

Challenges, Achievements, and Life of
Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi
"The Shining Star"



A biography by
Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Al-Ma'ārif Publications



Challenges, Achievements, and Life of
Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi
“The Shining Star”

A biography by
Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

Al-Ma‘ārif Publications

C a n a d a

2021 / 1442

First Edition 2021 / 1442

© All rights reserved.

This publication may not be printed, reproduced in any print or media format or translated or distributed without the written permission of the writer.

کلیہ حقوق برای مصنف محفوظ است

جملہ حقوق بحق مولف محفوظ ہیں

ISBN 978-0-920675-85-4

Published by



Al-Ma'ārif Publications
C a n a d a

www.al-m.ca | +1 (416) 624-7861 | publications@al-m.ca

C o n t e n t s

<i>Preface</i>	i
Chapter One: The Birth of a Star	1
Birth & Family Background	3
Father: Sayyid Abul Ḥasan	3
Maternal Grandfather: Sayyid Zaynul ‘Ābidīn	7
Maternal Great-Grandfather: Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi	8
Chapter Two: The Growing Star	17
His Education & Teachers	19
His Teachers	23
Views of His Colleagues	32
Views of Teachers & Prominent Scholars	33
Chapter Three: The Rising Star	41
As a Resident Imam, Teacher, Social Worker, Poet & Writer	43
Hallaur (as Resident Imām)	43
Gopalpur & Hussainganj (as Teacher & Imām)	46
Social Worker	48
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Urdu Written Works in India	52
‘Allāmah Rizvi & Urdu Poetry	61
Chapter Four: The Voyaging Star	65
Migration to Africa	67
The Journey Across the Ocean	67
Brief Stay in Dar-es-Salaam	71
Arrival in Lindi (Dec. 1959 – Dec. 1962)	73
Transfer to Arusha (Jan. 1963 – Dec. 1964)	85
Move to Dar-es-Salaam (Dec. 1964 – July 1969)	91

A Visionary Missionary	97
The Inspiration	97
The Planning for Tabligh	100
Persistence	104
Internal Opposition to Tabligh	106
Pre-1968 Tabligh Activities	111
Temeke: the Beginning Point	111
Rufiji Area	115
Songea	116
<i>The Light</i> Bi-Monthly Magazine	117
<i>Sauti ya Bilal</i> Bi-Monthly Magazine	121
Articles in the <i>Tanzania Standard</i>	121
Registration of Bilal Muslim Mission in 1968	125
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Meeting with Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm	126
Expansion of Tabligh Activities	130
Training African Muballigīn	130
New Boarding House & Madrasah at Temeke	134
Islamic Correspondence Course	137
Swahili Correspondence Course	147
Rotating Seminars	149
External Challenge by the Qāadianis	154
‘Allāmah Rizvi Recognized by KSI Supreme Council	156
Shk. Mayunga..163; Shk. Dhikiri..167; Br. Kishunga	173
A Dream Comes True	177
Beyond the African Continent	183
World Organisation for Islamic Services (WOFIS)	191
Shī‘ism in Guyana	192
The First Shī‘a of Poland	198
Helping the Shī‘as of Thailand	199
10th Anniversary of Bilal Muslim Mission in 1974	201
Visit to Lahore & Lucknow	203
Farewell for ‘Allāmah Rizvi	209

Chapter Five: The Illuminating Star	211
A Long Sojourn to India & the West (1978-1986)	213
Return to India	213
Translation of <i>Tafsīr al-Mizān</i>	214
Reviving the Religious Environment	219
Charity Work in India	220
First Visit to the West	223
Move to the UK	225
Formation of World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League	231
Chapter Six: The Rotating Star	241
Return to Africa (1985-1990)	243
Nakuru	243
Reconnecting to Dar-es-Salaam & Bilal Mission	244
Another Trip to the West (1987)	249
Back in India (1987)	252
The Decade of the 1990s	260
Highlights of Activities in Tanzania & the Region	261
Visit to Zimbabwe & Botswana	261
Visit to Mozambique	267
Visit to Kigoma Region	268
Ahlul Bayt Assembly Regional Conference (1997)	272
Trip to Kenya	275
1st Conference of Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Tanzania	275
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Writings & Publications	283
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Arabic Works	283
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Urdu Works	286
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s English Works	287
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Travel in the 1990s for Tablīgh	291
Trips to India in the 1990s	291
Trips to Iran & the region in the 1990s	299
Trips to the UK in the 1990s	317
Trips to Canada & USA in the 1990s	318

Last Trip to Canada 2000-2001	324
<i>A History of the Shī‘a People</i>	324
<i>Khūrshīd-e Khāwar (Urdu)</i>	326
Research on <i>Adh-Dharī‘ah</i> (Arabic)	327
Return to Dar-es-Salaam	331
The Sad Demise of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Wife	332
<i>Chapter Seven: The Setting Star</i>	335
Demise, Funeral & Soyyum Majlis	337
Condolence Messages	344
A Selection of Condolence Messages	349
‘Allāmah Rizvi in the view of those who met him or worked with him	379
<i>Chapter Eight: Posthumous Awards</i>	405
The Bearers of the Qur’ān	407
Ḥawzawi Personality on International Level	411
Ijāzāt of Riwayāt & Umūr-e Ḥisbiyyah	425
<i>Chapter Nine: Personality, Family & Photo Album</i>	429
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Personality	431
Struggle & Sincerity..431; Exceptional Memory..431;	
Maintaining Family Ties..432; Accountability in Charity..432;	
My Father’s Advice to Me..434; His Devotion of the Imam ‘Aṣr ^(a) ..436;	
An Open Book: Memories of My Grandfather	441
‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Family	448
Photo Album	454
<i>Chapter Ten: Facsimiles of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Handwritings & List of Written Works</i>	477

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ

Preface

For a person to migrate to a foreign country, on a different continent, amidst an unfamiliar language and culture, with the purpose of spreading the message of Islam and Shī‘ism, with limited resources, and for him to extraordinarily succeed in that mission, is indeed a great achievement; one which could not have been accomplished without Divine grace (*tawfīq*). This is the story of my late father, ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may the Almighty elevate his status).

The late Āyatullāh Shaykh Muḥammad Mahdi al-Āṣifi beautifully summarized the achievements of my father by relating it to the life of Prophet Mūsa (a): “He went to look for a firebrand for his journey but what did he return with? He returned with the light of *nubuwwah*. What had Mūsa gone for, and with what did he return back? That is known as Divine grace (*tawfīq*).”¹

Writing the biography of a person whose active life spanned half a century across four continents is not an easy task. Fortunately, my late father himself had already started the process when he wrote the book, *Shajarah-e Ṭayyibah*, in Urdu, on the five ‘ulamā’ from among our immediate ancestors, ending with my grandfather, the late Maulānā Ḥakīm Sayyid Abul Ḥasan Rizvi. In the manuscript of *Shajarah-e Ṭayyibah* that he had left with me, there are two chapters (p. 64-81 of the handwritten copy) that he did not include in the printed version: (1) an incomplete autobiography describing his

1 Quoted from a [documentary](#), “*Akhtar-e Pur Furūgh (Bright-Shining Star)*,” produced by Al-Muṣṭafa International University (Qum) in 2012 in memory of my father. Hence the subtitle of this book: *The Shining Star*.

Preface

own studies and his activities in India and Africa; (2) the last chapter that he wrote on my life until the late eighties and had written a note asking me for details of my teachers.

My late father also wrote some biographical notes about himself upon request for different occasions. There is a handwritten Arabic autobiography consisting of six pages and then a list of his written works spanning another six pages. This is dated 19 October 1994, Toronto.

Then in 1998, in Dar-es-Salaam, my father further added the history of Bilal Muslim Mission to his Arabic autobiography for Mr. Muḥammad Sa‘īd at-Ṭurayḥī’s quarterly *al-Mawsem* journal, which was published in 2000.

So the idea of writing my father’s biography had been on my mind since his demise. This was also emphasized by my friend and mentor, the late Ḥujjatul Islam Syed Murtaza Nūrī in his condolences message: “It is appropriate that a biography on the blessed life of the deceased be written...Such a biography will be an example for those who serve the blessed faith and *madh-hab*.” However, the process was delayed because I wanted to finalize my father’s last work, *A History of the Shī‘a People*, before anything else. And I also had to fulfill my promise made to HI S. Murtaza Nūrī to complete the remaining translation of volume 13 of *Al-Mizān*.

After having finalized the history book and its launch in 2017, I was set to work on the biography of my father.

* * *

Besides the brief biographical notes written by my father as mentioned above, the sources used in writing this biography are as follows:

- (1) **Personal diaries:** My father, ‘Allāmah Rizvi, was very meticulous in maintaining his personal journals. At the end of each day, he would list his completed tasks, letters

- received and written, articles or books started or completed, the people he met, etc. In some cases, he even expressed his inner feelings about events that had occurred. As you will see, his diaries were very essential in writing this biography.
- (2) **Audio cassettes:** Based on the suggestion of one of his students, Dr. Kazim Dhalla, my father started recording the important events of his life on audio cassettes in 1995. There were six audio cassettes.
 - (3) *The Light* magazine has also been a good source for the activities of my father through Bilal Muslim Mission.
 - (4) My father's *Khūrshīd-e Khāwar* on the biographies of the 'ulamā' of India, especially the entries on his teachers and friends, also have some useful information about his own interactions with them. Also the articles that he wrote as tribute to his teacher and elders were useful in knowing about his student life.
 - (5) Some of the **personal files** of my father which he had kept in my room in India which I was able to retrieve over my various trips.

I am indeed grateful to the Almighty that I was able to acquire the important documents from my father's belongings during my various trips to Dar-es-Salaam and India, so they could aid in conveying the most accurate portrayal of my father's life.

* * *

In spite of some setbacks, I am thankful to Almighty Allāh for the opportunity to compile this biography. The addition of photographs has enriched this book. Many of these pictures are from our personal and family albums and some were forwarded to me by friends and well wishers of my late father (some of whom have been acknowledged in the footnotes). In this regard, I would like to

Preface

thank my brothers, Zaki Imam and Masud Akthar, for going through the manuscript and filling in some gaps that I couldn't ascertain. I would also like to especially thank my nephew, Dr. Jafar Zaki, for finding some items upon my request from the archives section of the National Library in Dar-es-Salaam. Upon my instructions, he also conducted some interviews with a number of students of my late father.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of my children: Aliyyah, Mahdi, Nabila, and Najiya for editing the manuscript, especially Aliyyah for using her thorough editorial skills; and my son, Mahdi and his wife Warda, for being supportive and for designing a beautiful cover which reflects the challenges (dark clouds) and achievements (stars) in my father's life.

* * *

The Urdu version of this book will also include Urdu poems and articles on my father which we have not fully included here; similarly, the Swahili version will include some Swahili poems and articles.

* * *

Hopefully this biography will inspire the seekers of truth and its promoters to face challenges in their own sphere and era with perseverance and reliance on Allāh. The most essential asset for success is sincerity, *ikhhlās*. As Allāh has promised: "Whoever helps Allāh (in promoting His message), Allāh will help him."

May the Almighty elevate the status of my father, accept his deeds and include him among the sincere servants of Allāh's ḥujjat of our time, Muḥammad al-Mahdi (a).

Wa mā tawfīqī illā billāh.

Ramadhān 1442
May 2021

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi
Toronto, Canada

Some Important Notes:

- Most of my father’s **written works** mentioned throughout this book are available for viewing and download at www.al-m.ca and www.shia-maktab.info.
- Some excerpts are placed in **boxes**; these are standalone stories or information that can be read on their own.
- For **any information regarding my father ‘Allāmah Rizvi**, please have it verified by myself or my brothers. I have heard and read some very amusing things about my father which are not factual. A couple of examples will suffice:
 - (1) In a memorial gathering in a prominent city in the USA after my father’s demise, a person stood up and gave a brief speech praising my father in which he also said, “**He had studied in Najaf.**” When I confronted him after the program, stating that this was not true, he was insisting on it whereas we know for a fact that his first trip to Iraq was in mid 1960s for ziyārat from Africa!
 - (2) The *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (vol. 24, issue 3, July 2014) carried an article, “Travelling Leaders & Connecting Print Cultures” in which the author asserts:

“The Bilal Muslim Mission Trust was set up in 1964 under the direction of Sayyid Sa‘id Akhtar Rizvi, who was appointed Chief Missionary for his knowledge of Swahili and English, **his training in Najaf, and also the marriage alliance with the daughter of the late Iraqi marja‘ Ayatullah Sayyid Abu ‘l-Qasim al-Khoei.**” (p. 464)

It was indeed hilarious to know, 12 years after my father’s demise, that I am apparently a grandson of the Grand Āyatullāh al-Khoei! And also that my father was trained in Najaf! Both are obviously not true at all.
- Any inquiries can be sent to **info@al-m.ca** for verification.



Chapter One

The Birth of a Star

Birth & Family Background

Sayyid Abul Ḥasan Rizvi

Sayyid Zaynul ‘Ābidīn

Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً
كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

Have you not ‘seen’ how Allāh gave a parable of a good word?

It is like a good tree —

its roots are firm, and its branches are in heaven...

(14:24)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ

BIRTH & FAMILY BACKGROUND

Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi¹ was born on 5 January 1927 CE (1 Rajab 1345 AH) in ‘Ushri Khurd, in the district of Siwan, Bihar, India. (Siwan district was known those days as Saran district.) ‘Ushri Khurd was his maternal grandfather’s home, a few kilometers south of his ancestral home, Gopalpur.

He was the fifth in the consequent generations of religious scholars (*‘ulamā’*) of his family.

Father: Sayyid Abul Hasan Rizvi

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s father, Maulānā Ḥakīm Sayyid Abul Ḥasan Rizvi (1888-1974/1306-1394) was a famous *‘ālim* and an experienced *ṭabīb*.²

Born in Gopalpur, Sayyid Abul Ḥasan lost both his parents in his childhood and was raised by his uncle, Sayyid Maḥbūb Ḥusayn. After studying elementary Persian and Arabic languages in Gopalpur,

1 Sayyid and Rizvi form his family name whereas “Saeed Akhtar” is his proper name and it means “the fortunate star”. The numerical values of the letters of his proper name comes to 1345 which was his Islamic birth year.

2 “Ḥakīm / Ṭabīb” means a doctor who practices traditional Greco-Arabic medicine, which seeks non-invasive and holistic methods of treating patients.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Sayyidul Ḥukamā', Ustādhul 'Ulamā'
Maulānā Sayyid Abul Ḥasan Rizvi (1888-1974)

and for a short while in Khujwah, he travelled to Lucknow around 1908 and was admitted in Sulṭānu 'l-Madāris. Among his famous teachers were Sayyid Muḥammad (known as Bāqiru 'l-'Ulūm), Sayyid Muḥammad Hādi (Hādiyu 'l-Millat), and Sayyid Muḥammad Razā. He graduated in 1919/1338 with the highest degree of Sulṭānu 'l-Madāris, “Ṣadru 'l-Afādhil.” Both his senior teachers wrote glorifying testimonials about him. Moreover, Bāqiru 'l-'Ulūm assigned the education of his sons, Muḥammad and 'Ali, to Sayyid Abul Ḥasan; and both of his students went on to become principals of the madrasah, one after the another.

During his time in Sulṭānu 'l-Madāris, Sayyid Abul Ḥasan also studied *ṭibb* (medicine) under Ḥakīm Sayyid Muzaffar Ḥusayn and also performed practicals at his clinic. On 30 November 1920 (18 Rabi al-Awwal 1339), he was awarded the certificate for *ṭibb*.

Upon the recommendation of Bāqiru 'l-'Ulūm, he lived for two years in Agra as a tutor of Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥasan's children. He also started his *ṭibb* practice at this time.

In 1922/1341, at the invitation of Sayyid Muḥammad Shabbar, the Principal of Madrasah Nāṣiriyyah, he moved to Jawnpur as the Vice Principal of that Madrasah. He continued his *ṭibb* practice here as well. This vocation turned out to be very helpful when, during the last two years at the Madrasah, the teachers were not paid their salaries due to mismanagement by the trustees.

A new madrasah was established in Patna (Bihar) in 1923/24 known as Madrasah 'Abbāsiyyah. In 1926/1344, Maulānā Muḥammad Muṣṭafa Jawhar became Principal of Madrasah 'Abbāsiyyah and he invited Sayyid Abul Ḥasan to join him as the Vice Principal. (Both hailed from the same area of Siwan and were close friends in Sulṭānu 'l-Madāris.³) In Patna also, he continued his

3 Their close friendship is also reflected by the fact that a textbook on astronomy (*At-Taṣrīḥ fi Sharḥi 'l-Taṣrīḥ*, a commentary on *Taṣhrīḥu 'l-Aflāk* of Shaykh al-Bahā'ī) that was apparently not easily available those days was

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

tibb practice at Pachhim Darwāza and named his clinic “Sa‘īdiyya Dawākhāna” after his son.

When the earthquake of 1934 destroyed the Madrasah’s building, it was shifted to Gulzār Bāgh. Unfortunately, Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah also became a victim of the trustees’ mismanagement: the teachers had not been paid for six months and so they all resigned. Thereafter, Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah closed on 21 May 1940.

During his stay in Patna, the outstanding salary of the Madrasah Nāshiriyyah (Jawnpur) was finally paid, and it was directed towards reconstruction of the northern portion of Maulānā Abul Ḥasan’s ancestral home in Gopalpur. He even used a portion of that money to build the Eid-gāh⁴ of Gopalpur. Interestingly, when he finally received the outstanding salary of Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah, he was able to complete the southern portion of his home. With God’s grace, it was a spacious home with a front courtyard, two rooms for meetings and guests, and a secondary large courtyard inside the family quarters.

Sayyid Abul Ḥasan spent around two years in the Siwan area.

In 1942/1359, when the five thousand strong Shī‘a community of Hallour, UP, planned to update their masjid and madrasah, an elder, Sayyid Wārith Ḥusayn, suggested that such a big community needed a capable ‘ālim. The community left the choice upon him. Wārith Ḥusayn knew Maulānā Abul Ḥasan from Jawnpur and thus invited him to Hallaur. He lived there as their religious guide until January 1948 (1367). When his older brother, Sayyid Laṭīf Ḥusayn, died, he was forced to return to Gopalpur to oversee the family farms. Due to his dedication and hard work, the people of Hallaur had fond memories

entirely copied very diligently by Shaykh Muḥammad Muṣṭafa (who was an excellent scribe). At the end of the textbook, he wrote: “This has been copied by Shaykh Muḥammad Muṣṭafa for his friend al-Ḥakīm Sayyid Abul Ḥasan.” This was in 1334 AH. (Based on my unpublished list of manuscripts of our family library “*Fihrist-e Makhḥūṭāt-e Kitāb-Khānah-e Riyāḍu ‘l-Ma‘ārif*,” prepared on the eve of 17 Rabī al-Awwal 1403 / 2 January 1983 in Gopalpur.)

4 Communal Masjid dedicated only for Eid Salaat

of him.

In 1949, Sayyid Abul Ḥasan along with his wife, Şiddīqah Khātūn, joined a caravan of 20 people for the ziyārat of Iraq and Iran. They went by sea from Bombay to Baṣrah, and after the ziyārat of Iraq, they moved on to Iran, then returned via the newly formed nation of Pakistan.

In 1969, my father invited his parents to Dar-es-Salaam and took them for the ḥajj in 1971.

My grandmother, Şiddīqah Khātūn, died at the age of 69 on 30 August 1972/9 Rajab 1392. Maulānā Ḥakīm Sayyid Abul Ḥasan Rizvi died on Saturday, 21 December 1974/6 Dhul Ḥijjah 1394, in Gopalpur. My grandparents are buried side by side in Gopalpur. May Allāh shower His mercy and blessings on their souls.

Maternal Grandfather: Ḥakīm Sayyid Zaynul ‘Ābidīn

‘Allāmah Saeed Akhtar Rizvi’s maternal grandfather, Ḥakīm Sayyid Zaynul ‘Ābidīn (d. 1369/1950) was born in ‘Ushri Khurd, Siwan, Bihar. His father, Maulānā Sayyid ‘Ali Aḥmad, was imām of Golaghat Masjid in Bhagalpur, Bihar.

Although he lost his father at a young age, Ḥakīm Zaynul ‘Ābidīn was able to take care of his mother, brother and two sisters. He also continued his studies. He was admitted to Jāmi‘ah Nāzimīyyah (a prestigious seminary in Lucknow). In one of his personal notes that has survived, when he succeeded in the exam of *Sharḥ Lum‘ah* (jurisprudence), *Qawānīnu ‘l-Uṣūl* (principles of jurisprudence), *Ash-Shamsh al-Bāzighah* (philosophy), and *Ḥamāsah* (Arabic literature), he was awarded a book, *Jadhawāt* of Mir Bāqir Damād and a certificate signed by S. Muḥammad Ḥādī, S. Nāşir Ḥusayn and other senior ‘ulamā’. He graduated with Nāzimīyyah’s highest degree, “Mumtāzu ‘l-Afādhil.”

He also studied *ṭibb* and became a famous *ṭabīb*. Initially he

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

opened a clinic in Purnea and then settled down in Bhagalpur, Bihar.

