

*Obituary*

**Abdus Sattar Ghauri**  
**(The Father Figure of Al-Mawrid!)**

*Dr Shehzad Saleem*

In the wee hours of 22<sup>nd</sup> April, Al-Mawrid lost its senior most research fellow: Abdus Sattar Ghauri. He was almost 80 years old. As the father figure of this institute, he was loved and cherished by each and every member of its staff. Had our society been more sensitive to academic excellence, it would have showered accolades on this researcher *par excellence*; nevertheless, his name will live through the masterful works he has authored. Just a few days before his death, he came to the institute and nonchalantly declared to one of its employees that this might be his last visit. Lo! this prophecy of a person who spent his life in solving prophecies came true within a few days.

He was a profound scholar of Biblical Studies. He devoted a greater part of his life to this subject and contributed deeply-researched books and articles in this area. His passion for knowledge and his quest for the truth were inspirational. His hard-work and industry in advancing age when ill-health had taken over him was simply amazing. His warm handshake and even warmer hugs made everyone feel so welcome in his presence. His characteristic chuckle was music to the ears. His saintly countenance exuded awe and affection at the same time. He was person who had a deep relationship with His creator – a relationship that was so apparent from the radiance on his face.

He was a wonderful human being. Caring for others was his life-long mission. He not only spent generously on the needs of others, but also urged others to help those in distress. For several years, the tea-break at Al-Mawrid was held in his room. This was a place where all kinds of topics ranging from politics to religion, literature to history, science to philosophy would be

discussed in a frank yet academic way. Jokes and teasers too would find their way at times. He would often lead the prayers at Al-Mawrid and had a vintage style of reciting the Qur'ān in the prayer that would move the heart and stir the soul. After every few months he would throw a banquet for the employees of Al-Mawrid. This was one of his ways of showing his affection to us. His humility in the world of religious knowledge was exemplary. Once in a gathering, a very basic issue of religious studies was being discussed and he was asked to give his opinion on it. His immediate reply was that he had not thought of this issue till then and so could not express an opinion. He was an avid collector of books and had some very rare books in his personal library. He cared for books like a gardener who tends to his flower-beds. He covered some of them with water-proof paper and bound them in a most exquisite way.

One can see our dear Ghauri *ṣāhib*'s reflection in these moving words once spoken by Benjamin Franklin: "The best thing to give to your enemy is forgiveness; to an opponent, tolerance; to a friend, your heart; to your child, a good example; to a father, deference; to your mother, conduct that will make her proud of you; to yourself, respect; to all men, charity."

He taught Persian literature to some batches of Al-Mawrid's students. I attended many of his sessions in which he taught Sa'dī's *Gulistan* and have fond memories of his command of the language. I was also fortunate enough to be among his list of people for whom he would diligently pray. In fact, he would often mention that he had included my wife and my son in his prayers for which I will remain eternally indebted to him. He evinced keen interest in the history of the Qur'ān – a subject on which I have been working on for the past many years. I had specially asked him to pray for me to solve the complexities this project posed. So many a time, he would greet me with a smile and say that he had been praying for me the previous night. I used to feel elated and encouraged at this.

His two books: *Muhammad Foretold in the Bible by Name* and *The Only Son Offered for Sacrifice: Isaac or Ishmael?* are masterpieces of research on their subjects. In the first of these books, he unravels the prophecies of the advent of Muhammad (sws) found in the Bible in particular by Solomon (sws). The second book deals with the son offered by Abraham (sws) for

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sacrifice. While building upon the research of Imam Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī (d. 1930) on this subject, he has provided copious references in this book to prove that the son offered for sacrifice was Ishmael (sws) and not Isaac (sws) as alleged by the Jews. Both books have been translated into Urdu.

Today, we bid farewell to this worthy soul in the words of Robert Service (d. 1958) – with some alterations and additions to describe this splendid person:

A ripe and cherubic old chappie  
Who lived to make others happy

In his eyes was a merry twinkle  
A glowing face without a wrinkle

Who radiated hope and cheer  
Grew kindlier with every year

Was simple, loving and kind  
A gentle heart; a vibrant mind

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