcher at al-Mawrid, who had spent most of his life studying the Bible with particular focus on prophecies regarding Prophet Muhammad (sws). Despite many differences of approach and opinion that some colleagues at al-Mawrid had with him, Ghauri *ṣāḥib* was greatly respected for his character and depth of his research and for his meticulous attention to detail. I have seen few people with the kind of devotion and dedication he had. Apart from being a scholar of the highest calibre in his particular field, he was a devout Muslim and a wonderful and loving human being. His presence at al-Mawrid was a living testimony to how scholars from different schools of thought in the Islamic tradition could work together in harmony and with respect despite differences of opinion and even academic criticism. I had often wondered how

one could capture that beautiful aura of mutual respect around both Mr Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and Ghauri *ṣāhib* when they would greet each other and share opinions, criticisms and jokes. I suppose each member of al-Mawrid could tell his story of how affectionate and loving Ghauri *ṣāhib* was. I think I shall carry the memory of his love until I die. The affection that he had for me can be seen in this email that he sent to me after our exchange of views on certain matters. It also reflects his feelings for younger colleagues who needed his guidance and encouragement:

4/1/2011

My dear loved son

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu.

Your sincere words moved me to tears. I raised my hands in prayer and asked our Allah for so many benedictions for you. May Allah bless you with patience, right guidance, deep, fruitful, and soothing thoughts, prosperity, contentment, perseverance towards pursuit of *ḥaqq* and *ākhirah* oriented efforts.

I am all love and affection for you and am thankful to for such beautiful and sincere words for me. May Allah sustain our mutual concern for the sublime cause among us, my beautiful boy having beautiful and sublime thoughts and sincere and loving heart.

Sincerely,
A S Ghauri

I'd also sometimes just request him for prayer, and he'd respond immediately with such comforting words. And his hugs were full of warmth and love and would make me feel closer to God. He always admired me for my language skills a great deal. I remember I once suggested some changes in his book (and he wouldn't easily accept suggestions despite being ever ready to change his opinion once he had understood the opposing view), and he just looked at me for while and put his hand on my shoulder and said very kindly, "M' boy, you do it." That was such an honour!

Few of his friends or colleagues would know that he used to sing very well. I heard him sing, “Gulon mein rang bhare.” once in his soft, melodious voice -- a voice that the rest of our colleagues at al-Mawrid would have often heard in prayer recitation. Ghauri *ṣāhib* also loved poetry and was an excellent connoisseur. I’d often send him my lines for correction. Despite his strict discipline, he was full of emotion and sentiment. I had often seen him in tears when he’d hear something related to human tragedy. He once showed me a personal letter in which he had addressed God and had begged Him to accept his contributions in highlighting prophecies about his Prophet (sws), for which contributions he had stayed away for long hours from this family and wife for so many years. I can still feel the immense pain of that burden and the deep and passionate love for the Prophet (sws) that made him bear it. His greatest joy, he told me, was that his son (now Dr Ehsan Ghauri) had decided to continue his work. In Aamer Abdullah’s words, one can only pray that he receive fully the love of the Prophet (sws) in his eternal life, prophecies about whom he wanted to pass on to the whole world. And one might add that the work that his son continues to do after him further augment his reward in the hereafter. We’ll miss you Ghauri *ṣāhib*, not because you were a great scholar but also because you were a wonderful friend and a great human being. Above all, you loved the Prophet (sws) with all your heart and dedicated all your life and endeavours to that love. That I think was your ultimate legacy. Yes, we’ll miss you, Ghauri *ṣāhib*, and remember you fondly. God bless you.