Ḥakīm Zaynul ‘Ābidīn was highly respected by the elite of Bhagalpur. During the evenings, respected residents of Bhagalpur from various religious backgrounds would gather at his residence, and discuss a variety of issues in a friendly and intellectual manner; in most cases, his word was considered to be the final statement on a given topic.

He had rented two spacious houses in Bhagalpur; one for his own use, and another as a guesthouse for his out-of-town patients. He was also known for his generosity, charity and social work amongst relatives and others. For example, when one of his daughters died, he took the gold that he had gradually collected for her marriage and donated it for construction of a bridge which linked ‘Ushri Khurd to Ḥasanpura, which was a connection along the main road of the region.

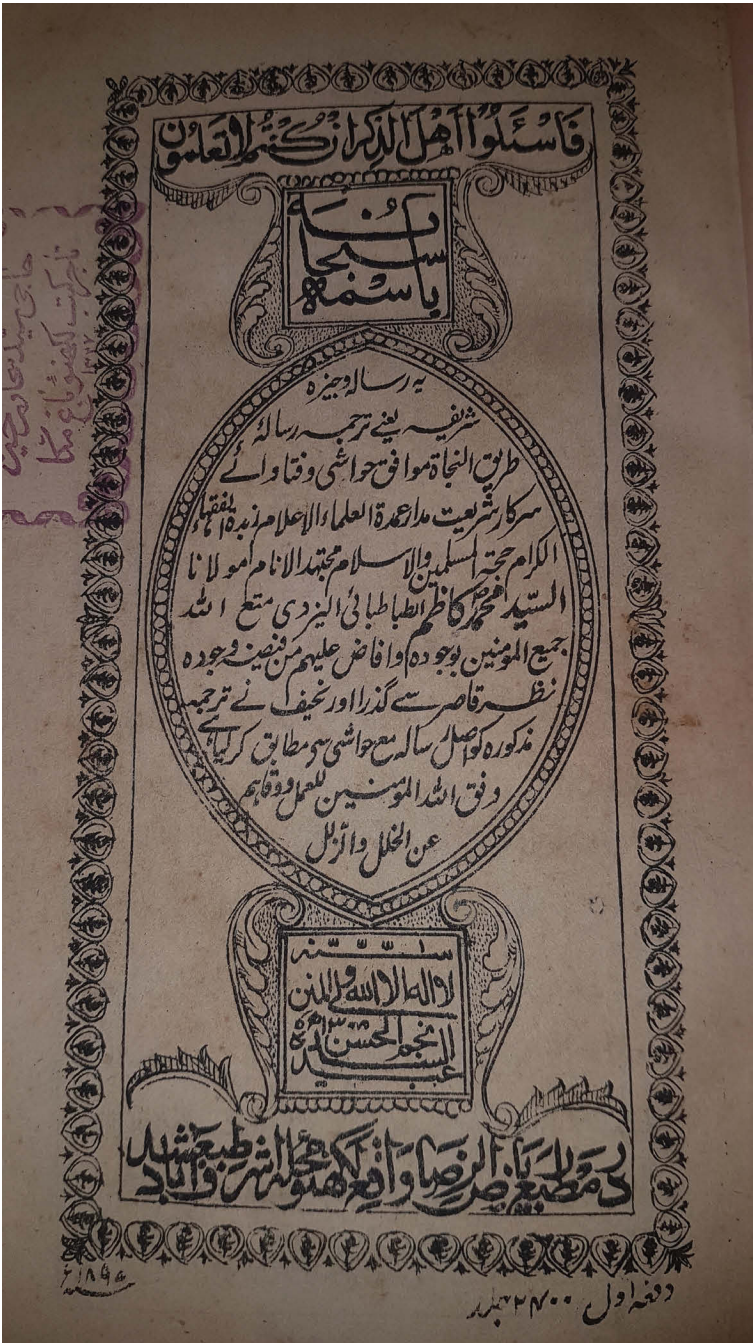
One of his teachers in Lucknow, Najmu ’l-‘Ulamā’ (senior most ‘ālim of India) asked him to translate *Ṭarīqu ’n-Najāt* of Shaykh Mīrza Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shirāzi. This was his Farsi *risālah ‘amaliyyah* (fatwa manual) in the form of questions and answers on matters of jurisprudence. It had footnotes of the great scholar, Sayyid Kāzim aṭ-Ṭabātabā’ī al-Yazdī. Sayyid Zaynul ‘Ābidīn translated the *risālah* into Urdu which was published in 1315/1897 in Lucknow.

Ḥakīm Zaynul ‘Ābidīn was also an accomplished Persian poet.

He died on 4 Rabi ath-Thāni 1369/24 January 1950 while doing his ‘ishā prayer — he went into the position of *sajdah*, attained his ‘ascension’, and did not rise up again. May Allāh elevate his status.

Maternal Great-Grandfather: Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi

The most famous among ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s ancestors was his mother’s maternal grandfather, Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi (1852-1929/1269-1348). He was the son of a very pious ‘ālim,

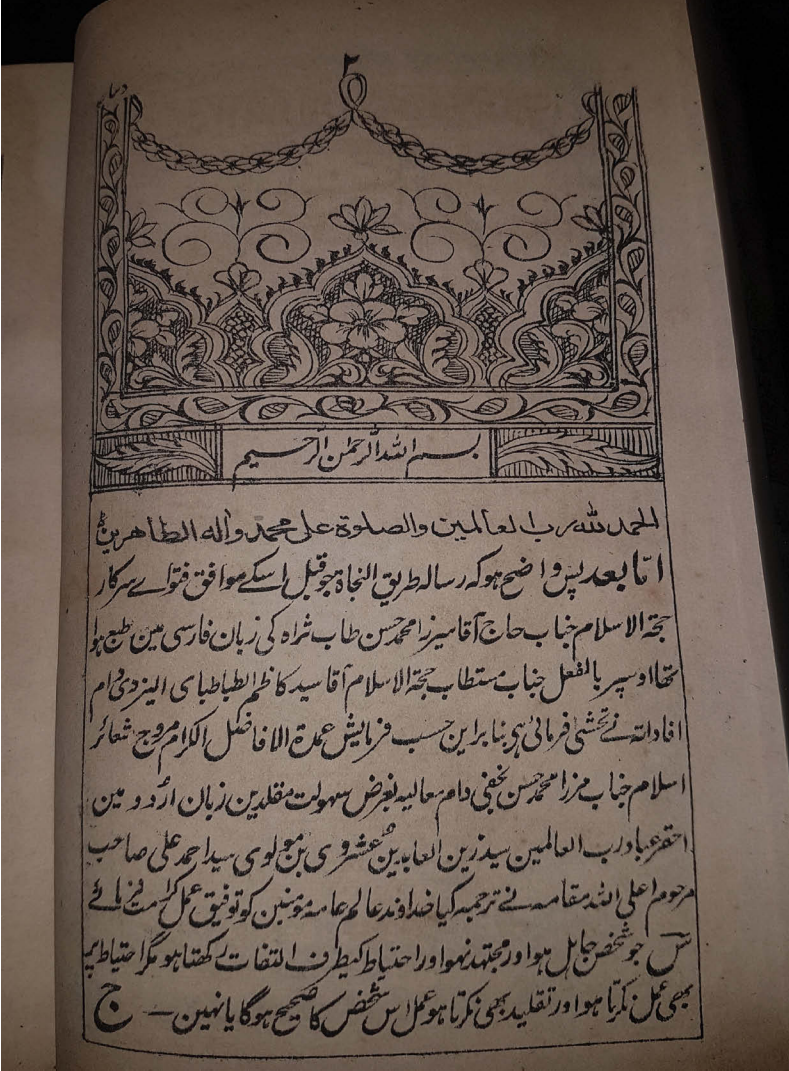


Title page of *Risālah-e Ṭarīqu'n-Najāt*, published in 1897 in Lucknow

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Maulānā Sayyid ‘Alī, who was known for his *karāmāt* (usually translated as ‘miracles’ but actually means someone whose du‘ās are readily accepted by the Almighty).

After losing his father at the age of 16, Maulānā Muḥammad Mahdi traveled to Patna for his education. Then he moved to



Tarīqu'n-Najāt, page 1.

Lucknow where he studied under prominent scholars of the time such as Sayyid ‘Ali Muḥammad (known as Tāju ’l-‘Ulamā’), Mufti Sayyid Muḥammad ‘Abbās, and Sayyid Taṣadduq Ḥusayn.

Upon completing his studies, Maulānā Muḥammad Mahdi settled down in Muzaffarpur (Bihar) in 1306 as the Principal of Madrasah Imāniyyah built by Nawwāb S. Muḥammad Taqī Khān. When the imām of the masjid attached to that complex left for Lucknow in 1902, the position of imām and khaṭīb was also assigned to him. One of his students, Rāḥat Ḥusayn Gopalpūrī, studied *Abwābu’l-Jinān*, *Sharḥ Jāmi* and *Sharḥ Tahdhīb* with him. Ayātullāh Rāḥat Ḥusayn later emerged to be a great scholar.

Maulānā Muḥammad Mahdi visited Iraq and Iran for ziyārat. On one of these trips, the great mujtahid, Sayyid Muḥammad Taqī Shirāzi, issued an *ijāzah* of ḥadīth and religious authority for him. In 1321 / 1903, he went with his wife for ḥajj.

He suffered a stroke in 1340/1921 from which he could not recover, and passed away on 27 November 1929/24 Jumadi ath-Thani 1348 at his ancestral home in ‘Ali Nagar, Siwan, Bihar.

Maulānā Muḥammad Mahdi was the author of a number of books:

1. *Sawā’u ’s-Sabīl* (Urdu) on theology, published in Lucknow in 1306 / 1888.
2. *Ḥujjat-e Bāligha* (Urdu), published in Patna in 1311/1894. It is in response to three questions sent by a Sunni scholar, Mulla Ghulām Qādir Madrāsi:
 - (a) Was Allāh’s promise about khilāfat fulfilled?
 - (b) About the *irtidād* (apostasy) of the three khulafā’.
 - (c) Obedience to the Prophet & the issue of Fadak.

The book has a very interesting introduction (in 10 pages) about bias and prejudice in polemic writings. The introduction was in response to Mullā Qādir’s condition

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

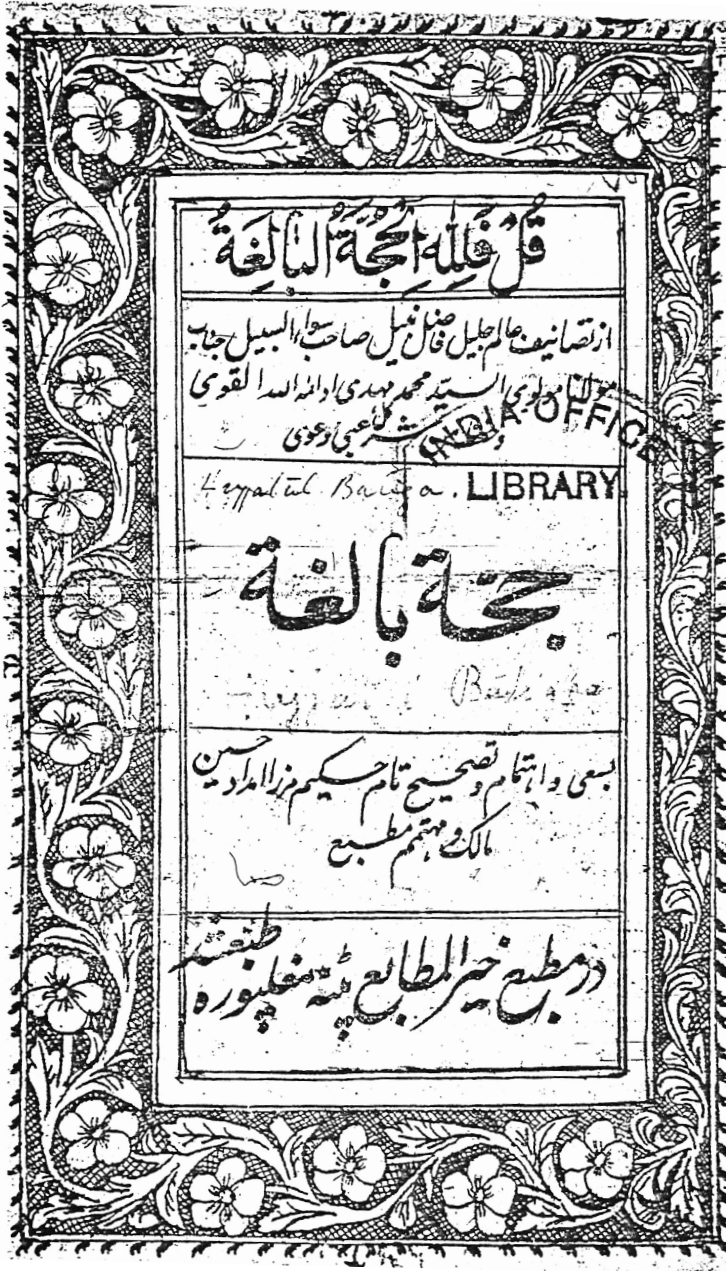
that answers should not be biased; and Maulānā Muḥammad Mahdi held a mirror to him by giving multiple examples of bias from famous Sunni scholars.

3. & 4. *Zamzamatu ‘l-Ḥujjāj* and *Madīnatu ‘l-Ziyārāt* (Urdu), a guide for ḥajj and ziyārat, published in Lucknow 1908/1326, and again in 1924/1343 for free distribution among pilgrims.
5. *Tuḥfatu ‘l-Abrār* (Persian) on the biography of his esteemed father, Maulānā Sayyid ‘Ali, published in Patna.
6. *Mawā‘izu ‘l-Muttaqīn* (Arabic) published around 1346/1927 in Lucknow. This consists of his sermons given in Ramadhān before 1343/1924. There is a notice in the *Iṣlāḥ* monthly (Rabī al-Awwal, 1346 / 1927) about this book as follows:
“Based on the letter of the chosen one among the honourable ‘ulamā’, the disciple of the great jurists, the best of the theologians and the cream of researchers, Maulānā Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi ṣāhib qīblah^(dāmat barakātuhum), the writer of *Mawā‘izu ‘l-Muttaqīn*, this book is not for sale nor for public distribution, rather it is gifted by the author to the ‘ulamā’, some chosen people, and orators with certain conditions.”
7. His most famous book *Lawā‘iju ‘l-Aḥzān* in Urdu on the lives of the Infallible Ones (in two volumes) was published five times in his lifetime and is still in print in India and Pakistan. Soon after its first edition was published in 1319/1901, Hāji Ghulām ‘Ali Ismā‘īl (Hāji Nāji) serialized its chapters in a Gujarati transliteration in his *Rāh-e Najāt* monthly for Gujarati followers of the faith.⁵

These were the illustrious immediate ancestors of ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. “*A good word: it is like a good tree—its roots are firm, and its branches are in heaven.*” (14:24)

* * *

5 The details on my ancestors are based on S.S.Akhtar Rizvi, *Shajarah-e Ṭayyibah* (2000) and *Khūrshīd-e Khāwar* (2002).



Title page of *Hujjat-e Bāligha*, see details on p. 11

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi

Area of Siwan in Bihar, north-eastern India



Details of Siwan District (Bihar)



The Birth of a Star



A panoramic view of Gopalpur from the other side of the pond.
Picture taken by the author in early 1990s.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Chapter Two

The Growing Star

Education & Teachers:

At Home

In Patna

In Banaras

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص
مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَطْلُبُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَلَكَ اللَّهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ
وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أَجْنِحَتَهَا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ رِضًا بِهِ
وَإِنَّهُ يَسْتَغْفِرُ لَطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
حَتَّى الْحُوتِ فِي الْبَحْرِ

Allāh’s Messenger (s) said:

“Whoever walks on the path seeking knowledge, Allāh leads him to the Paradise; and verily the angels place their wings [on the path] for the seeker of knowledge; and indeed whoever is in the heaven and the earth, even the fish in the sea, ask forgiveness for him.”

(*Al-Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 34)

HIS EDUCATION & TEACHERS

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s education began at his ancestral home in **Gopalpur** (Siwan). Even before attending the formal *maktab*, his mother, Šiddīqah Khātūn, was his first teacher. She herself was a member of a scholarly family. ‘Allāmah Rizvi says, “Instead of reading the *tūtā-o-maynā* [nursery rhymes and stories commonly used in Urdu], she used to read to me the stories of the prophets from Prophet Nūḥ all the way to the Prophet of Islam (s) as well as the stories of the Imams (a).” And when he joined the local *maktab*, he started learning Urdu and Farsi at the same time.⁶

At the age of eight (1935), ‘Allāmah Rizvi moved to **Patna** where his father was the Vice Principal of Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah. In Patna, he studied Farsi, Arabic, logic, mathematics, *fiqh* and philosophy in Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah under his father’s supervision. When that madrasah closed, he moved to Madrasah Sulaymāniyyah for a year.

Initially, his father had assigned Maulawi Syed Kalbe Ḥusayn and Nawwāb S. Muḥammad ‘Askari to teach him Farsi for one full year. Then for the next whole year, his father had assigned Syed ‘Ali Asghar to teach him English and math. This was a solid foundation upon which he continued his reading and studying of English on his own, even when he moved to Banaras. It is worth mentioning that those days it was unheard of for seminary students to study English. This proved very helpful to him later in his life when he migrated to Africa. After the two years of private tutoring, he was admitted in the 7th grade of Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah at the age of ten.

One of the examiners of Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah wrote two

6 Based on my father’s notes and his audio cassettes on his biography, and also the interview with Chawdhari S. Sibṭ Muḥammad Naqvi in *Tawḥīd Mail*, (15 Dec 2002) p. 23.

remarks on the answer sheet belonging to student #5 (which was ‘Allāmah’s roll #). The first remark was a Farsi verse:

بالای سرش به هوشمندی می تاخت ستاره بلندی
bāla-e sarash be husmandi mi tākht sitāra-e bulandi
‘Because of his intelligence, an elevated star was
shining upon his head.’

And secondly he wrote the Qur’anic verse:

‘Verily the human has been a hasty being’ (17:11)
(indicating that he wrote the exam hurriedly.⁷)

In Patna, ‘Allāmah Rizvi also appeared for the Fauqania Exam (administered by Bihar State Madrasa Education Board) on 1 July 1941. His certificate shows that he took English and Urdu as his optional subjects, and that he passed in the first division. Fauqania is equivalent to Matriculation.

In **1941** he enrolled in Jāmi‘atu ’l-‘Ulūm Jawādiyya, **Banaras** (now Varanasi) UP, which was one of the three most advanced Shī‘a seminaries in India.

In **1946**, at the age of nineteen, he graduated from Jāmi‘atu ’l-‘Ulūm Jawādiyya with distinction and was awarded its highest degree, ‘Fakhru ’l-Afādhil’. *Fakhru ’l-Afādhil* means “the pride of the erudite ones”. See the image on the previous page.

In one of the final exams at Jawādiyya, the question paper on theology was based on *Sharḥ Tajrīd* of Muḥaqqiq aṭ-Ṭūsi with commentary by ‘Allāmah al-Ḥilli. It is a complex textbook at an advanced level. Its question paper was prepared by an external examiner, ‘Allāmah ‘Adīl Akhtar, the Principal of Madrasatul

7 My father’s audio cassette # 1.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Wā’izeen (Lucknow). A few days later, he came to Banaras and was a guest of Maulānā S. Razi Zangipūri, the Principal of Jawādiyyah. My father was in the room when he saw that ‘Allāmah ‘Adīl Akhtar held up an answer sheet (which had only a student’s roll number) and said, “I wanted to give this student 101% but it wouldn’t have made sense to do that out of 100% and so I ended up giving him 99%.” Maulānā Razi pointed towards my father and said, “This is the student whose answer paper you are holding.” He asked for his father’s name and then remarked: “Maulānā Abu’l-Ḥasan is very fortunate to have a son like him.” He also mentioned that he had made copies of the answer paper and showed it to the students in Lucknow as an example of how to write an exam on *Sharḥ Tajrīd*.⁸

* * *

During his studies at Jawādiyyah, ‘Allāmah Rizvi also appeared for various government run exams in Urdu, Arabic and Persian linguistics from the Allāhabad Education Board of UP and obtained the following certificates:

- 1944 ‘Ālim (Arabic & Persian) certificate, 1st division
- 1945 Munshi (Persian) certificate, 2nd division
- 1946 Fāzil Adab (Arabic) certificate, 1st division
(Anjuman-e Arabi of UP awarded him 10 rupees for attaining first position among all participating students)
- 1946 Qābil (Urdu) certificate, 1st division

These certificates are useful for those who want to pursue a teaching career in Urdu or Farsi in high schools and colleges in India. For example, a teacher with a Fāzil Adab degree was on the same pay scale as a teacher with a B.A. degree. These certificates helped ‘Allāmah Rizvi in starting his teaching career at the high schools in his local area before migrating to Africa.

8 My father’s audio files

His Teachers

1. His father, Maulānā Sayyid **Abul Ḥasan Rizvi**. Under him, he studied:

Sharḥ Tahdhībi 'l-Mantiq; al-Mirqāt; al-Quṭbi (section on *at-taṣawwurāt*); all on logic.

Sharā'i'u 'l-Islām (sections on *ṭahārāt* and *ṣalāt*) in jurisprudence.

Ḥāshiyāh al-Qalyūbi on Arabic grammar; *Mukhtaṣaru 'l-Ma'āni fi Sharḥ Talkhīsu 'l-Miftāh* on Arabic rhetoric.

2. Maulānā **Farḥat Ḥusayn** (Patna). Under him, he studied:

Bidāyatu 'l-Hidāyah on ḥadīth and *al-Kawākibu 'd-Durriyyah* on Arabic grammar in 1938-1939.

3. Maulānā Shaykh **Muṣṭafa Jawhar**, the Principal, Madrasah 'Abbāsiyyah, Patna. Under him, he studied:

Sharā'i'u 'l-Islām (sections on *ṣawm, zakāt and nikāḥ*) on jurisprudence.

Al-Quṭbi (section on *at-taṣdīqāt*) on logic.

Al-Hadiyyah as-Sa'īdiyyah, Sharḥ Bābi 'l-Ḥādi 'Ashar on metaphysics and theology.

Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīri on Arabic literature.

4. Maulānā Sayyid **'Ali Sajjād Bhīkhpūri** (Patna). Under him, he studied: Half of *Mukhtaṣar an-Nāfi'* (till *kitābu 'l-waqf*) on jurisprudence.

5. Maulānā Sayyid **Ghulām Muṣṭafa** (Principal of Madrasah Sulaymāniyyah, Patna). Under him, he studied:

Hidāyatu 'l-Ḥikmah on philosophy in 1940-1941.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

6. Maulānā **Mukhtār Aḥmad** (Gopalpur). Under him, he studied:
Some chapters of *Maqāmāt Badi‘u ‘z-Zamān* (on Arabic literature) during a summer holiday at home. He was also his guide in the early stages of his own poetry.
7. Maulānā Sayyid **Rasūl Aḥmad** (Gopalpur). Under him, he studied:
Azhāru ‘l-‘Arab during one summer holiday at home. (When he was a teacher at Madrasah Sulaymāniyyah, Patna, ‘Allāmah Rizvi prepared under his supervision for the Fauqania exam in 1940-1941.) Later Maulānā Rasūl Aḥmad became a popular teacher at Nāzimīyyah in Lucknow.
8. Maulānā Sayyid **‘Ali Rizvi** (Gopalpur). During one of the summer holidays, he studied a book on philosophy under him.
9. Maulānā Shaykh **Kāzim Ḥusayn** (Banaras). Under him, he studied: *Diwān al-Mutanabbi* in Arabic literature.
10. Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimin Sayyid **Zafaru ‘l-Ḥasan** Rizvi, the Vice-Principal of Jāmi‘atu ‘l-‘Ulūm Jawādiyya (Banaras). He studied under him from July 1941 to the end of 1946:
Iḥqāqu ‘l-Ḥaqq on theology.
Sharḥu ‘l-Lum‘ah, Riyāzu ‘l-Masā‘il (known as *Sharḥ Kabīr*) on jurisprudence.
Qawānīnu ‘l-Uṣūl, Rasā‘il on principles of jurisprudence.
Uṣūlu ‘l-Kāfi, Nahju ‘l-Balāghah on ḥadīth.
11. ‘Allāmah Sayyid **Muḥammad Razi Zangipūri**, the Principal of Jāmi‘atu ‘l-‘Ulūm Jawādiyya (Banaras). Under him, he studied:
Sharḥu Sullami ‘l-‘Ulūm of Mulla Ḥamdullāh on logic.

Al-Ifādah al-Qudsiyyah, Kashfu 'l-Murād fi Sharḥ Tajrīdi 'l-I'tiqād,

'Imādu 'l-Islām of Sayyid Dildār 'Ali (section on *tawḥīd, 'adl, nubuwwat*)

Sharḥ Hidāyati 'l-Ḥikmah (known popularly as *Ṣadrā*) all on philosophy and theology.

Diwān al-Ḥamāsah and *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīri* in Arabic literature. (He was also his mentor in Arabic poetry.)

* * *

In April 1958, 'Allāmah Rizvi appeared for his **high school examination** at the Aligarh Muslim University as a private candidate. The compulsory subjects in that examination were English, history, geography, Muslim theology, Urdu with elementary Hindi; and the optional subjects were civics and Arabic. He passed the examination with a distinction in theology, English and Arabic, and was placed in the first division. (He was given a 2 mark penalty to bring him below the other highest-scoring student, simply because he was a private candidate!)

The Most Prestigious Shī‘a Seminaries in India in the 19th & 20th Century

1. Madrasa-e Nāzimiyyah (Lucknow)



Founded on 1 Jumāda I 1308 / 13 December 1890

Founder & Principal: Sayyid Abul Ḥasan

- Najmul ‘Ulamā’ (S. Najmul Ḥasan), principal
- Mufti S. Aḥmad ‘Ali ibn Mufti M. ‘Abbās, principal
- Ḥamīdul Ḥasan (great-grandson of Najmul Ḥasan), principal
- Its highest degree is “*Mumtāzu ’l-Afādhil* – the distinguished one among the erudite.”
- The first graduate with a Mumtāzul Afādhil degree was Maulānā Fakhru ’d-Dīn (the cousin of Syed Farmān ‘Ali) of Bihar. He was the only student in his class.
- In the second batch came Syed **Farmān ‘Ali** (1876-1916), the famous translator of the Qur’ān in Urdu (from Bihar); S. Muḥammad Hārūn, S. Sibṭe Ḥasan Jā’isi and S. Muḥammad Dā’ud Zangipūri – they graduated in 1313 AH.

2. Madrasa Sulṭāniya “Sulṭānu ’l-Madāris”: (Lucknow)



Founded on 2 Jumada I 1259 / 31 May 1843

1st Principal was S. Muḥammad ‘Abbās Shūshtari.

(During 1857’s turmoil, the madrasa was closed by the British after it annexed the Awadh kingdom. Restarted in its new building on 21 Mar 1912)

- Syed Muḥammad Bāqir (Bāqiru ’l-‘Ulūm) ibn Abul Ḥasan became the Principal. The post is reserved for that family:
- S. Muḥammad Hādi ibn Abul Ḥasan
- S. Muḥammad ibn Bāqirul ‘Ulūm
- S. ‘Ali ibn Bāqirul ‘Ulūm
- S. Muḥammad Ṣālih
- S. Muḥammad Hādi’s grandson S. Muḥammad Ja‘far
- Its highest degree is “*Ṣadru ’l-Afādhil* – the chief of the erudite ones.”
- **‘Allāmah Rizvi’s father** graduated from Sulṭānu ’l-Madāris, and his **maternal grandfather** graduated from Madrasa-e Nāzimiyyah as did the latter’s **great-grandfather**.
- **‘Allāmah Rizvi’s father** studied under Bāqiru ’l-‘Ulūm and also taught his sons, Muḥammad and ‘Ali, who later became the 3rd and 4th principals of Madrasa respectively.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

3. Madrasatu ‘l-Wā’izeen (Lucknow):



Founded in 1138 AH / 1919-1920 by S. Muḥammad Abul Ḥasan (known as Najmul ‘Ulamā’) in 1338 AH / 1919-1920.

- Some principals of al-Wā’izeen:
 - S. ‘Adīl Akhtar Zaidi (of Pali, **Bihar**)
 - S. Rāhat Ḥusayn **Gopalpuri**
 - S. Ibne Ḥasan Nawnahrawi
 - S. Waṣī Muḥammad
 - S. Muḥsin Rizvi **Gopalpuri**
 - S. Shabīhul Ḥasan
 - S. Wārith Ḥasan
- Students graduating from other seminaries could choose to join Wā’izeen for specializing in comparative studies as well as training for tablīgh within and outside the community. This was a unique training college not seen in Najaf or Qum those days.
- Once their training was complete, the title “wā’iz - preacher” would be added to their qualifications. They were then sent for tabligh at the expense of al-Wā’izeen.

4. Jāmi‘ul ‘Ulūm Jawādiyyah (Banaras):



Founded in 1928/1347 by S Muḥammad Sajjād in the name of his father.

Principals:

- S. Muḥammad Yūsuf Zangipuri
- S. Muḥammad Razī Zangipuri
- S. Zafaru ‘l-Ḥasan Rizvi
- S. Shamīm-ul-Ḥasan Rizvi

- Its highest degree is “*Fakhru ‘l-Afādhil* – the pride of the erudite ones.”
- Banaras is now known as Vanarasi
- The above picture is of Jawādiyyah’s new building.

- This was the alma mater of ‘**Allāmah Rizvi**

Student Life & Concern for the Community

My father narrates:

“In around 1945, UP had a Congress government whose Minister of Education was Dr. Sampurnanand. Soon after coming to power, he asked Maulānā Abul Kalām Āzad to form a committee for the development of Arabic madrasahs and submit a report after surveying all the madrasahs. Interestingly, there was not a single Shī‘a in that committee.

“I was studying in Jawadiyyah in Banaras those days and had received word that Dr. Sumpurnanand was in town. He was a native of Banaras. Along with three friends, we went to his house to see him without any appointment. He was taking a shower at that time. When he finished and was told that four young people had come to see him, he came out without drying his hair and sat down with us. [We presented our plea to him about the absence of a Shī‘a member on the committee.] He talked to us in very polished Urdu and explained that, ‘for a personality like that of Maulānā Āzad to head such a committee was itself an honour for our provincial government and I don’t have the audacity to question him about the composition of his committee. Nonetheless, I will convey your message to him.’

“We left the meeting with a positive tone. And one of us sent this meeting’s report to the *Qawmi Awaz* newspaper. As soon as this brief report was published, [Maulānā Ḥāmid Ḥusayn ‘Ushrawi whom we called *nana*] sent an envelope to me. In that letter, he praised our spirit for the wellbeing and betterment of our community and mentioned that he and a couple of his colleagues

had prepared a plan for the reformation and betterment of the madrasahs, and that it was published in a booklet form. He included a copy of that booklet which I read and fully imbibed. This was his first formal contact with me which was initiated by him. [This was the graciousness of the elders of that generation who recognized and praised the talents of the younger generation and encouraged them further.]

“In 1945, I appeared for the exam of the Fāzil (Arabic literature) level of the Allāhabad Examination Board. Those days, the answers to the question-papers of ‘Ālim and Fāzil levels were written in Arabic. The last paper was on writing an essay from a list of topics given in the examination paper. Interestingly, one of them was about ‘the need for reform in the Arabic madrasahs.’ I selected that topic since the plan proposed above [by Ḥāmid *nana*] was still fresh in my mind and so I easily wrote it down in Arabic. I continued writing for three hours and finally a thoughtful and eloquent essay emerged.”

S.S. Akthar Rizvi, “Maulavi Ḥāmid Ḥusayn ‘Ushrawi,”
Ded-o-Daryaft, p. 108-109.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Views of His Colleagues:

One of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s colleagues at Jawādiyya, the late Maulānā **Nāṣir Zaidi** (a scholar, literary critic in his own right and a high school teacher) describes his student life as follows:

“Saeed Akhtar Rizvi was the youngest of our group... When he was admitted into Jawādiyya, he was already a grade or two higher than his age group. He had very good abilities. The surprise is that our group used to study only to fulfill the minimum requirements of our courses, and the rest of the time was spent in meeting personalities and visiting different places ...In short, ‘wasting away time’ was part of our routine. And Saeed Akhtar was with us in all our activities during the day, but during the night he would be busy studying and reading books for hours.

“Of course, we never failed our exams, we passed with good grades; however, the passing grades of Saeed Akhtar were exceptional. When it came to our passing grades, we would be expecting to grade higher than 60%; but in the case of Saeed Akhtar, we had to start from 100% and then guess how many marks he would lose from there.

“Not only was his ability exceptional in studying, he was also blessed by the Almighty with a good pen; and he was already accomplished in poetry. If you truly ask me, during my ten years in Jawādiyya, the only graduate to really achieve the desired level of Jawādiyya was Saeed Akhtar – and the seminary has full right to take pride in him.”⁹

9 Syed Nāṣir Zaidi, *‘Itr-e Gil*, p. 108-110. (Nāṣir Zaidi was son of the renowned scholar, ‘Allāmah ‘Adīl Akhtar, the Principal of Wā’izeen.) Any website on Jawādiyya provides only one exemplary name of its alumni: Saeed Akhtar

Another of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s contemporaries in Banaras, Janab **Wafā Malīkpūri** (a scholar, poet, literary writer and editor of *Ṣubḥ Naw*), says,

“These words of Nāṣir Zaidi are confirmed by Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan upon the graduation of Maulānā Saeed Akhtar: ‘You are now not in need of any institution; serve the faith; you are my example.’”¹⁰

Interestingly, the ‘Allāmah himself has written something similar:

“When I reached the courses for Fakhru ’l-Afāzil [the highest degree of Jawādiyya], I decided to appear for the Year 2 exam at the same time. But when my teacher [Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan] heard my proposal, he said, ‘I know that you can easily do the two years’ exams together, however, for sake of gaining academic excellence, I suggest that you go through the Year 2 course first.’”

And the student dutifully accepted the teacher’s advice.¹¹

Views of Teachers & Prominent Scholars:

Maulānā Sayyid **Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan**, who was at that time the Vice Principal of Jāmi‘atu ’l-‘Ulūm Jawādiyyah, writes about his student as follows:

“The honourable man of excellent erudition, a noble scholar who possesses shining qualities, Janab Maulawi Sayyid Saeed

10 Wafā Malīkpūri, “Asmān-e Tablīgh-o-Taḥqīq,” *Tawḥīd Mail*, p. 37.

11 S.S.A. Rizvi, “Ustādhi al-Mu‘azzam,” *Ded-o-Daryāft*, p.87.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Akhtar, is from the exceptional and most deserving graduates in whom Jāmi‘a Jawādiyyah will always take pride. His student life of constant dedication and hard work is unmatched, and therefore he passed all levels at first division including the highest degree of Fakhru ’l-Afādhil (which is given after the education of 16 years). During the same time, he demonstrated his capability in giving speeches in Arabic and Urdu as well as publishing well-researched articles, which continues even now. He also sat for the exam of Allāhabad Examination Board for ‘Ālim, Fāzil and other courses [of linguistics] during his days in Jawādiyyah and passed them in the first division. He has also mastered the English language.

“In short, his knowledge and action, his asceticism and piety, his good oratory and writings are all qualities that will guide him to a great status. I am sure that whatever I have written, others will find him to be even better when they interact with him.

“I pray that the Almighty may preserve his blessed presence among our community and country for a long time. And I advise him not to abandon the path of precaution, and not to forget me in the best of prayers. May the blessings be upon him and all the mu’mineen.”

It is indeed interesting to see that Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan so much admired his student’s talents that he wanted him to stay at Jawādiyyah even after graduation. During the ‘Allāmah’s last year, he mentioned to ‘Allāmah ‘Adīl Akhtar (the Principal of Madrastu ’l-Wā’izeen, Lucknow) that after graduation, he planned to attend Madrastu ’l-Wā’izeen. Knowing his abilities, ‘Allāmah ‘Adīl Akhtar gladly welcomed him saying, “Wā’izeen was indeed formed for people like you; you should come.” And when ‘Allāmah Rizvi mentioned that to Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan, the latter said, “If you

are ready, after your graduation, I can start a one year course for ‘training wā’iz, preacher/missionary,’ and after that you can be deputed for preaching activities by Jawādiyyah at a monthly stipend of 40 rupees.”

This was in the middle of 1946 and soon after, Hindu-Muslim riots started from Punjab to Bengal, especially in Bihar; and in such an environment, these plans were forgotten.¹²

This brings me to the remarks of the above-mentioned prominent scholar of that generation, Maulānā Syed ‘**Adīl Akhtar** (the Principal of Madrasatu ’l-Wā’izeen, Lucknow), who wrote about ‘Allāmah Rizvi as follows:

“The best among honourable ones who is named as ‘the fortunate one’ (Saeed) and who is praiseworthy for success in his tests, Maulawi Sayyid Saeed Akhtar, Fakhru ’l-Afādhil, is very well known to me.

“He acquired advanced studies at the famous Jāmi‘tu ’l-Jawādiyyah, and received its highest degree with distinction. His scholarly abilities are solid, and he is endowed with practical asceticism. He is also gifted with the talent of a sensible oratory which has enhanced his scholarly and practical personality.

“I hope that wherever he resides, the mu’mineen will benefit from him and be delighted with his [sermons on] Friday and congregational prayers for the purpose of spreading the faith; and that they will be blessed by appreciating and respecting him. “I pray for his success and hope that, ‘the fortunate one,’ will not forget me during the time when prayers are granted.” (14 Shawwal 1368 [9 August 1949].)

12 S.S.A. Rizvi, “Ustādhi al-Mu‘azzam,” in *Ded-o-Daryāft*, p.87-88.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Yet another great scholar of that era, ‘Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad **Razi Zangīpūri** (the Principal of Jawādiyyah and the teacher of ‘Allāmah Rizvi who also left a lasting impression on his erudition and training) had the following to say about his student:

“The accomplished scholar and a practicing preacher, Maulawi Sayyid Saeed Akhtar, Fakhru ’l-Afādhil (may the Almighty elevate him to highest level of perfection and guide through him those who are astray), after graduating from Jāmi‘a Jawādiyya Arabic College, Banaras, is *al-hamdu-lil-lah* illuminating Hallaur and other locations with his scholarly light and spiritual guidance.

“Just like his respected father, Maulawi Sayyid Abul Ḥasan Rizvi (who is from the graduates of Sultānu ’l-Madāris), he is busy in spiritual struggles by establishing Friday and congregational prayers, preaching and guiding, and teaching and instructing. May Allāh bless him with best of rewards on behalf of the faith and Islam.

“I hope that he will continue to guide the people based on asceticism, piety and precaution, and always focus on the pleasure of the Almighty. I ask the mu’mineen to seek the blessings by benefiting from his advice and guidance. May the Almighty Allāh bless us and them with His pleasure.”

(21 Jumadi II 1369 [10 April 1950])

Patna During ‘Allāmah’s Student Life

My father recalls:

“Patna (the capital of Bihar) those days [1935 to 1941] was the center of scholarship, virtue, literature, and poetry. Now I realize that those were the last days of its glorious past (just as the candle’s flame flutters before it dies out).

“Landholding still existed and nawwābs still held their courts. Nawwābs like S. ‘Ali Sajjād, S. Muḥammad Ismā‘il, S. Muḥammad Mahdi, S. ‘Abbās ‘Ali, S. Mubārak ‘Ali, Deputy Aḥmad ‘Ali, S. Dildār ‘Ali and his sons – most of them were patrons of scholarship and literature.

“Both Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah and Madrasah Sulaymāniyyah were thriving with their prestige and fame. At ‘Abbāsiyyah, Maulānās Muṣṭafa Jawhar, my late father and Farḥat Ḥusayn were recognized for their erudition and scholarship. At Sulaymāniyyah, Maulānās Ghulām Muṣṭafa, Kāzim Ḥusayn, Abrār Ḥusayn and Rasūl Aḥmad carried solid reputations.

“Gulzār Bagh’s masjid had Maulānā S. ‘Ali Sajjād, Ghuzri’s masjid had Maulānā S. Fakhrud Dīn and Bawli’s masjid had Maulānā S. Muḥammad ‘Amīd as imāms and khaṭībs.

“From Muḥarram to Arba‘īn, various ‘asharahs were held. The most important included that at Bawli, addressed by Maulānā Murtaza Ḥusayn, at Guzri by Maulānā Mazāhir Aḥmad, at Mughalpura by Maulānā Abrār Ḥusayn and at Qāsim Ḥusayn’s imāmbārgāh by Maulānā Muṣṭafa Jawhar. Gulzār Bāgh State held three days’ majālis (26th-28th Ṣafar) which were addressed by Khaṭīb A‘zam S. Muḥammad Dehlawi.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

“Along with Maulānā Muṣṭafa Jawhar and my late father, I also would get the chance to attend one or two days at each of these majālis. However, for the ‘ashara of Bawli and Mughalpura Imāmbārgāhs, Nawwābzāda S. Muḥammad Mahdi and Khān Bahādur Deputy Aḥmad ‘Ali respectively would send their horse carriages every day and I used to tag along with them. For me, the initial attraction was the *shirmāl* and Kashmiri *chai* at those majālis but gradually I started grasping the content of those majālis. One of those years, my late father instructed me to write the summary of each day’s majlis of Mughalpura imāmbārgāh. As a result of that, I was able to write the ten majālis of Maulānā Abrār saheb from memory...

“Poetry and literature was also thriving in Patna’s environment of those days. Three prominent *muqāṣidah* (religious poetry competitions) were held annually: 13 Rajab by Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah, 3 Sha‘bān by Madrasah Sulaymāniyyah and 15 Sha‘bān at Nuzar-katra. The students of these two madrasahs had a friendly competition on poetry. At Madrasah ‘Abbāsiyyah, Maulānās Jawhar and Farḥat Ḥusayn would supervise the students. Some prominent poets of the city, Rāz, Dānish, and Akthar, were central figures of these programs. The *muqāṣidah* would start at 9 p.m. and mostly end at *fajr* time. Jamīl Mazhari also participated in these events...

“In such a pleasant environment, Maulānā Jawhar and my late father would regularly go for their evening walks; places like Doli Ghat, Nuzar Katra, Nanmuhiyan, Gulzar Bagh State and Madrasah Sulaymaniyyah were their favorite locations.”

(S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *Shajarah-e Tayyibah*, p. 115-118 and from his audio files.)

Patna in the early 19th Century from the view of a visiting Persian scholar

Aḥmad, grandson of the famous ‘Allāmah Waḥīd Bahbahānī (who is known as the reviver of the Uṣūlī trend in Shī‘ī jurisprudence), visited ‘Azīmābād (the historical name of Patna) in Dhul Qa‘dah 1221/1807. He describes it as follows:

“It is a city which is generous to the poor; it is very colourful and has pleasant water and weather. It has a variety of clothings and food items which are exported to other areas. In the area of Bengal, rather in India, there are few cities as comprehensive as ‘Azīmābād; and if it is named as ‘the paradise of India,’ it is worth it.”

See the travelogue of
Aḥmad bin Muḥammad ‘Alī Bahbahānī,
Mir’ātu ’l-Aḥwāl (Jahān Numā),
vol. 1, p. 446.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Chapter Three

The Rising Star

**As a Resident Imām, Teacher,
Social Worker, Poet & Writer**

Hallaur

Gopalpur & Hussainganj

Urdu Works in India

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ مُحَمَّدُ الْبَاقِرُ
عَالِمٌ يُنْتَفَعُ بِعِلْمِهِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ سَبْعِينَ أَلْفَ عَابِدٍ

Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (s) said:

“A religious scholar from whose knowledge [people] benefit is better than 70,000 worshipers.”

AS A RESIDENT IMĀM, TEACHER, SOCIAL WORKER, POET & WRITER

After his graduation in 1946, ‘Allāmah Rizvi got married in 1947 to Roshan Jahan, the daughter of Syed Mukhtar Imam of Gopalpur.

‘Allāmah Rizvi started his first formal job as an Urdu **teacher** in 1947 at MacDonald High School in Deuria (Saran district of Bihar) between Siwan and Chapra. It was an isolated area with very few Muslims around. He was able to find accommodation with a Sunni family as a paying guest. However, the dangerous environment following the murder of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948 compelled him to quit the next day and return home.

Hallaur (as Resident Imām):

Just a month before that, my grandfather had decided to leave Hallaur, UP, and returned to Gopalpur to manage the family’s farms upon the death of his brother. And so he sent my father, as the **imām** of the Hallaur Shī‘a community in February, 1948.

Maulānā Ḥasan ‘Abbās Fiṭrat (d. 22 May 2020), a native of Hallaur and a student of ‘Allāmah Rizvi, describes his early days as follows:

“Initially the people would observe him from a far, but gradually, they started coming closer. When they came to know that this young man is not only a qualified ‘ālim but is also broad-minded, and a poet, and also reads English newspapers, then college and university groups also gathered around him. Maulānā Saeed Akhtar Ṣāhib soon became beloved and also earned their respect...He was the person I had seen who had a

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

keen interest in reading, and that also serious reading. He went through Pickthall’s English translation of the Qur’ān – this must have helped him in strengthening his knowledge of English.”¹³

Ḥasan ‘Abbās Fiṭrat was initially sent to Sulṭānu ’l-Madāris (Lucknow) while still young. He studied for two years but didn’t feel comfortable, and so returned home. His father then asked him to continue his studies with the ‘Allāmah:

“I studied with him for four years...till *Mukhtaṣaru ’l-Nāfi* ‘ [in jurisprudence] and *Azhāru ’l-Adab* [in Arabic literature]. Then I went to Wathīqah College, Faizabād and sat for the maulawi level exam and attained first division.”¹⁴

The quest for tablīgh was in the ‘Allāmah’s mind from his early teens as can be witnessed in the conversion of a *chamār* couple to Islam by his hand in Hallaur. The *chamār* Hindus are at the lowest rung of the untouchables in Indian society. A Hindu of a higher caste would rather die of thirst, than drink water drawn by an ‘untouchable’. ‘Allāmah asked him to do the ablution of jum‘ah and brought him to the mosque. After the Friday prayer, he dedicated his speech to the importance of tablīgh, the sense of equality in Islam, and conveyed that this is why the oppressed and poor people of Mecca were more receptive to Islam’s message. Then he asked the new Muslim to bring him a glass of water and drank that water on the mimbar. This simple gesture brought some other untouchables into the fold of Islam as well.¹⁵

13 H.A. Fiṭrat, “Ghawhar hone tak,” *Tawhīd Mail*, p. 39.

14 Ibid, p. 41. Maulānā Ḥasan ‘Abbās Fiṭrat emerged as a scholar and a reputable Urdu journalist whose articles were published in the weekly *Blitz* (Bombay). He was greatly influenced by the personality and work of ‘Allāmah Rizvi.

15 Based on ‘Allāmah’s audio files

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s preaching style impressed the people of Hallaur so much that they always remembered him and looked forward to seeing him. Even after he left Hallaur, they would invite him for the annual majālis every year and he would accommodate their request whenever possible.

In his last year in Hallaur, ‘Allāmah Rizvi personally supervised the construction of the two minarets of the Jāmi‘ Masjid in spite of the May-June summer heat season.¹⁶ All internet references regarding the Hallaur community proudly mention that during his early years, he was their resident ‘ālim.



Jāmi‘ Masjid, Hallaur, UP, India

* * *

It was during his tenure in Hallaur that Almighty Allāh blessed ‘Allāmah Rizvi with **two children**: a daughter, Qaiser Jahān, in 1948 and a son, ‘Ali Imam, in 1952. Unfortunately, his wife, Roshan Jahān, died just five months after her son’s birth in Muḥarram 1372 (**September 1952**). The death of his young wife who left two children behind was indeed devastating for the ‘Allāmah; even more so since it happened during the first ten days of Muḥarram while he was away in Darbhanga (Bihar) for the majālis.

16 H.A. Fiṭrat, p. 41-42 as well as my father’s audio files on biography.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Gopalpur & Hussainganj (as Teacher & Imām):

In early **1952**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi joined the Mohammad Saleh Higher Secondary School in Hussainganj (Siwan, Bihar) as the Urdu and Persian **teacher**, and was also assigned the role of the imām Jamaat and jum‘a of Hussainganj masjid. Hussainganj is a small town just a few miles to the west of Gopalpur. ‘Allāmah Rizvi maintained this position until he decided in late **1959** to migrate to Africa.

From those who had studied under him, we hear that he was a strict but concerned teacher who always motivated his students to achieve their maximum potential. Many of them were encouraged to continue advanced studies. Today, in Gopalpur, there are some who have achieved university and postgraduate degrees as result of his guidance and encouragement. In the case of some Shī‘a teens of Gopalpur, he had to convince their parents to let them attempt a high school education and higher. He would personally take them with himself everyday when he would go from Gopalpur to the school in Hussainganj.

* * *

It was on **4 April 1954** (eve of 3 Sha‘bān 1373) that ‘Allāmah Rizvi got married to Fatema Zahra, the daughter of Syed Mehdi Hasan Naqvi of Hussainganj.

* * *

A testimonial written by the Principal on 3 November 1959 says:

The Rising Star

“...Throughout his service here in this school for the last eight years, he has highly impressed me with his sincere work and strict sense of responsibility. I was especially charmed with his valuable suggestions in general administration, conduct of examinations and arrangement of teaching... [He] took keen interest in extracurricular activities and always tried his best to give a new luster to it by his guidance and observation. He always charmed the boys with his speeches and they always appreciated his talks and considered him to be an exemplary guide in many respects... The students and staff of this institution are pained to part with him, but with the consolation that he is going to have a better and prosperous career abroad. I wish him every success in life.”



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Social Worker:

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s enthusiasm for improving the situation of the community had been within him from a young age.

Anjuman-e Wazīfa-e Sādāt-wa-Momineen (AWSM):

AWSM was established in 1912 as registered society with its headquarters in Aligarh to promote secular and religious education amongst the Shī‘a youth by giving them interest-free loans (*qarza-e ḥasana*) for higher studies. AWSM had 117 local secretaries around India who collect membership fees, enroll new members, collect applications for scholarships and recommend them for approval, and recover loans. ‘Allāmah Rizvi himself was a recipient of 10 rupees a month during the last two years of his studies at Jawādiyyah in Banaras. He paid off the loan in 1952.

It was during his stay in Hallaur that Maulānā S. Ḥāmid Ḥusayn Ushrawi encouraged ‘Allāmah Rizvi to become a member of AWSM in May 1950. He also became the local secretary of the Anjuman for Hallaur.

When he moved to Gopalpur and started working as a teacher in Husainganj, ‘Allāmah planned to expand the work of AWSM in that region. At the time, there were about 8 local representatives in the Saran District who were not very active. He merged all of them under one office in Gopalpur which covered about ten localities of that district. ‘Allāmah would use his free time to promote the AWSM in that region. During his tenure as a representative of AWSM, the memberships gradually increased. Wherever he would go for reciting majālis, he would also carry AWSM membership forms and the receipt book.

In 1952, he was elected to the central committee of the AWSM

and maintained his position until 1960 (except for 1953); and during this period he attended and actively participated in all annual meetings (except for the meeting in Jabalpur). He was most likely the youngest member in India to be elected to the central committee of AWSM. He also wrote articles in *Sarfarāz* (Lucknow) and *Razākār* (Lahore) to promote the Anjuman.¹⁷ He finally paid the one time fees for *dawāmi* (permanent) members. Even now, on the AWSM's website, 'Allāmah is listed (no. 179) in the *dawāmi* members roster.¹⁸

He helped young Shi'as pursue higher studies, and also encouraged those who had graduated and found good jobs to pay back the *qarza-e ḥasana* so that other deserving students could be helped.

Although his involvement with AWSM decreased after his migration to Africa, the cause was always close to his heart. In his diary of 1962 in Africa, there are quite a few entries in June about his attempt to encourage some 'ulamā' from India to contribute towards the AWSM. Among those who became life-time members of AWSM were the late Maulānās S. Khalīl 'Abbās, Sharāfat Ḥusayn, S. Farḥat Ḥusayn, S. Murtaza Ḥusayn and Ṣābir Ḥusayn (may Allāh bless them all). Some of them even contributed 500 Shillings (which was a large amount by the standard of those days). With the increase of his activities in Africa, his involvement with the AWSM was reduced.

However, when he returned to India in 1978, 'Allāmah Rizvi revived his link with AWSM and was elected as its Vice-President in 1978-1979. His first visit to the United States of America was in 1981. Although the purpose of this visit was for tablīgh during the month of Ramadhān, he asked the central office of AMWS for a list of Shi'as who had been given *qarza-e ḥasana* for their higher

17 One such article "Wapsy-e Qarza-e Hasana se ghaflat 'chori' haye" that survived was included in his *Wahy-o-Ilhām ki Bateen*, p. 155-157.

18 Details based on Golden Jubilee issue of AWSM (2012), p. 87-89.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

studies and were now well-established in the USA. This was so that he could call them up to either pay back their *qarza-e hasana* or, if they had paid it off, to help the AWSM via donations.



A pictorial page from the Golden Jubilee issue of the *Wazifa* magazine published in 2012. ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s picture is in the bottom right corner.

Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu (1942 - 1959):

During his student days, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was active in promoting Urdu literature and poetry in Gopalpur, and for this he formed Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu. A humble library was also established and monthly sessions of poetry were organized. This was further revived when he returned to Gopalpur to work as a teacher in Hussainganj. This Anjuman created a conducive environment for the promotion of Urdu poetry in Gopalpur and also published some poetry work of local poets.

Unfortunately, after his migration to Africa, the Anjuman-e Tarraqi-e Urdu, Gopalpur, lost its soul and gradually died out.

Protecting the *Waqf* Land of Gopalpur:

In 1958, 'Allāmah Rizvi was elected as the trustee of the Imāmbārgāh of Gopalpur, and during the same time he established the Waqf Committee of Gopalpur and was elected as its secretary. When the *zamīndāri* (landlord) system was abolished in Bihar, the government confiscated all *waqf* (endowment) lands, and a pond of Gopalpur which was endowed for the upkeep and maintenance of the religious buildings. There seemed to be no hope of getting those *waqf* lands back, but 'Allāmah Rizvi courageously filed a case against the provincial government and, single-handedly against all the odds, he was able to get the *waqf* lands back for the community. He expressed his success in the following lines of Persian poetry:

لله الحمد که روشن شب تارے کردم بنگر این رنگ خزانے کہ بہارے کردم
ای خوشا بخت کہ معیار عزا افزودم "شادم از زندگی خویش کہ کارے کردم"

*Thanks to Allāh that I have brightened the dark night
Look at the season of autumn that I have changed to spring
I am fortunate to have raised the standard of 'aza
I am pleased with my life for having done something*

If you calculate the numerical values of the last line and the word 'azā (mourning ceremonies for Imam Ḥusayn), you get the year of this accomplishment: 1958.¹⁹

19 Details based on Golden Jubilee issue of AWSM (2012), p. 87-89. Thanks for Dr. Wasi Jafari of AWSM who kindly found this information from their archives and sent me the scans.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

All India Shī‘a Conference:

‘Allāmah Rizvi represented Gopalpur in the first convention of the All Parties Shī‘a Conference in Lucknow held in 1945.²⁰

Entries in dairies from the early 1960s show that there were correspondences between ‘Allāmah Rizvi and Syed Kalbe ‘Abbās, the head of the All India Shī‘a Conference, which also ran a Shī‘a orphanage in Lucknow. My father was able to raise some funds and send them to Lucknow for the orphanage. As usual, he would always ask for receipts which were then passed on to the original donors.

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Urdu Written Works in India

During the late 1940’s and 50’s, even when he was employed full time as a high school teacher of Urdu and Farsi, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was still very active in writing articles and books in the Urdu language on various Islamic issues.

His first attempt to write an article was in 1943 at the age of sixteen while he was still a student in Banaras. He wrote an article on *‘Nawāse ki raftār Nanā ke kirdār ki roshnī meen: Şulḥ-e Ḥasan Ke Maşāliḥ’* on the rationale behind the peace treaty signed by Imam Ḥasan (a.s). Hesitantly, he showed his article to his teacher, Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan, for review.

“He greatly encouraged me and sent that article to Maulānā Syed Najmul Ḥasan Karārvī (the managing editor of the prestigious *al-Wā‘iz* monthly of Madrasatu ’l-Wā‘izeen, Lucknow). After a few days, Maulānā Karārvī’s reply came that he liked that article so much that he replaced his own article with

20 Ibid.

نوسے کی ہمتار مانا کے کردار کی روشنی میں صلح حسن کے مصالح

ترجمہ: جناب مولانا سید اختر صاحب از جامع العلوم جرادہ، بنارس۔

شعبہ ہفت

مجھے اس امر سے باز رکھنے کے لیے میرے ایک ہاتھ رافا
اور دوسرے پر ہاتھ لاکر رکھیں جب بھی میں قہقہے
باز آسکتا جا

خدائی چھاپے سکر نہایت پایے انداز میں کتب اہب
یا بن اخی! وقل ما شئت فواللہ انی لاسلمک
حتی اموت۔ (بیٹا جاؤ اور جو جی میں آئے کہو۔
قسم خدا کی اپنی زندگی میں تو میں تم کو اگلے حوالے میں لکھا
مترکین اس واقعہ سے غضبناک ہو جاتے ہیں اور
بنی ہاشم سے تعلقات منقطع کر لے جاتے ہیں۔ بنی ہاشم
تقریباً ۳ برس تک ایک پہاڑ کی کھائی میں زندگی
بسر کرتے ہیں۔ یہ تین سال بنی ہاشم نے جس حال
میں گزارے ہیں اسکے کھنکھنے کے آسکانا کافی ہے کہ خود
دشمن ترس کھاتے ہیں اور عذاب مار توڑنے کا ارادہ
کرتے ہیں۔ اس موقع پر جو تقریر کی گئی

ہے اسکے دو جملے درج ذیل ہیں ان کو بڑھ کر
اندازہ ہو سکے کہ بنی ہاشم کی کیا حالت ہو گئی تھی۔
یا اهل مکة! اناکل اطعام ولبس اشیاء بنو
ہاشم واطلب ہلک لا یبیعون ولا یبتاعون
کہ والو! (شرم کا مقام ہے کہ تم تو بچے دیکھ کھاتے
کھائیں اور لباس ملتے ناخود زیب تن کریں اور ہاشم
وطلب کا گھر انھیں باغیچے کی جیسے لڑائی میں
(آرٹھ اسلام دہلی الموب و دیگر ملاحی لکھنوی)

(۱)

تو نہیں! ایسا نہیں ہو سکتا۔ ہم کزور ہیں۔ ہماری
قدو کم ہے۔ اسکے بڑھانے دشمن طاقتور ہیں۔
یہ تمامہ جواب جو پیغمبر اسلام نے ایک صحابی کو دیا
کھا جیکر انھوں نے کہا کہ رسول اللہ! آخر کب تک سلام
کو پیشہ رکھا جائے۔ اطلاع کے حق میں اتنی دیر کیوں ہوا
اٹھے اور خدائی پیغام کو دنیا کے کانوں تک پہنچا بیچو
ہر ارجح الفیۃ و دیگر کتب سیر

(۲)

شعبہ ہفت :-

بیٹا! ابھی مترکین میرے پاس آئے تھے اور میرے
ساتنے دو صدمہ تیں پیش کی ہیں۔ یا تو تم کو تبلیغ حق سے
روک دے یا پھر تم کو ان کے حوالے کر دوں۔ پورے چھا
نے سعادت مند بیچے سے نرم لہجے میں یہ پیغام کہ سنایا۔
بیچے کے دل پر نہیں لگتی ہے۔ اسکے دل میں خیال
پیدا ہو جاتا ہے کہ شاید چھاپے لے یا روک دے گا پھر
دینے کا ارادہ کہہ لے گی۔ اس خیال کے پیدا ہونے ہی
آنکھوں میں آنسو جھلکے لگتے ہیں اور یہ تمامہ خاموش اور
ساکن فضا میں گونج کر اسکو محسوس بنا دیتی ہے واللہ
یا ہم! لو وضعوا الشمس فی الیمین والقمر فی الیسار
علی ان اتوا ہذا کلاسر ہر چھاپے خدا کی قسم اگر لوگ

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

mine. My teacher showed the letter to me and encouraged me to continue writing articles. It was with this encouragement that I am a writer today.”²¹

* * *

It was in Hallaur that ‘Allāmah Rizvi started writing a series of articles on the topic of family life, titled as *Islām awr Tabdīr-e Manzil* which were gradually published from **June 1949 to June 1950** in the monthly *al-Wā‘iz* (Lucknow). Mahāraj-Kumār of Maḥmūdabād, the patron of Madrasatu ‘l-Wā‘izeen, expressed his desire to publish these articles in book form but the abolition of the zamindāri system in 1950 restrained his resources.

Mr. Yusuf Jigar, the assistant editor of *‘Alamdār*, the Gujarati monthly of Bombay, asked for permission to translate those articles into Gujarati, and started publishing them in July 1969.

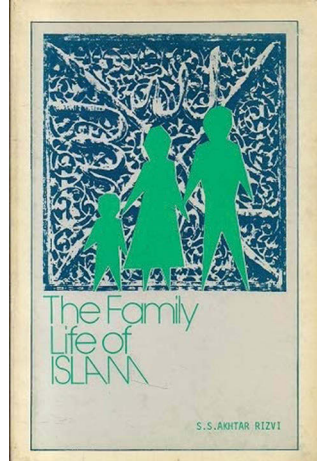
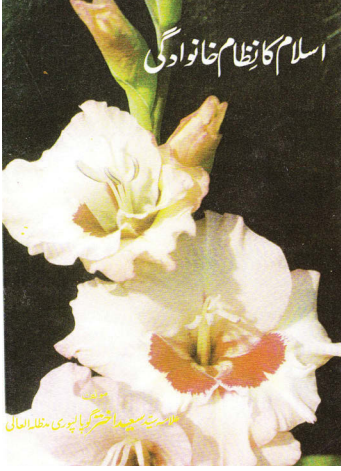
These twelve articles formed the basis of his English book, *The Family Life of Islam* (in 1971). Since the English book addressed a wider readership, new issues were added in by the author himself.

The Urdu articles were later compiled and, after an overall review and addition as per the English version, they were published in book form as *Islām kā Nizām-e Khāniwādgi* (1997) in Lucknow.

Another book written in the same era was *Ghinā ki Ḥurmat* (*Prohibition of Singing & Music*).

21 S.S. Aktar Rizvi, “Ustādhi al-Mu‘azzam, Ḥazrat Zafarul Millat,” *Ded-o-Daryāft*, p. 86. In the files of my late father, I had never seen this article. Upon reading this incident in the article, I remembered that Nadeem Rizvi of New Jersey (USA) had downloaded some old issues of *Al-Wā‘iz* from the National Digital Library of India. I asked his brother, Maulānā Rizwan Rizvi, to look for it. Within a few hours, he found the article and forwarded its PDF copy to me. May Allāh reward them both. That article was published in *Al-Wā‘iz* (July 1943) p. 29-32. See the previous page.

Interestingly, my own first article in Urdu was published in the same journal, *al-Wā‘iz* (1402/1982) entitled “*Iṭā‘at-e Imām Ṣulḥ Ḥasan ki Roshni meen – Obedience of the Imam in light of Imam Ḥasan’s Treaty*” on the reaction of some Shī‘as like Ḥujr bin ‘Adi to the peace treaty of Imām Ḥasan (a).



Urdu & English versions of the book on family life in Islam.

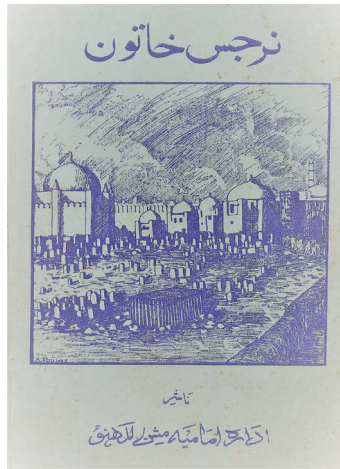
The Imamia Mission of Lucknow published a booklet of ‘Allāmah Rizvi entitled, *Narjis Khātūn* in 1954. It was republished by the Imamia Mission of Lahore as well. Its revised edition was published 1979 by Imamia Mission. Major parts of it were translated into Gujarati in *Rah-e Najat* magazine (Karachi) in Sha‘bān 1379/March 1960. Sadly there was no acknowledgment of the origin or the author of that article, as noted in the entry of my father’s diary on 8 April 1960.

Maulānā S. Murtaza Ḥusayn (Ṣadrul Afāzil) wrote:

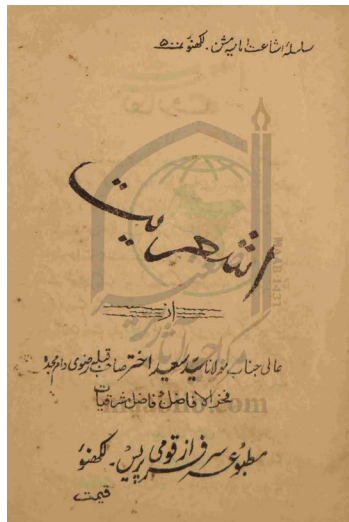
“Maulānā Saeed Akhtar ṣāḥeb is our young research scholar who is highly respected for his worthy publications. By writing this booklet on Hazrat Narjis Khātūn (a), he has indeed fulfilled an important duty. The respected lady is the mother of the Present Imam (a), and there was a need for a research based biography. Praise be to Allāh that the Maulānā compiled quite a few resources in one place.”²²

22 S. Murtaza Ḥusayn, *Razākār* (weekly), 8 May 1962.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



In 1953, ‘Allāmah Rizvi wrote an extensive article on the theology of Ashā‘ira Sunni theology, entitled as *Ash‘riyyat*, tracing the basis of its theological beliefs on two ideas: the denial of the concept of causality, and the rejection of the rational method in matters of belief. This article was published in *Sarfaraz* magazine and later on published as a separate booklet by Imamia Mission of Lucknow in 1387 AH.



In 1954, an editor of a Sunni monthly, *Ridhwān* (Lahore), published a supplement in its Muḥarram issue challenging various Shī‘a theological and historical concepts. The Shī‘a weekly, *Razākār* (Lahore), responded to some of its arguments but then it was censored by officials. Then S. Jamīl Ḥusayn Rizvi (of Patiala) wrote to the late ‘Allāmah to respond to that challenge. ‘Allāmah wrote the response that was published as **“*Mudīr-e Ridhwān sey Doo Doo Bateen*”** (A Frank Conversation with *Ridhwān*’s Editor) in a series of twelve articles in the monthly *Al-Jawād* (Banares) from 1955 to 1958:

1. Shī‘as and the issue of interpolation in the Qur’ān
2. The belief in *Badā’*
3. The difference between *taqiyyah* and *nifāq*
4. Who were the killers of Imam Ḥusayn?
5. Imam Mahdī (a) in Sunni books
6. Mut‘ah and the story of the abrogation of its verse
7. Review of the *fiqh* of Abū Ḥanīfah

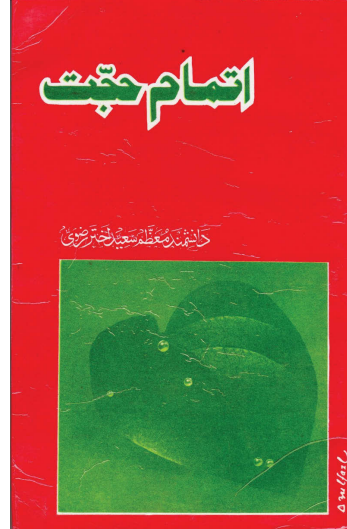
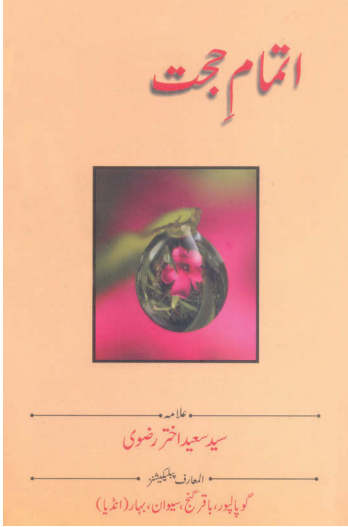
These are common themes used by Sunni polemicists to criticize Shī‘as, and ‘Allāmah give elaborate and fitting answers to each.

The second of these articles on the issue of *badā’*, a complex theological issue, was highly appreciated by scholars, so much so, that Adib-e A‘zam, Maulānā Zafar Ḥasan Amrohwi, the editor of the *Nūr* magazine of Karachi, published it in 1955 in a dialogue form entitled as “‘*Allāmah Barzakhi kā Mukālama apni Baigum sey Mas’ala-e Badā’ meen*” (A Conversation of ‘Allāmah Barzakhi with His Wife on the Issue of *Badā’*). He wrote a comment: “I have not seen a clearer and better writing on this subject in Urdu.”

In the 1980s, at the height of anti-Shī‘a propaganda by the Wahhābi lobby supported by Saudi petrodollars, ‘Allāmah was

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

requested to publish those extensive articles together in book form. This was published in 1986 by Idara-e Nur-e Islam (Faizabad, UP) as *Itmām-e Hujjat*. In 2011, I thoroughly edited the book, bolstered its content, and updated all its references.



2nd edition, 2011

Itmām-e Hujjat

1st edition, 1985

The 2nd edition was edited & annotated by the present author.

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s articles were even considered authoritative in scholarly disputes. For example, there was a debate going on in *al-Jawād* monthly in the early 1950s on the issue of the “six days creation” in relation to “**sittata ayyām**” in the Qur’ān. His article was entitled by the editor as “*Qawl-e Fayṣal - khilqat-e arz o samā ke muta‘alliq*” (the Decisive Word on creation of the earth and heaven). An excerpt is given here:

“The words used by the holy Qur’ān on this issue are highly eloquent and precise. The words ‘*sittata ayyām*’ are inviting the researchers to reflect on the actual meaning of ‘*ayyām*’ and delve into the various stages that the world has gone through

in its history of creation. Unfortunately the Muslims didn't benefit from the true message of the Qur'ān, and influenced by the converted Jewish and Christian scholars, followed them blindly.

“If they had looked at other verses of the Qur'ān, they would have realized that ‘*sittata ayyām*’ mean six long periods of time. “Almighty Allāh says, ‘*wash-shams wal qamar ḥusbanan...*’ (6:96) meaning the sun and moon are measures to compute the days and years. Again in Sūrah Raḥmān (5:55), He says, ‘*ash-shams...*’ the sun and moon are for calculating the year. Therefore, before the creation of the sun and moon, computing the days was not possible...”

“My entire discussion can be summarized as follows: before the creation of the heaven, the earth, the sun and the moon, computing the day was impossible. Computing the day, *yawm* or *ayyām*, depended on the sun and the moon which didn't exist before and so ‘six days’ in that context does not mean ‘days’ rather they mean ‘periods’ or ‘eras.’ And interestingly, the word ‘*ayyām*’ has been used by the Qur'ān in this meaning: ‘*We bring those (ayyām) days to the people by turn...*’ (3:140). Look at the commentaries of the Qur'ān and the context in which the word ‘*ayyām*’ has been used here and you will easily accept my conclusion.”²³

A postcard from Janāb Muḥammad Siddique, the editor of the weekly *Razākār* (Lahore) dated 15 November 1956 says: “There has been no Urdu translation of Shī‘a books of ḥadīth (or at least, it has not come to my knowledge). Anyway, Razākār Book Depot has initiated a project to publish the translation of Shī‘a ḥadīth books. And in this regard, the selection has focused on you; so let us know

23 See the monthly *Al-Jawād* (February 1952) p. 15-19.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

if you are interested in it or not.” Although ‘Allāmah Rizvi did not accept that assignment, it shows that his work had attracted the attention of Shi‘a religious writers and publishers alike.

* * *

A list of some of the articles published by ‘Allāmah Rizvi during the 40s and 50s is as follows:

‘Azādāri awr Bid‘at, al-Wā’iz (Lucknow), 1949

This was published as a booklet by Imamia Mission.

Uṣūl-e Khilāfat par Shahādat-e Ḥusayni ka Asar, al-Wā’iz, 1950

Wa Fadaynāhu bi Zibḥin ‘Azīm, al-Jawād (Banaras) 1951.

Zibḥ-e ‘Azīm, Sarfarāz (Lucknow) 1951, again in 1957.

Ijtimā‘i Qurbāni, al-Wā’iz, 1951

Ruznāmah-e Hilāl ki Sharar Anghiziyān, Zulfiqār, 1953

Qātilan-e Ḥusayn Kawn They? Sarfarāz, 1954

‘Azādāri Sayyidu ‘sh-Shuhadā’ Islami nuqta-e nazar sey,

Razākār (Lahore) 1956 Published also by Imamia Mission.

Banu Umayyah Qur‘ān ki Nazar Mein, al-Jawād, 1956

Yazīd ka Khāndān, al-Jawād, 1957

Bahā‘iyūn ka Kalāmullāh, 195x, Banaras.

Ayk Inqilāb-angez Kitāb: Khilāfat-e Mu‘āwiyah-o-Yazīd,

Islāh (Khujwah) 1960; al-Jawād, 1960.

Wāqi‘a-e Karbalā ki Peshiyin-go‘iyān, al-Jawād, 1962

Shahādat-e Ḥusayn kiyūn Jāwidāni Huga‘i? Razākār (Lahore), 1977

* * *

There are **four collections** of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Urdu articles:

1. **Karbalā Shināsī**, published in **1982**, 1989 (India) and 1993 (Pakistan) which consists of **17** articles on Imam Ḥusayn (a) and the tragedy of Karbala.
2. **Itmām-e Ḥujjat**, published in **1985** which consists of **12** subjects already mentioned earlier.

3. *Wahy-o-Illām*, published in 1994 which consists of 21 articles on a variety of subjects.
4. *Ded-o-Daryaft* published posthumously in 2008 (India), which consists of 18 articles on different subjects. This collection was compiled after ‘Allāmah’s demise by my youngest brother, the late S. Murtaza Rizvi and thoroughly edited by this present author.

Many of these scholarly works were published in India, before ‘Allāmah’s migration to Africa at the age of 32. The impact of these writings even reached the shores of East Africa, as will be seen in the next chapter.

* * *

‘Allāmah Rizvi & Urdu Poetry

‘Allāmah Saeed Akhtar Rizvi was not only a prolific writer of Urdu, but also a good poet. His pen name for poetry was “Tapish” (fervour or warmth). His focus was in the *qaṣīdah* stream of poetry, even though ghazal and other streams can also be seen in his poems.

His interest in poetry started in 1943-1944 when he was studying in Banaras where three *muqāṣidahs* were organized annually in Rajab and Sha‘bān, in which accomplished as well as novice poets would participate. My father also wrote his first *qaṣīdah* in 1943 and asked his mentor Maulānā Zafaru ‘l-Ḥasan, an accomplished poet himself, to review it. Under his teacher’s guidance he continued writing poems not only in Urdu but also in Arabic.²⁴ He also wrote a eulogy in Arabic upon the death of Maulānā Nāṣirul Millat saheb. However, after leaving Banaras, his Arabic poetry also came to an end.²⁵

24 See Rizvi, *Ded-o-Daryaft*, p. 86, 88-89.

25 My father’s audio cassette no. 3.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s articles on Urdu poetry and literature were published in *Āj-Kal* and other popular journals of India. While working as a teacher in Husainganj, as mentioned earlier, he was the main soul of Anjuman-e Taraqqi-e Urdu of Gopalpur under which he was able to publish two poetry works: “*Sabad-e Gul*” of Gopalpuri poets and “*Sham ‘-e Rāh*” of Jazb Gopalpuri.

Maulānā Ḥasan ‘Abbās Fiṭrat, who was a student of my father, writes that during my father’s stay in Hallaur, his poems were recited by Musa Kāzim (known as Fahim Hallauri). While in Hallaur, ‘Allāmah Rizvi lost his *diwān* (collection of poems) but he had such a good memory that he was able to re-write his entire *diwān* by memory.²⁶ I remember when my parents came to Toronto in 1994 and stayed with us for a few months, we were invited to a celebration for the birth anniversary of the Present Imam (a) organized by Bani Hashim Society. Besides my short speech, most of the program consisted of poetry in praise of the Ahlul Bayt (a). The audience, which also consisted of some Urdu poets of Toronto, insisted my father give a speech. After he finished his talk, the poets then requested that they wanted to hear a *qaṣīdah* from him on this occasion. The audience and even I were amazingly surprised to see that my father recited his *qaṣīdah* on the 12th Imam (a) by heart, a poem that was composed even before my birth!²⁷

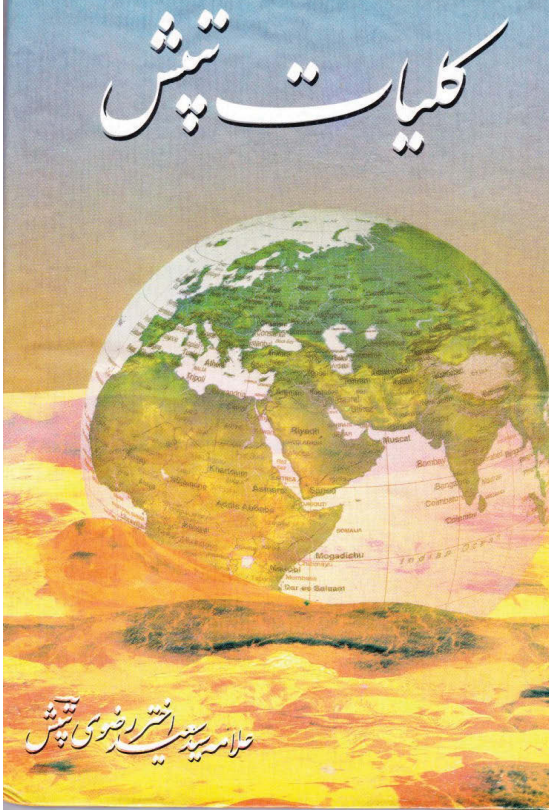
During the last year of his life, my father had put together all his Urdu poetry work, and it was published later on as *Kulliyāt-e Tapish* in 2008. In his introduction to this work, Mr. Mahmud Naqvi, the editor of the monthly, *Hadith-e Dil* (Delhi), writes that:

“[‘Allāmah Rizvi] had composed some poems along the same pattern as some famous poems of Ghālib and other poets, and

26 Ḥ. A. Fiṭrat, “*Gohar hone tak*,” p. 41.

27 That poem can be seen on p. 63 of his *diwān*.

I am compelled to say without any hesitation that this was only ‘Allāmah’s right to do so in such a way that no imitation is sensed in his poems, rather it seems as if some poems from Ghālib’s published work had been left out and now they come to light!’²⁸



Collection of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Urdu poetry
Kulliyāt-e Tapish, 2008

28 See *Kulliyāt-e Tapish*, p. 13-14. This *diwān* consists 15 *qaṣīdahs*, 48 *ghazals*, 8 poems, 4 *salāms* and *nawḥas*, and 34 couplets, etc.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Chapter Four

The Voyaging Star

Migration to Africa

Journey Across the Ocean

Arrival in **Lindi** (Dec 1959-Dec 1962)

Transfer to **Arusha** (Jan 1963-Dec 1964)

Move to **Dar-es-Salaam** (Dec 1964-1969)

A Visionary Missionary

**Expansion of Tablighi Activities
(Bilal Muslim Mission)**

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

...وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

“...and whoever gives life to a person,
it shall be as if he has given life to mankind altogether.”

(The Qur’ān 5:32)

Giving life applies to the physical as well as spiritual life,
in the sense of guiding someone to the right path.

MIGRATION TO AFRICA

The Journey Across the Ocean

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s parents left for a ziyārat trip to Iraq and Iran in 1950. During their absence, he noticed an announcement in the weekly *Sarfarāz* from a person named Abul Ḥasan Munji, stating that the Zanzibar Jamaat was looking for a resident ‘ālim. ‘Allāmah sent a letter of interest and received a positive response, but in a subsequent letter a week later, he was told that the position had been filled based on a recommendation from a senior ‘ālim in Lucknow.

When ‘Allāmah’s parents returned from the ziyārat trip and heard about his potential plan, his mother was not in favour of him leaving India, and so he gave up that idea for a while. Time passed until 1957 or 1958, when he read an article by Maulānā Khwājah Laṭīf Anṣārī in *Razākār* (Lahore) saying that the Christians are active in their missionary work in Africa but the Muslims in general, and the Shī‘as in particular, are totally oblivious of their duty of tablīgh. This reignited his urge to go to Africa, and his mother agreed to it this time.

Coincidentally, the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat was looking for a resident ‘ālim and someone forwarded ‘Allāmah’s details to them. First, he received a letter stating there was no vacancy, but after a couple of weeks a letter arrived in Dhul Qa‘dah offering him the position with an emphasis that they would prefer he reach there before Muḥarram. However those days, to get one’s initial passport was not an easy task. He had to apply at Calcutta’s regional office and then they would wait for a police inquiry approval before the passport was issued. So the passport came in Rabī ath-Thāni of the next year.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

‘Allāmah tried to get a year’s unpaid leave from his teaching position at Hussainganj High School but that was not approved, and so he resigned and started his journey to Africa.²⁹

Like most such situations, a person would travel alone first to assess the situation in a foreign country before bringing his own family over, and so he set out on his own.

It was on **19 November 1959**, at 5 p.m., at the age of 32, that my father left Gopalpur by train to Banaras. Unfortunately, his mentor and teacher Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan was not in town. On the 20th of November, he took a train reaching Bombay on the 21st at 9 p.m.

He met some friends of Hallaur in Bombay. And since this was his first journey overseas, he was fortunate to meet one of his teachers, Maulānā Sayyid Farḥat Ḥusayn at the Haji Dewji Jamāl Musāfir-khāna and was pleased to know that they would be travelling in the same S.S. State of Bombay ship to Africa. This was Maulānā Farḥat Ḥusayn’s second trip to Africa where he had served the Shī‘a communities in Pangani, Tanga and other cities since 1952. His destination was Mombasa while my father’s final destination was Dar-es-Salaam.



S.S. State of Bombay

The ship departed on **26 November** at noon and stopped at Porbandar (a port in Gujarat) before sailing south towards Africa.

²⁹ My father’s audio files on biography.

Since my father and Maulānā Farḥat Ḥusayn were both in the same cabin, it was a good opportunity for him to learn from the experience of his teacher. The teacher explained the organizational structure of the Khoja Jamaats and how they are all linked to the Khoja Shī‘a Ithna-Asheri Supreme Council, and also apprised him of the overall situation of that region. (Khojas hailed from the Gujarat province of India and had settled in East Africa.)

An importance advice given by Maulānā Farḥat Ḥusayn to my father was, “Don’t go to the shops of the people.” (It was though by some that an ‘ālim visiting a mu’min’s shop was indication that he heeds help.) When he arrived in Lindi, he took this advice seriously and refrained from visiting the mu’mineen in their shops. Soon people started complaining, “The previous maulānā used to visit us everyday so why don’t you come?” My father wrote to his teacher about this and received the response, “If refraining from it might be perceived as a sign of arrogance, then there is no harm in visiting them occasionally.”³⁰

Before leaving Bihar, my father had informed his senior teacher Maulānā Zafaru ‘l-Ḥasan about his travel to Africa. He wrote many advices to him and especially mentioned that there was a learned elder in Zanzibar by the name of Mulla Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff Dewji, a very influential person in East Africa, and that “whenever he meets a new ‘ālim, he will somehow test him.”

The State of Bombay docked at Mombasa (Kenya) port on **5 December 1959** where the arriving passengers disembarked, but the continuing passengers were also allowed to go ashore for a few hours. My father went to the Khoja masjid in town for prayers, and then recited a short majlis at Mullā Bishon’s home before returning to the ship. On the way back to the port, three mu’mineen joined him as they wanted to bid farewell to Mulla M.J. Sheriff Dewji who was

30 S.S. Akhtar Rizvi, *Khūrshīd Khāwar*, p. 291-292.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

travelling on that ship to Zanzibar. ‘Allāmah also accompanied them to the berth of Mulla saheb.

When the others had left, Mulla M.J. Sheriff Dewji asked his name, and extended a writing pad and a pencil to him to write the answer, as he was hard of hearing. My father wrote his name, and when the Mulla saw it, he said, “I have been following your articles in the monthly *al-Jawād* with interest; they reflect the depth of your knowledge, and it is indeed good that I was able to meet you since only you can solve my problem.” This is when my father remembered the words of his teacher about Mulla Saheb and realized that the moment of test had arrived!

Mulla M.J. Sheriff Dewji said, “The problem is that there is a Ibādhi Khārijī ‘Arab scholar in Zanzibar who has asked me ‘If the *shaykhayn* [i.e., the two caliphs] were truly hypocrites and they were going to mislead the people in future, then why did the Prophet (s) keep them so close to himself; why didn’t he shun them?’ Maulawi saheb, I haven’t been able to give a satisfactory answer as of yet.”

‘Allāmah Rizvi gave two responses to that question. The second one is quoted here:

“There might be disagreement about the *‘ilmu ’l-ghayb* (the knowledge of the unseen or future) of the Prophet (s) but no one can doubt Allāh’s *‘ilmu ’l-ghayb*. The question arises that if Almighty Allāh knew of Shayṭān’s weak faith and that he would mislead mankind in the future, then why did He elevate his status to the level that he could be in the company of the angels? Whatever answer is given in this case will equally apply in the case of the Prophet (s).”

He gave the written answers to Mulla MJ Sherīff Dewji who was so pleased with it that he unguardedly said, “I had given the

same response to the ‘Arab Khārijī scholar upon which he said, ‘It’s sufficient; it’s satisfactory.’” It was indeed a test since he knew the answer! This was the beginning of a friendship between them and they continued to correspond with one another. Sometimes, Mulla M.J, Sheriff Dewji would send religious questions to him as well.

Later on, my father received a letter from Maulānā Zafarū’l-Ḥasan informing him that Mulla MJ Sheriff Dewji had sent copies of his answers about the questions discussed on the ship and expressed his utmost pleasure with them, a letter which filled Maulānā’s heart with happiness just like when a father hears the praise of his son.³¹

On 6 December, the ship dropped anchor off the port of Zanzibar where the Mulla saheb disembarked and the ship started sailing again that night.

Brief Stay in Dar-es-Salaam

Finally, on **7 December 1959**, at 10 a.m., my father disembarked at his final destination, Dar-es-Salaam (Tanganyika). He was welcomed by Ali Husain Ratansi, the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat’s *mukhi* (program director), who took him to the musāfir-khāna.



On a boat from the ship to the Dar-es-Salaam harbour.³²

31 S.S. Akhtar Rizvi, *Ded-o-Daryāft*, p. 89-90.

32 Photo kindly sent by the late Murtaza Karbala.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Soon after disembarking from the ship, my father was told by the mukhi that tonight there is a “*majlis*” for Bibi Zaynab (a), and they would like him to recite. My father agreed, and ended his speech with *masā’ib* (eulogy). This sounds very normal but it was not because of the following two reasons:

Firstly, the religious calendar of the Shī‘as in East Africa has the 5th of Jumādi al-Awwal as the birth anniversary of Bibi Zaynab (a). The Shī‘as in north India, if they did celebrate that occasion in the 50s and 60s, did so on the 1st of Sha‘bān.

Secondly, the Khoja Shī‘as use the term “*majlis*” for all their religious gatherings, whether they were commemorations of sad events or celebrations of auspicious one, while the Urdu-speaking Shī‘as use the term “*majlis*” for sad occasions and “*mahfil*” or “*milād*” for auspicious occasions.

Not familiar with the regional variation of religious occasions observed in calendars and the language differences, ‘Allāmah Rizvi understood “*majlis*” as a sad occasion and ended the speech with *maṣā’ib* (eulogy) in a celebration gathering.

One can imagine the reaction of the people. He was already late in reaching Dar-es-Salaam and someone else had been found to fulfill the role temporarily. However, this ‘incident’ played its part in local politics in forcing the Jamaat officials to transfer him to another city even though he had been invited by, and for, Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat. About seventy signatures were gathered from the members asking the officials to keep the temporary ‘ālim and to transfer the new ‘ālim to another Jamaat. The Jamaat’s president, Nūr Muḥammed Nasser and Maulānā Muḥammad ‘Ali Ijlāl saheb came to see ‘Allāmah Rizvi and proposed that he go to Lindi. When he said that Lindi Jamaat already had Maulānā Muḥammad Mufti ‘Abbās (of Muzaffarpur, Bihar) as its resident ‘ālim, he was told that, “Maulānā Muḥammad Mufti ‘Abbās has already decided to

return back to India permanently.” His pride was urging him to say no but his ultimate goal of doing tablīgh among the Africans prevailed, and so he swallowed his pride and accepted the proposal to move to Lindi.

Of course, no one said anything to him at that time about reciting *maṣā'ib* in a wilādat program and it was only after about two months that he realized his “error;” he was asked to recite the “majlis of Bibi Zaynab” in Lindi on 15th of Rajab. When he said that he just recited the “majlis” couple of months earlier in Dar-es-Salaam, he was told that was a “*khushāli*” and tonight is her *wafāt*.

This was only the first example of linguistic and cultural challenges that ‘Allāmah faced during his early days in Africa.

He then recited one more majlis on 8 December at Mehfil-e ‘Abbās and another one the next night at the Imāmbārah.

On Monday, **14 December 1959** at 10 a.m., my father took the flight to Lindi. The President, the Secretary Mohammad Dhirani, and the Joint-Secretary Mohammad Khalfan came to see him off.

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ
وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا
*Whoever fears (displeasing) Allāh, He shall make a way out for
him and provide for him from whence he does not reckon.
And whoever puts his trust on Allāh, He will suffice him.
Indeed Allāh implements His command. Certainly Allāh has set a
measure for everything. (The Qur’ān 65:2-3)*

Arrival in Lindi (Dec 1959 - Dec 1962):

‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi finally reached Lindi via two stops on **14 December 1959** at 4 p.m. and was welcomed at the airport by a group including the outgoing Maulānā Muḥammad Mufti ‘Abbās (who was also from Bihar).

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Outside Lindi (Tanganyika) airport. From left: unknown, Mulla Abdulhussein Mulji, Hassanali Esmail, Rashid Versi (President), Mulla MP Daya, Gulamhussein Manji, Fazal Ladha Dinani, ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Yusufali Pirmohamed, Maulānā Muhammad Mufti ‘Abbās, Ebrahim Esmail, Fidahussein M. Khaki, Gulamabbas Jusab, Husein Dhanji, Kamruddin Khaki (child).

‘Allāmah Rizvi recited his first majlis that same night. An individual who knew him from before, approached him and said that there is no need to deliver a scholarly speech among these people as they don’t understand much; to just keep it simple with stories. So for the next night’s majlis, he changed his approach accordingly. Later that night, Mulla Ḥasan ‘Ali met him privately and said, “Although I don’t know you, I want to give you a sincere advice: Your speech last night was appreciated by the people, but tonight’s speech was not.” When my father said, “But that was the advice given to me last night, to change my approach.” Mulla Ḥasan ‘Ali said, “Stay with the style and approach that you had yesterday. Don’t listen to others who might sound sincere.”³³

33 Based on my father’s audio files on biography.

On 15 December, he officially started his work and also took charge of the Jafferi Madrasah on 19 December.

Most interestingly, on 21 December 1959, within a week of his arrival, ‘Allāmah Rizvi sent someone to buy a book for him, titled *Teach Yourself Swahili*. This shows that the idea of tabligh among the indigenous people was on his mind from the very beginning.



Maulānā Muhammad Mufti ‘Abbās & ‘Allāmah Rizvi 12 Jan 1960 in Lindi

‘Allāmah Rizvi gradually settled down. Ramadhān started in late February with its regular programs at the mosque. He was informed by the Jamaat that on the day of Eid-ul Fiṭr, after the eid prayer, they would have an Eid gathering at the Jafferi Madrasah in which Arabs, Africans, Ismā‘ilis and Shī‘as would join in celebration under the banner of The Muslim Association. They wanted him to give a speech. He asked, “What was the language used in that occasion by the previous ‘ālim?” They said, “Urdu.” But only the Shī‘as and Ismā‘ilis could understand Urdu, what about the Arabs and Africans? They said, “Then you can give the speech in English.”

On Tuesday, **29 March 1960**, he led Eid-ul Fiṭr prayers at 8:30 a.m., and at 10, he delivered his **first lecture in English** at the

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

gathering of The Muslim Association. The speech was generally well received. He described his experience of writing the first English speech as follows:

“It was on the last night of *qadr* (of Ramadhān) that I was asked to give a speech in English for Eid day. I started writing a two-page Eid-ul Fiṭr speech in English for the benefit of the audience. By the time Eid day came (i.e., after a week), I had written and rewritten it six or seven times. And on that day, I just read it from the paper.”

On a personal level, of course, that Eid day was not that pleasant. In that day’s diary entry, my father wrote: “My Eid was totally tasteless, rather, filled with sorrow since I am constantly missing my family. Moreover, people here probably don’t have the tradition of visiting one another on the day of Eid. No one came to visit today. This is a strange place!”

Upon the request of Husain Jadavji (the *mukhi* of Lindi), ‘Allāmah Rizvi gave him the text of his English speech, and it was sent it to *Salsabil* magazine published out of Zanzibar. *Salsabil* published the speech in its Dhul Qa‘dah issue. The feedback was very positive. And since *Salsabil* was widely circulated in East Africa, my father came to know much later on that his English speech created a murmur amongst the elders of the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat. They started saying, “Our Jamaat is very generous indeed! It finds a capable ‘ālim (who can even give a speech in English), arranges for his resident permit and ticket, but when he comes here, instead of keeping him, they transfer him to Lindi, even though it ended up paying one-third of his monthly *hadiya* as Lindi Jamaat could not pay more than two-thirds of the amount initially agreed between him and the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat!”

Solsebil

Zil Kad 1379

"saad"e

1379

ID LECTURE

(Delivered in English, in a general meeting of The MUSLIM ASSOCIATION, LINDI, on 29.3.60 By MAULANA SYED SAEED AKHTAR RIZVI, Fakhru'l-A'azil, Fazil-e-Mashriqiat, Priest, LINDI)

Mr. President and Dear Brethren,

You have bestowed an honour upon me by inviting me to deliver a lecture here on this auspicious day of ID-ul-FITR. I thank you all for it. Id-ul-Fitr marks the termination of our fasting month of Ramadhan. It is a day of happiness and rejoicing. It is a festival unique in its character. So far as I am aware, every festival of every religion and community owes its origin to some historical or even mythological event. But this festival of ours, which is called Id ul Fitr, is an exception to this rule. It is pure religious function, not connected with any past event. The month of Ramadhan is a month of spiritual uplift, moral training and religious discipline. We pass this month with a remarkable

discipline and try to purify our soul by fasting and observance of other similar restrictions. Now that the month of Ramadhan has come to end, the Shariat of ISLAM marks its end by a national festival of thanksgiving; and that is our Id-ul-Fitr. On this day we thank ALLAH that HE gave us strength to observe ROZA. We thank HIM, for only by HIS help and TAUFIQ we were able to comply with the strict rules and regulations of SAUM. We thank HIM, for without HIS light we could not lead a pure religious and true spiritual life in that sacred month of Ramadhan. We thank HIM, as HE helped us in completing this religious training successfully.

Apart from this, ID has acquired a social aspect also under religious guidance. On this day we meet each other,

see each other, visit the houses of each other, wish the welfare of our relatives and friends. We try to forget and forgive any injustice done to us in past, by anyone in whose contact we might have come. Thus, a new life of kinship and a new era of friendship begins from this day. Thus a new moon of happiness, mutual understanding, and brotherhood appears and shines brightly on the horizon of our society.

Dear brethren,

The word "ISLAM" originates from "SALM," which means "peace." A Muslim according to the 'Hadith of our beloved Great Prophet (s.a.a.s), cannot be a true Muslim unless and until his neighbours, his relatives and in fact all people who happen to have any contact with him, do not feel them selves safe and secure from his deeds and words. Let us make it our motto and let this Id Day become the beginning point of our new creed and life, based upon this highest

morality taught by our by PROPHET (s.a.a.s.).

Let us hope that the light of discipline, which has been lit in our character in the month of Ramadhan, will lead us in the remaining days of the year, so that the next Ramadhan sees us in a far better religious order than this year. Let us pray to ALLAH that this spirit of love, this feeling of brotherhood, this bond of unity and this sense of friendship, which prevails among us on this auspicious day of Id-ul-Fitr, grows and grows in our heart through our life. We are sowing today a seed of Islamic Unity. Let it develop into a shadowy huge tree, so that every community of Islam may find a shelter and refuge under it in these days of Materialism and Etheism.

Let me hope that the next Id-ul-Fitr will find us in a stronger and more sincere Islamic Brotherhood in comprison with this year.

Interesting Incidents **of Cultural Dissimilarity**

The residence of the ‘ālim was at the end of the complex which was owned by the Lindi Jamaat just opposite the masjid. Outside the complex where my father resided, there was a *baraza* where the elders of the community would gather before maghrib prayer. My father was also invited to join them before going to the mosque for maghrib.

A person brought a plate of bananas for the gathering and, as it is customary to start serving the ‘ālim first, he presented the plate to my father saying, “Maulānā *geno.*” *Geno* in Kutchi language means, “please take,” but in Urdu, it means “count!” (Kutchi is spoken by the people of Kutch, a part of Gujarat, while Urdu is spoken in UP and Bihar.) My father, not understanding Kutchi, momentarily thought that these people indeed had a strange custom of asking the guest to count the fruits before eating, and so he politely declined the offer! He realized its meaning when others just picked it up! Whenever he remembered this incident, he used to laugh about it.



The *baraza*. (Courtesy: Mustafa Pirmohamed)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

* * *

In the early days in Lindi, after someone’s funeral took place, a person came to my father the next day, “Maulānā, do you want to go for the *ziyārat* for so-and-so?” *Ziyārat* in Urdu means “to visit or to meet someone.” ‘Allāmah replied, “Why should I go for his *ziyārat*? If someone wants to visit me, he should come here.”

After a few days, there was another funeral which he attended. And after the burial, it was announced that “tomorrow we will have *ziyārat* majlis for the deceased.” This is when he realized that “*ziyārat*” in the Khoja context also refers to what is known in north India in Urdu as “*sayyum*” or “*teja*” majlis, the majlis held after three days of the deceased’s burial.

Some **noteworthy items** regarding Lindi from ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s diary:

5 June 1960: After the Eid-ul Adhaa prayer at 8:30, at 10 a.m., he delivered **another English speech** at the gathering of the Muslim Association.

25 June 1960: “Today I made the ‘*dā’irah-e hindīyyah*’ in the masjid so that there will be no dispute in determining the *zawāl* (zuhr) time.”³⁴

2 July 1960 / 7 Muḥarram 1380: After a majlis he went to his residence (which was close by) and then came back to see the *mātam*. “There I witnessed a surprising event that delighted the heart: Mr. Sirāju ’d-Dīn (the [Sunni] Punjabi owner of a restaurant) had been attending the majālis for three days and it affected him so much that today he and his family have become Shī‘a; and I announced that in the Imāmbārgāh. May Allāh give him the *tawfīq* to remain steadfast and may he compensate me by honouring me with salvation in the hereafter. If it wasn’t Muḥarram, I would have written this in red pen [as a sign of celebration].”

12 July 1960: He wrote an article for a local magazine on “*Slaves’ Contribution in Karbala.*”

25 October 1960: ‘Allāmah Rizvi started his **journey back to India to bring his family** to Africa. He left Lindi at night by road and reached Kilwa at 1 a.m.

After spending a day at Kilwa to visit Kilwa Masoki and Kilwa Kisiwani, he left Kilwa the next morning at 7 a.m. by bus and reached Dar-es-Salaam at 8 p.m. He spent a few days in Dar-es-

34 “*Ad-Dā’irah al-Hindīyyah*” refers to the Sundial used to determine the *zawāl* time: a circle is drawn; then a pole or stick is fixed in the middle. At sunrise, the shade of the pole is towards the west and as the sun rises, the shadow starts decreasing but when the sun reaches the *zawāl*, it starts increasing towards the east. That is the *zawāl* time.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Salaam to meet friends. Then on 1 November, he took a flight to Tanga arriving at 3:20 p.m. On 4 November ‘Allāmah left from Tanga at 6:30 p.m. by train, reaching Moshi the next morning at 8 a.m. From Moshi, along with Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji’s brother, he went by car to Arusha, reaching at 1 p.m. He spent two days visiting the officials of the KSI Supreme Council such as Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji and Ahmed Sheriff Dewji. During this visit, he signed a three years’ agreement with the Supreme Council.

On 8 November 1960, he left Arusha by car in the morning, reaching Mombasa at 5 p.m. The next day at midday, he embarked on the S.S. State of India ship which sailed at 2 p.m. Finally, the ship docked at the Bombay port on **19 November 1960**.

Return Journey to Lindi with Family:

‘Allāmah Rizvi departed from Gopalpur on **14 February 1961** with his family: my mother, my older brother ‘Ali Imam (9 years old), myself (4 years old), and my younger brother Zaki Imam who was just under a year old. After changing trains in Bhatni and Banaras, we reached Bombay on 16 February at 9 p.m.

‘Allāmah Rizvi and his family stayed in Haji Dewji Jamal Musafir-khana in Bombay for five days while booking the ship, getting vaccinations, doing necessary shopping, especially for items that were not easily available in Africa, and also meeting friends from Hallaur.

He also met his Madrasah colleague, Maulānā Qays Zangipūri, and Zākir Ḥusain Farouqi (who, during his visit to Africa, had also met my father in Lindi). Farouqi Saheb was doing his doctorate in Urdu and had asked my father for information on two poets of Bihar. For a couple of days, he also found time to take us sight-seeing.

On **22 February 1961**, our family embarked S.S. Amra at 4 p.m. and the ship started its journey at 8:30 p.m.

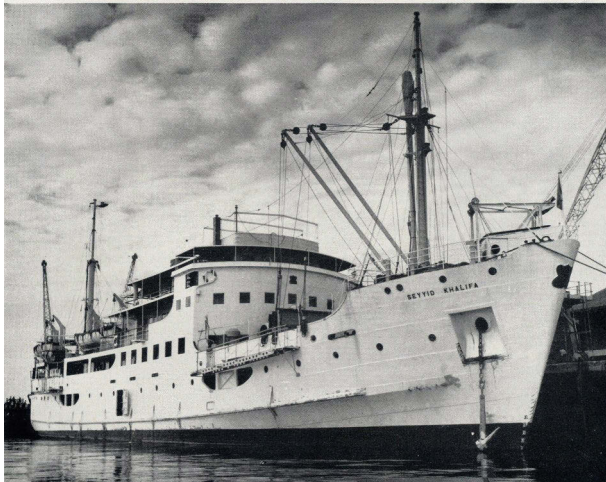


S.S. Amra

The ship stopped in Mombasa on 2 March 1961 for a night. We spent the night in town and returned back to the ship the next day at 2 p.m.

We reached Dar-es-Salaam on **4 March / 16 Ramadhān 1380** and were met at the port by the *mukhi*, Gulamabbas Merali and Maulānā Yūsha‘ (who was my father’s colleague at Jawādiyyah, Banaras). My father recited a majlis that night, and the next night as well.

HHS Seyyid Khalifa



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

On 6 March 1961, we embarked on the S.S. Seyyed Khalifa for the journey to Lindi. Since the departure was delayed, we went back to town so that my parents could participate in the *shab-e qadr* rituals (the eve of 19 Ramadhān) and then returned back to the ship.

The S.S. Seyyed Khalifa sailed in the early morning of 7 March 1961 and **reached Lindi** the next morning.

My father recited the shahādāt majlis and also led the a‘māl of *shab-e qadr*.

15 March 1961 / 27 Ramadhān 1381: Interestingly, ‘Allāmah Rizvi prepared a **speech for Eid day in Swahili** and then delivered it on Eid Day (18 March 1961) in a larger Muslim gathering. He sent its copy to Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji, head of the Supreme Council.

6 October 1961: ‘Allāmah Rizvi finalized the article on **“Problems of Tabligh in East Africa & their Solutions”** and mailed it to the Supreme Council’s office.

21 August 1962: He wrote a new **madrasah syllabus** and delivered it to the madrasah sub-committee.

25 August 1962: He gave another speech in Swahili in an African *mawliidi* (celebrations regarding the Prophet [a]).

24 September 1962: He received a letter from the Secretary of the Tanga Jamaat expressing their intention to circulate **his article on the importance of tablīgh among indigenous** people to other Jamaats.

7 October 1962: He participated in a Sunni gathering and gave a **speech in Arabic** which was translated into Swahili by Shaykh Jamālu ‘d-Dīn.

15 October 1962: He “started writing the **second article** on [importance of] tablīgh.” He finalized it on the 18th and sent it to the Council’s office in Arusha.

We will come back to these articles on the importance of tablīgh later in this chapter.

Transfer to Arusha (Jan. 1963 - Dec. 1964):

‘Allāmah Rizvi was transferred to Arusha Jamaat in January 1963 as its resident ‘ālim.

The First Lecture At Lutheran Theological College:

The day he reached Arusha with his family, he was welcomed by the late Rafiq Somji. As soon as they reached the center which also housed the ‘ālim’s residence, Rafiq bhai told my father: “Ebrahim bhai [Sheriff Dewji] has, on your behalf, committed you to fulfill a task.” What is it? “There is a seminar organized by the Lutheran Missionaries of East Africa and its organizer, Rev. Sigvard von Sicard, has requested Ebrahim bhai to arrange for a speaker who can explain Shī‘a Islam to them, since whatever they know so far is based on Sunni Islam. Ebrahim bhai informed them that a qualified scholar is soon arriving in town who knows English and he will be able to fulfill this task.”

When was that seminar to be? “Maulānā, it is the day after tomorrow!” ‘Allāmah’s previous attempts to write in English had required a few days of preparation. In this case, there was not enough time to prepare; more so when he had just arrived in Arusha with his family and had not even settled down. He says, “If I had become nervous and apprehensive at that moment, then today there would neither be Bilal Muslim Mission nor any tablīgh among the Africans. But it seems that Allāh wanted this task to be done and so I accepted the challenge and agreed to give the lecture. I said to myself that this time the audience will be of the priests and so even if I make a mistake in English, they will be gracious and not boo.”

The rest of that day and the day after, he isolated himself in a room in the apartment, planning his speech by writing down important terminologies and how to use them appropriately. He would only

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

come out for going to the masjid for ṣalāt, and for food. It is not difficult to imagine that this would not have been possible without the support of his wife who had to settle down in a new town with boys of 10, 6, 4 and 2 years old respectively. She didn’t complain about him being busy on the first days of arrival into Arusha, rather she gave him space and peace of mind to prepare his lecture.

On the day of the seminar, the late Yūsof Sheriff Dewji took him to the Makumira Theological College and introduced him to Rev. Sigvard von Sicard³⁵ at the gate, and left. “I started the speech; and would briefly pause after every few sentences. That’s when I understood the verse of the Qur’ān: *‘You give honour to whomsoever You wish and humiliate whomsoever You wish.’* (3:26) I would pause to compose the next sentences in my mind before continuing the speech but the audience thought that I was a very experienced speaker and was speaking slowly in order to make sure that my audience properly understood my message!”

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s speech went on for 40 minutes, followed by 30 minutes of questions and answers. It was received very well. Then a European priest stood up and said that he had completed his doctoral thesis on family life in Islam and was soon travelling to the USA to submit it to his university. Then he said that he had only covered the Sunni perspective and it would be helpful if ‘Allāmah Rizvi gave a lecture the next day or the day after on family life from the Shī‘a perspective so that his thesis would be complete.

‘Allāmah agreed. Content-wise he didn’t have to worry as he already had twelve articles in Urdu on this subject. After the second lecture, Rev. von Sicard said that since Ramadhān is already here, it would be nice to hear from you about the philosophy of fasting.

35 The Makumira Theological College later became part of Tumaini University. Dr. Rev. Sigvard von Sicard moved on to the UK and joined the religious department of Birmingham University. Presently he is an Emeritus Senior Research Fellow.

So that became the third lecture. Then he was asked to give another lecture on life after death in Islam. So he ended up giving four lectures during those days.

After the first lecture, Rev. von Sicard met Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji and said that the lecture was “marvelous and he is indeed an experienced speaker as he explained everything gradually so that the audience would follow him properly.” ‘Allāmah Rizvi said to himself, “*Al-ḥamdu-lillāh*, what was a weakness in my view became a merit in their views!”³⁶

Supreme Council’s ‘Ālims’ & Religious Education Dept:

Since the office of the KSI Supreme Council was in Arusha, ‘Allāmah was asked in March 1963 to take charge of its “**religious education and ‘ālims’ department.**” In April 1963, Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji, the Council’s president, issued a circular to all resident ‘ālims about ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s appointment.

Haji Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji wanted to ensure that each Jamaat had a qualified person to guide the communities, young and old alike. My father’s personal notes and audio files state that “Therefore, in those two years, the number of resident ‘ālims went from 19 to 38; and the new appointment letters were mostly signed by me.” Obviously such a position also came with its bitter moments, when he had to censure and also dismiss two individuals.

It is important to note that it was under the guidance and leadership of the ‘Allāmah that the standardization of religious education took place. In his audio files, he talks about preparing a **unified syllabus** as well as unified bylaws for madāris. Two weeks after his arrival in Arusha, the late Rafiq Somji, the Secretary of the Supreme Council,

36 Based on my father’s audio clips. Also a news item in the Africa Federation *Samachar* of 1963 mentions that soon after his arrival in Arusha, Maulānā delivered four lectures at the Lutheran Orientation course. “He was able to clear misconceptions about the Shī‘a madhhab among the participants.”

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

had a discussion with him about organizing the religious education in madāris of the Jamaats. A plan was prepared and discussed by the office-bearers and local councillors. The reorganization of the madāris began in May 1963.

In **August and September of 1963**, the Supreme Council asked ‘Allāmah Rizvi to go on a **tour** to survey and review the madāris of the Jamaats. This tour took him from Arusha to Mombasa, Tanga, Pangani, Pemba, Chake, Dar-es-Salaam, Dodoma, Tabora, Mwanza, Bukoba, Kampala, Nairobi and back to Arusha. Most of these places had resident ‘ālims.

He also initiated and supervised the centralized exams. And from 5 January 1964 to 12 January, a Common Annual Examination for all madrasahs under the Supreme Council was conducted in which 14 madāris with a strength of 544 students participated. The second Common Annual Examination was conducted in October of the same year in which 27 madāris with a strength of 1310 students participated.

According to the *Federation Samachar* of November 1964, there were two main papers for the exam: the Urdu paper (for grades 3-7) and the Gujarati paper (for grades 4-7).

It should be acknowledged here that such a task could not have been possible without the support of various people in the field. The Urdu paper (grades 3-7) was prepared by Maulānās Mirza Bande Haider, Syed Riazhussein Rajjan, S. Muḥammad Akhtar Abedi, Syed Khalīl ‘Abbās, Ṣafdar Ḥussein Jalāli and S. ‘Ali Mehdi. The Gujarati paper (grades 4-7) was prepared by Maulānās S. Intezār Ḥussein, S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, S. ‘Ali Ābid Rizvi and S. Shamīmu-s-Sibtain Rizvi.

The report prepared from the archives of the Federation *Samachar* by Mustafa Pirmohamed, who was ‘Allāmah’s student in Lindi, says, “It was fascinating to learn that although Maulānā Syed

The First Meeting with Dr. Noel Q. King, & A Long-Lasting Friendship

“During my 3 days stay at **Tabora** [in the tour of madāris in Aug-Sept 1963], the Jamaat’s president, Haji Bachchu Sulaymān took me to visit the David Livingstone Museum. When we were coming out of the museum, I saw two or three European Christian priests coming in. When we passed by each other, I said, ‘Good evening.’ I had my ‘*amāmah* and ‘*abā* on. The next day, at the local bank one of the priests happened to meet an Indian teller and inquired about a Muslim cleric who apparently knows English and is presently in town. That teller was a Shī’a, Muḥammad Taqī Rajwani, who gave him my name and where he could find me. Finally he came to the shop of Haji Bachchu Sulaymān and approached me saying in broken Urdu, ‘*Ham app sey kutch bat karna chahta haiye* – I want to have a word with you.’ I welcomed him.

“This was Dr. Noel Q. King of Makerere University, Kampala (Uganda), on a tour of East Africa to promote the religious department of the University. In Arusha, he had met Rev. von Sicard who told him that, ‘there is only one man in East Africa who knows Islam and you must meet him’ – and mentioned my name. So when he saw me greeting them in English at the Livingstone Museum, he thought that this was the person he was looking for and that is how he found me.

“So he described his own struggles in Ghana from where he and all foreign Christian priests had been forced to leave and how he ended up in Kampala at the Makerere University. Then he asked about my travel plans. I told him that from here I will go to Mwanza, Bukoba and then Kampala. He asked me to inform

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

him when I arrived in Kampala as he wanted to arrange a lecture at the University for me. I promised him to do so.

“I started working on the lecture. When I reached **Kampala**, I informed him of my arrival. A lecture was arranged and publicly announced in the newspaper. The lecture was delivered followed by questions and answers.

“The content of this lecture, with more additions later ,formed my 1967 booklet known as *Islam*.” [This was then published by WOFIS (Tehran) and other groups and also translated into French, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, Burmese, Swahili, Hausa, Sindhi, and Thai languages.]

(Based on ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s audio recordings on his biography)



‘Allamah Rizvi with Dr. Noel Q. King in California 1987

Saeed Akhtar Rizvi was not commonly seen talking in the Gujarati language, he set the Diniyat question paper.”³⁷

I have not been able to ascertain for how long this process of standardized exams continued after my father’s move to Dar-es-Salaam, but looking at his diaries of many years, he used to prepare the exam papers for the Supreme Council. But whether it was for the common exam or the exam for scholarship applicants, that I could not verify from his diary notes.

* * *

Move to Dar-es-Salaam (Dec. 1964 - July 1969)

When ‘Allāmah Rizvi moved to Dar-es-Salaam in December 1964, the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat had a membership of 1,700 Ithnā-‘Asharis. This number gradually increased to 6,000 by 1969 due to new arrivals from Zanzibar and the southern provinces of the mainland.

* * *

Religious Education in Government Secondary Schools:

After transferring to Dar-es-Salaam, aside from the normal responsibilities of the Resident ‘Ālim, an extra burden was placed upon ‘Allāmah Rizvi by the Jamaat: the Tanzanian government decided to add a compulsory subject for **religious studies to the primary and secondary schools**, and each community was asked to prepare the syllabus and arrange for instructors for their own students.

A small town with one or two schools would be easily manageable but Dar-es-Salaam had many schools scattered across its region. ‘Allāmah gathered a group of volunteer teachers who contributed their time to visit various schools and teach the Shī‘a students. ‘Allāmah himself used to teach at two or three schools.

37 Thanks to Mustafa Pirmohamed for preparing this report for me.

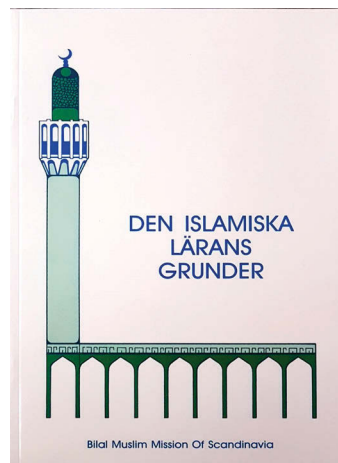
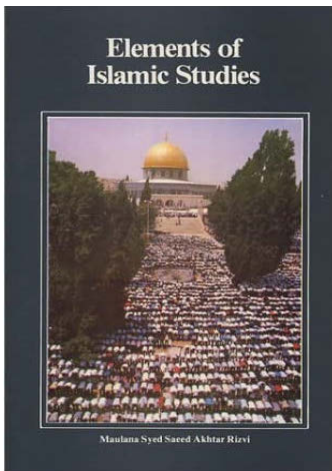
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

This was besides the madrasah which ran every afternoon at 2 p.m.

While supervising and conducting the religious studies for the government secondary schools, ‘Allāmah Rizvi had compiled lessons which formed the textbook entitled *Elements of Islamic Studies*. It was published and released on **7 November 1968 / 15 Sha‘bān 1388** for free distribution. This book was written in English. In the preface of the book, Haji Mohamedali Meghji, the President of the Supreme Council, wrote, “With the radical changes in the educational system, my community in East Africa is steadily becoming out of contact with the Gujarati language. This is especially the case with the new generation...is unable to benefit from the religious literature written in Gujarati.”

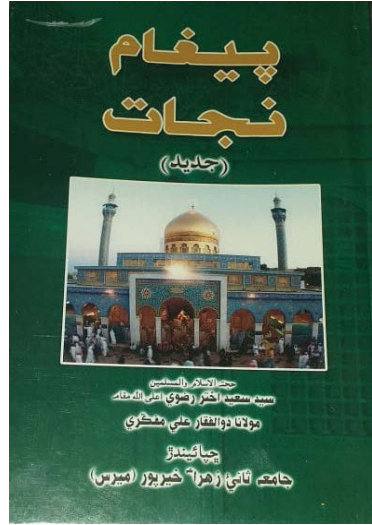
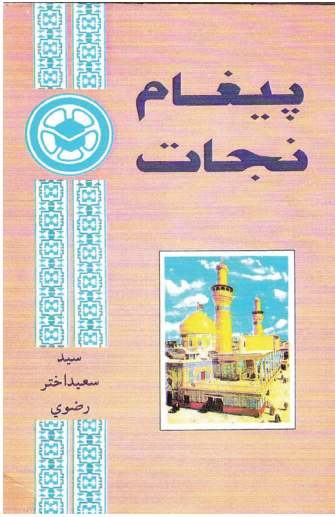
This simple textbook became so popular that it was used by madrasahs in East Africa and also in Europe, Canada and the United States of America. The madrasah of Toronto reprinted it several times for its students. The madrasah run by the Muslim Foundation in New Jersey published its new version as well.

In 1990, the Bilal Muslim Mission of Scandinavia published its Swedish translation as *Den Islamiska Lärans Grunder*. The KSI World Federation sponsored the first publication of its Sindhi



Elements of Islamic Studies & its Scandinavian translation

translation for use in Sindh (Pakistan) madrasahs. Later on, it was reprinted by Jāmi‘a Thāni Zahra (a), Khayrpur, Mir’s.



Sindhi translation of Elements of Islamic Studies

Defending Muslim Personal Law:

Besides this, another task was placed upon the ‘Allāmah: In 1964, the Tanzanian parliament empowered the Justice Minister to prepare a statement on **Islamic Law** regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc, after consultation with learned persons in the Islamic schools of law. “These statements will greatly assist the courts who have to rely on textbooks.”

Haj Mohamed G. Dhirani, President of the Khoja Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari Territorial Council of Tanzania, asked ‘Allāmah Rizvi to write the Shī‘a statement. Both met the lawyer who was in charge of that project. He advised ‘Allāmah to write the Shī‘a laws on related matters so that his office could incorporate them into the project. The ‘Allāmah spent June to the 5th of October 1965 in preparing the Islamic Laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, will, inheritance, acknowledgment and *waqf* in approximately 135 pages in foolscap

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

size with double spacing. The papers finally reached Bashir Rahim, then Senior Parliamentary Draftsman, who finalized four chapters of marriage as accepted by three principal schools: Shāfi‘i, Ḥanafi and Shī‘a. It appeared as the Subsidiary Legislation under the Restatement of Islamic Law Act (No. 56 of 1964), in the Gazette Supplement No. 34 of 27 June 1967.

Meanwhile the Kenyan government set up a Commission on the laws of marriage, divorce and succession, under the chairmanship of Justice Spry of the Kenyan High Court. Its task was to make recommendations for new comprehensive and secular law applicable upon all citizens. ‘Allāmah Rizvi had gone to Mombasa in July 1967 when the officials of the Supreme Council briefed him about the Commission. He wrote the answers to the Commission’s questionnaires. Upon his return to Dar-es-Salaam, he sent a copy of the Islamic Laws that he had written for Tanzania to the Supreme Council.

In the third week of August 1967, the ‘Allāmah was hurriedly called to Mombasa where the Commission was to sit for hearing from the 21st of August. He wrote a memorandum for submission to the Commission. ‘Allāmah Rizvi was part of the delegation which met the Commission. Other members of this delegation were Mohammadali Meghji (President), Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer (Hon. General Secretary), Hassan AM Jaffer (Hon. Treasurer), Maulānā Maqbūl Ḥussain (Resident ‘ālim of Mombasa) and Bashir Peera. The memorandum was read by Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer. Mr. Justice Spry was heard saying to his colleagues afterwards that “these people knew what they were talking about.”

Later on, ‘Allāmah wrote another Memorandum on the law of Succession which was sent to the Commission. The Kenya Commission submitted its reports and recommendations sometime in 1969.

While the above developments were taking place in Kenya, the Tanzanian government abruptly stopped the codification exercise.

Then the Tanzanian government published a White Paper (no. 1 of 1969) to the effect that it wanted to enact a Uniform Law of Marriage. With the publication of the White Paper, the government invited comments and suggestions from communities and individuals. The Christians, Hindus and Ismā'ilis published their views in the newspapers. 'Allāmah Rizvi approached BAKWATA (the officially recognized Muslim body consisting of Sunnis) for this purpose but they flatly refused, "to interfere in the Government's plan." Perhaps they were following the policy of obeying the *'ulūlu 'l-amr*, whoever he may be! So 'Allāmah had no choice but to write the comments on behalf of the Shī'a Ithnā-'Asharis only.

The comments of the 'Allāmah on the White Paper were then published in the *Standard* newspaper on **8 December 1969** on behalf of the Khoja Shī'a-'Ashari Territorial Council of Tanzania (which was then headed by Anverali M. Rajpar).

While drafting the Law of Marriage Act, 1971, based on the White Paper and the comments received, Bashir Rahim, then the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman and Counsel to the Speaker, tried his best to accommodate the provisions of the Islamic laws. Before finalizing the draft, it was shown to the scholars of every religion and sect, and some changes were made based on their suggestions. It should be mentioned here that Mr. Bashir Rahim (1931-1999) was a Shī'a Ithnā-'Ashari and a close friend of the 'Allāmah.³⁸

The late Mohammedali Meghji, President of the KSI Supreme Council, in the covering note of the memorandum that was presented

38 The late Bashir Rahim was our family friend. When I was leaving for Qum (Iran) for my studies in 1972, he gifted me a copy of the Qur'ān which had the Arabic script with English and Urdu translations. Later on in my life when I settled in Canada and started publishing my works, he was one of the avid supporters of my writings. May the Almighty bless his soul.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

to the Kenyan Commission, says: “Needless to say that Maulānā’s effort in this respect has been most commendable; and I have no hesitation to admit that the following submission would not have been successful without his guidance and assistance.”³⁹

The late Hussein A. Rahim (1900-1979) was a well-known orator, and a Public Prosecutor and Crown Counsel in Zanzibar. He was among those who received a copy of *Islamic Laws*. In a letter to my father, dated 2 September 1967, he wrote, “...I was especially impressed by the chapter relating to *waqf* which has clearly stated the Imamia law on the subject. I note from the Preface that it took you only four months to prepare the bulky volume. This was a marvellous feat by itself. The publication has come out at a suitable time in the history of the Shī‘a community in East Africa. You have the congratulations and the gratitude of the community for this important work.”

It is not an exaggeration to say that when the Shī‘a community needed a voice that could represent it in the legal chambers of Tanzania and Kenya, it could not find anyone more capable and courageous than ‘Allāmah Rizvi.

* * *

In late February 1965, ‘Allāmah Rizvi had been invited to give a lecture at the University College, Moshi campus. Later on, Mr. D.W. Edgington, the Resident Tutor, wrote a letter: “I am writing to say ‘thank you’ for lecturing to us last Friday evening. A number of students have expressed their appreciation of the lecture, and I must confess, to the Christians’ shame, that your talk was more stimulating than that given by some of the Christian groups! We are most grateful for your help and interest.”

39 S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *In Defence of Islamic Laws*, p. 8. The memorandums presented to Tanzanian and Kenyan governments on personal laws in Islam have been published together in this book.

A VISIONARY MISSIONARY Inspiration, Planning, & Persistence

The Inspiration:

The Khoja Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari community (which originally hailed from the Indian province of Gujarat) had settled in East Africa since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. To cater to their religious needs, they had built imāmbārgāhs, masājīd and madrasahs in various towns and even invited ‘ulamā’ from Iraq, Iran and mostly from India. However, most of the activities of the centers and the ‘ulamā’ were limited to the Khoja community, and there was no program for tablīgh among the indigenous people of those lands. Moreover, the language used in all the programs of the centers and madrasahs was mostly Gujarati or Urdu. These ‘ulamā’ did a good job, but focused only within the community. Some are remembered even now. For example, Maulānā Sultān ‘Alī Shāh came to Kampala and people still remember him for practically observing their wudhu and ṣalāt and correcting their mistakes.

However, there was one exception among them when it came to tablīgh among the indigenous people: Maulāna Syed Masrūr Ḥusayn Amrohwi (d. 1957/1377 A.H.) who was sent by Madrasatul Wā‘izeen (Lucknow) for tablīgh in Madagascar. He learnt the French and Malagasy languages and did tablīgh among the Malagasy people. He also married a Malagasy woman and had a daughter with her.⁴⁰

The lack of interest in tablīgh among the indigenous people was partly due to the inward focus of the Khoja community in East Africa. Of course, the **talk and discussion** for tablīgh by some Khoja scholars had preceded ‘Allāmah Rizvi. These include Mulla Ḥusein

40 See S.S.A. Rizvi, *Khūrshīd-e Khāwar*, p. 427.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Alarakhya Rahim (who wrote about it in Gujarati periodical *Salsabil*) and by visiting ‘ulamā’ such as Syed Ibn Ḥasan Jarchawi, Khawāja Muḥammad Laṭīf Anṣārī of Pakistan (at the Arusha Conference in Dec 1958), and Zākīr Ḥusayn Fārūqī of India. However these talks never reached a stage of serious discussion. Mulla Asgharali M.M. Jaffer writes:

As these novel ideas suffered the pangs of labour, a young ‘Ālim from India set his feet on land in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. With an analytic bent and genius, vast knowledge and readiness to meet with the new challenges, this young ‘Ālim was destined to set the wheels of change moving. He was Maulānā Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. Whether he himself was aware of the new directions to which the Shī‘a Ithnā-‘ashari Community of Eastern Africa was being led by his efforts, and whether his efforts were intentional and thus motivated, is difficult to ascertain. But that his arrival heralded a new era in the Shi‘ite Society of East Africa is indisputable. Among the ‘Ulamā’ who now remained to discharge their set role, he was perhaps the first to walk down briskly from the elevated pedestal of mere adoration. Maulānā set himself to learning Kiswahili, the lingua franca of Tanzania and Kenya, and language of adoption in Uganda, Zaire, Coastal parts of Madagascar, Comoros Islands and boundaries of Somalia. With great diligence, he perfected his English. He was now equipped and prepared to meet with the new demands in which he himself was a fervent and ardent believer. **This was indeed very important; for the new venue of service was not imposed on him; it was charted by himself.**⁴¹

41 Mulla A.M.M. Jaffer, *Outline of Shī‘a Ithna-‘ashari History in East Africa* (London, n.d.) p. 14-15.

The intention and motivation for tabligh among the indigenous African people was an intrinsic sense of duty for ‘Allāmah Rizvi from the beginning of his arrival in Tanganyika, it was not imposed upon him by any individual or organization. Moreover, the fact that ‘Allāmah Rizvi was well aware of the direction that he was putting the Shī‘a Ithnā-‘Ashari Community of Africa in is clear from his childhood inspiration which materialized in form of the tabligh movement on that continent.

That childhood inspiration can be traced back to ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s summer vacation of 1941 at his maternal grandfather’s home in Bhagalpur (Bihar). As mentioned earlier, his grandfather, Ḥakīm Sayyid Zaynul ‘Ābidīn was a famous *ṭabīb* of Bhagalpur and a very well-read *‘ālim*.

What most attracted the attention of the fifteen years old Saeed Akhtar were the two large bookshelves full of Arabic, Persian, and Urdu books. The books on medicine were too dry and so he ignored them, but those on comparative religions, history, ḥadīth and theology proved a good companion to pass through the sweltering days of a north-Indian June.

The most interesting were the periodicals like *Iṣlāḥ*, *al-Hāfiz*, *al-Wā‘iz* and *Suḥayl-e Yaman*. It seemed that his grandfather had been a regular subscriber to all those magazines since their inception, because their complete sets were there, all bound and carefully preserved.⁴² The old volumes of *al-Wā‘iz* proved

42 The bound copies of these magazines that survived after his death were gifted by his sons to my father and are part of our ancestral library in India. (SSA Rizvi, *Shajarah-e Ṭayyibah*, p. 89) The library which now contains the collections of my grandfather, my father and myself was named in the early eighties by my father as “**Riyāz Ma‘ārif - Garden of Knowledge.**” The name of **Al-Ma‘ārif Foundation**, which seeks to disseminate authentic information on Shī‘ism, is inspired by that name; and, my father’s publications in later part of his life, other than those published by Bilal Mission, carried the mark of Al-Ma‘ārif Publications.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

especially interesting to the young Saeed Akhtar. Some students of the religious seminaries like Jawādiyyah (Banaras) and Nāzimīyyah and Ṣultāniyyah (Lucknow), after their graduation, would enroll in Madrasatul Wā‘izeen (Lucknow) to study comparative religions and to train as orators and preachers. Madrasatul Wā‘izeen used to send its preachers not only to various provinces in the then undivided India, but also to far-away places such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Burma, Tibet, Zanzibar, Madagascar etc.

The reports sent back by the preachers were published in the Madrasatul Wā‘izeen’s journal, *Al-Wā‘iz*. Reports by preachers like Syed Liqā ‘Ali Ḥaidari, Syed Maṣrūr Ḥusayn, Syed ‘Ali Wā‘iz, Syed ‘Adīl Akhtar and Ḥāfīz Kifāyat Ḥusayn (from the 1920s and 1930s) were really inspiring for young Saeed Akhtar, and they created in his mind vivid pictures of those exotic places; and he, in his imagination, followed those stalwarts into those countries where there were as yet undeveloped roads, where lions and elephants roamed at will and where there were whole new cultures to encounter. He felt an irresistible urge to go out like them to preach true Islam in places where it was not yet properly known.

When his friend, Rev. N.Q. King, asked ‘Allāmah Rizvi in 1986 how the idea of engaging in missionary work entered his mind, he remembered his summer vacation of 1941 in Bhagalpur.⁴³

The Planning for Tablīgh:

And so it was not a surprise to see that **within a week** of landing in Lindi, on **21 December 1959**, the ‘Allāmah asked someone to pick up the book *‘Teach Yourself Swahili’* for him at a cost of 6.75 shillings, and started studying the Swahili language. An ‘ālim once asked him what he was doing with that book. He replied that since

43 ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s childhood inspiration for tablīgh was described by himself in “A Window on the Past,” *The Light* (June 1979) and he also wrote about it in his *A History of the Shī‘a People*, p. 845.

his aim was to do tablīgh among the Africans, learning Swahili was an essential requirement. The ‘ālim was aghast, and advised him to forget it, because the Khoja community would not like it and, in a way, indicated that they would ask him to leave. The late ‘Allāmah felt sorry for such a mentality. In the audio cassette on his biography, he says, “In 1961-1962, I would remark to the Mawlānā saheban that when you say you are ‘muballigh-e Africa,’ you are only leading in ṣalāt, reciting majlis and teaching in the madrasa. But what have you done for the Africans? If you see them going astray, should you not guide them towards the Ahlul Bayt? Some would give evasive answers and others would warn me that if you talk about this issue of tablīgh, the Khojas will send you back. My response was that my *Rāziq* (Provider) is Allāh, not the Khojas.”

His diary entry of **6 October 1961** says: “After hard work of a few days, I finished and typed the article on ‘**Problems of Tablīgh in East Africa and their Solutions,**’ and sent it to the [KSI Supreme] Council’s office.” This was a four-page article. On **4 November 1961**, he received a letter from Haji Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji, the President of the Supreme Council, asking him to send that article’s Gujarati translation for publication in *Federation Samachar*.

‘Allāmah Rizvi asked Roshan Ali Hameer to translate the article in Gujarati. After the translation was done in multiple meetings, he revised the English version of the article on tablīgh and mailed it all to the Supreme Council. The President of the Supreme Council had also expressed disappointment that so far no ‘ālim had taken the trouble to learn Swahili, so how could tablīgh be done? In a way, the blame was put on the mawlavis while the Jamaats were absolved of that responsibility. My father did not respond to this disappointment immediately; he waited for the result of his Swahili exam. And when the result came in, he informed Haji Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji about it as a response that he had prepared himself for this task.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

On **5 March 1962** (27 Ramadhān 1381), ‘Allāmah Rizvi worked on the Swahili speech for Eidul Fitr day. On 8 March, Eidul Fitr, he delivered his first Swahili speech. On 10 March 1962, he wrote a detailed letter to Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji and sent him a copy of his Swahili speech. On 28 August 1962, he was invited to a Sunni *mawliidi* and delivered a speech in Swahili.

As mentioned earlier, he appeared for the written Swahili examination conducted by the Ministry of Education for the colonial government (mainly for members of the civil service) as a private candidate. In the General Notice no. 2599 of *Tanganyika Gazetteer* (2 November 1962, p. 737), among the candidates who succeeded in the **13 September 1962** exam, you will find the name of ‘Allāmah Rizvi who passed the examination at the advanced level (70 per cent or over).

On **24 September 1962**, ‘Allāmah received a letter from Anwerali Tharu, the Secretary of the Tanga Jamaat, asking permission to circulate his article on the importance of tablīgh among other Jamaats. And so his idea of tablīgh among the Africans was gradually gaining the attention of many Jamaat leaders.

On **15 October 1962**, he started writing another article on tablīgh, elaborating and amending the first plan. He finalized it on the 18th and mailed it to the Supreme Council office in Arusha.

While this correspondence and circulation of his article was gaining attention, ‘Allāmah received a letter from Mohsin AM Jaffer (of Mombasa) who introduced himself and described the great potential of tablīgh in East Africa, and advised, “let us start this work on a small scale on our own; then the ‘big bosses’ will follow.” This was the first concrete support that he received for his tablīgh plan.

‘Allāmah Rizvi had studied the infrastructure of the Khoja Jamaats and its Supreme Council in Africa and realized that for any serious effort towards tablīgh, he had to seek the support of the

leadership of the community. Therefore, he started discussing the idea of tablīgh with the leaders. Not all were interested, and even those who showed interest, such as Haji Ebrahim Hussein Sheriff Dewji, wondered how this could be done, as none of the ‘ulamā’ knew the local language. After the ‘Allāmah was transferred to Arusha, he continued the discussion on the issue of tablīgh with the officials. Even Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji, the President of the Supreme Council, though very appreciative of the idea, was concerned about the difficulties both internally and externally in embarking on this scheme. ‘Allāmah once called the late Ebrahim bhai for a one to one meeting to discuss the importance of tablīgh among the Africans. The meeting went on for three hours. Ebrahim bhai was thinking that the ‘Allāmah wanted to do propagation at street corners or main intersections [or go door to door like the Tablīghi Jamaat in India and Pakistan or the Jehovah’s witnesses in North America]. But when he heard about the idea of propagating Shī‘ism gradually through personal contacts, he agreed on starting a pilot project in a limited circle for the time-being.

Sadly, on 10 January 1964, Haji Ebrahim Hussein Sheriff Dewji passed away. My father and 12 other individuals flew from Arusha to Zanzibar to attend the funeral of the marhum. (This was just two days before the revolution in Zanzibar.) In the written notes that have survived from my father, he describes how the most important achievement of Ebrahim bhai and his team, “was the fact that they made the Federation so strong that now it does not depend upon personalities for its existence.” May the Almighty reward them all for their selfless services to the community.

A new committee of the Supreme Council was elected with Mohamedali Meghji (President), Babu Ladak (Vice President), Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer (Secretary), and Hasan AM Jaffer (Treasurer).

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Persistence:

And so equipped with knowledge, enthusiasm and language, ‘Allāmah Rizvi persevered. He was able to win over the minds of the leadership of the Khoja community, especially the officials of the Supreme Council and the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat. The prominent supporters whom ‘Allāmah Rizvi has named at different occasions are: Haji Ali Mohamed Sheriff Dewji, Mulla Asgharali MM Jaffer, Haj Rafiq Somji, Haj Hussein Nasser Walji, Haj Fidihusein Abdullah Hameer and some others.

‘Allāmah Rizvi was transferred from Arusha Jamaat to Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat in December 1964. At the same time, the Tri-Annual Conference of the KSI Federation of Africa was held in Tanga. Rafiq Somji circulated the Gujarati translation of ‘Allāmah’s 1962 article on the importance of tablīgh among the delegates. Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat (with Hussein Nasser Walji as the president and Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer as its secretary) proposed a resolution at the Conference “to do something in this (tablīgh) connection.” There was a heated debate on this resolution. Uganda Council was opposed to this idea. In his speech, Mulla Asghar strongly supported the Dar-es-Salaam resolution and also referred to the Grand Āyatullāh Sayyid Muhsin at-Ṭabāṭabā’ī al-Ḥakīm’s question when the late Ebrahim bhai visited him: “What are you doing for Africans?”

That is how Bilal Muslim Mission, as an institution specifically dedicated to tablīgh among the Africans, came to exist.

‘Allāmah Rizvi moved in **December 1964** to Dar-es-Salaam where the Jamaat leaders like Hussein Nasser Walji and Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer were fully supportive of his tablīgh initiative. Not only were they instrumental in moving forward the resolution adopted at the above-mentioned conference; the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat nurtured the Bilal Muslim Mission during its early stages.

With the expansion of the tablīghi activities of the Bilal Muslim

Mission, ‘Allāmah Rizvi left the position of the Resident ‘Ālim of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat in **1969** in order to dedicate as much time as possible for tablīgh through Bilal Muslim Mission.

This narrative regarding the beginning of the plan for tablīgh, as an initiative of ‘Allāmah Rizvi, is necessary because I have noticed some writers and speakers of the community who unknowingly give the credit of initiating the idea of tablīgh either to the officials of the Federation or to ‘the fatwa’ of the late Grand Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (may Allāh elevate his status). There was no such fatwa! It is true that when Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji went for ziyārat, the Grand Āyatullāh S. Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm asked him, “What have you done for tablīgh among the African people? What will you answer on the day of judgement if they complain that ‘O Allāh, these Shī‘as lived on our soil but never shared their faith with us?’” This question of the great marja‘ indeed had an impact on Haji Ebrahim Sheriff Dewji’s mind and it pushed him to look into **the existing serious proposal** of ‘Allāmah Rizvi. Moreover, along with the Gujarati version of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s article on tablīgh, this probing question of the Grand Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm, quoted by Mulla Asghar at the conference, added weight to the already existing resolution for tablīgh presented at the 1964 Tri-Annual Conference.

The timeline of this narration clearly shows that the idea and the plan was initiated by the late ‘Allāmah and presented by him to the officials. In the words of Mulla Asghar quoted earlier, “**...the new venue of service was not imposed on him; it was charted by himself.**” Haj Mohamed GM Dhirani, as the Chairman of the Federation of KSI Jamaats of Africa, wrote in 1986: “**It was Ḥujjatul Islam Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi who initiated the idea of the Mission and then turned the idea into fact.**”⁴⁴ These notes are necessary to preserve the recognition and credit that he deserves.

44 His message in *Highlights of Bilal Muslim Mission 1965-1986*, p. 6.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

In his advice to Mālik Ashtar regarding his officers, Amirul Mu’mineen ‘Ali (a) wrote: “Appreciate the performance of every one of them: do not attribute the performance of one to the other, and do not minimize the reward below the level of performance.”

INTERNAL OPPOSITION **TO TABLIGH**

(in the words of ‘Allāmah Rizvi himself)

“The true impact of the tablīghī activities cannot be fully appreciated without looking at the Khoja mindset. Regional affiliation and prejudice was common among the Khoja Shī‘a Ithna-‘Asharis who had migrated from Gujarat, India. Initially it was so strong that there was racism within: a Kutchi could not marry a Kathiawari and vice-versa. So just being a Khoja Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari was not sufficient; even the place of birth was important in matters such as marriage!⁴⁵

“In such a background, you can realize their attitude towards the Africans. In Lindi, there was a *baraza* where some of the elders would gather before maghrib and discuss different things. I myself have heard that whenever they talked about the Africans, they would not accord them proper respect as fellow human beings. They used to easily describe them as ‘*wandra* -- monkeys.’ Even now, the Khojas in their interaction with the African are not fair. When an Indian clerk makes a mistake, they will politely admonish him and guide him to do things in the right way. If the same mistake is done by an African clerk, then their attitude would be different, they don’t

45 I mentioned this observation of my father to Haj Fidahussein Ghulamhussein (Fida Chacha), a respected elder of our community and a family friend, who also lived in Lindi. He confirmed this observation although he said that it is no longer prevalent in new generations.

even realize that he is also a human being who has self-respect and whose feelings can also be hurt. And yet they expect loyalty and dedication from them!

“During my stay of two to three years in Lindi, I realized that if I tried to change the mentality of the local Jamaats or the individual members before embarking on tablīgh among the Africans, then the dream of tablīgh would never reach to the level of fruition. And so I decided, and Allāh guided me in that direction, that I should approach the Supreme Council directly on this matter as there were sensible people in the leadership. Anyway, I wrote the first plan and article on tablīgh in 1961 and sent it to them: And with Allāh’s grace, by 1964 the resolution for tablīgh was approved with the support of the office bearers of the Supreme Council. If this had not been approved by the Supreme Council, then in spite of the support of individuals like Ali Mohamed Sheriff Dewji, Muhsin Jaffer, Mulla Asghar Jaffer, Hussein Alarakhia Rahim, and Sachoo Peera, the tablīgh project could not have started.

“The Khoja system is such that if something is approved by the Supreme Council, then they will willingly accept and follow it. And so that is how the work of tablīgh started although only few were fully supportive of it.

“Some of those who opposed the tablīgh idea would even express their opposition on our faces. Someone said to me: ‘Wasn’t it enough for you that although you are not a Khoja, we tolerate you in our masjid and now you are starting to bring in the Africans?!’ Some would remark that: ‘If more Africans start coming to our masjid, we will leave it and go to the [Ismaili] Jamatkhana!’ One of them wrote a long letter to the Supreme Council saying: ‘We need orphanages, shelters for widows, and this and that for our *qawm* (i.e., Khoja community), and you are leaving these important projects and spending money in tablīgh.’ I asked the late Rafiq Somji whether

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

this person ever donated to any of those projects. He said no, never! So all these noble projects would only come to mind when they wanted to oppose the Bilal Mission!

“Those who did not oppose openly restrained themselves because it was the Supreme Council’s resolution and also because the officials of the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat (Husein Nasser Wajli, Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer, Akber Panjwani, Mohamed Jaffer Hashim) were all supporters. But such people would not shy away from disparaging the name ‘Bilal Mission’ by saying ‘Bilal Mission’.

“When in September 1968 I sent five African students to Najaf to Āyatullāh Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (may Allāh elevate his status), we had a farewell party for them at the Union Hall (which is now a dispensary). After the event, an individual from Zanzibar said to the late Rafiq Somji, ‘So now these *kibarua* (labourers) will lead us in Jamaat prayers?’ [As the saying in Urdu goes:] Allāh’s whip doesn’t have any sound. Zanzibar Jamaat was the first Jamaat to request us for an African shaykh for the month of Ramadhān because ‘he will preach in Swahili and our women also will be able to understand.’ Until now [i.e., 1995], our teachers go there to lead daily prayers, jum‘a prayer and preaching.

“Similarly, after the resolution for tablīgh was passed at the Conference, the representatives of Uganda had said: ‘You can do tablīgh in Tanganyika and Kenya but don’t try to come to Uganda.’ When Idi Amin came to power in Uganda and expelled the Asians in 1972, these Khoja Shī‘as had to leave behind 12 to 14 masājid, 14 imāmbāras, madrasahs, nursery and primary schools. During Idi Amin and Milton Obote’s reigns, these buildings were used by them for purposes that were not appropriate; some were even used as clubs. When President Museveni came to power in the mid 1980s and decided to give back these properties, the Jamaats didn’t have

any Shī‘a in the interior to use them. If they had agreed with the tablīgh plan, these buildings could have been used by the African Shī‘as! Last year in 1994, the present President of Kampala Jamaat gave a speech in Toronto in which he said that even if we take these buildings back, who will use them? He said that now there is a madrasa in Jinja and once these Africans graduate from it, then we will be able to hand over the centers to them. I said to myself that if they had listened to us in the mid 1960s, there would have been few African Shī‘as in most towns of Uganda. In Fort Portal there was a small African Shī‘a community headed by Musa Kampare...And then these buildings would have been preserved and maintained by the African Shī‘as.

“Questions that were asked about Bilal Muslim Mission in Arusha, Moshi, Mombasa, Songea, Lindi and Tanga were indeed amusing! It is important to mention those also.

“One issue that was raised is that: ‘If the Africans start coming to our masjid, during the *niyāz* time, there will be a shortage of food.’ My response was that if the number of people who will mourn Imam Husayn (a) increases to the extent that there is shortage of *niyāz*, then this is a good sign – the number of ‘azādār is increasing! And the same God who can provide for 700 people will also provide for 7000 or 10,000.

“Some would say: ‘If they become Shī‘as, they don’t have value for time [i.e., they are idle and lazy] and so they will come early to the masjid and occupy the first rows of the jamaat prayer.’ What a foolish question!

“The most serious question was that: ‘If they become Shī‘a, they will come and ask for the hands of our daughters in marriage.’ The answer for this was given in Tanga Conference by Haji Ali Mohammad Jaffer Sheriff Dewji.⁴⁶ When this question was put to

46 See his article, “My Answers to a Few Jibes About Bilal Muslim Mission,”

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

me during my stay in Arusha, my answer was that today we are converting few Africans only. But look at the African Roman Catholics who have been here for more than a century. And there are Goan Roman Catholics (originally from Goa, India) who have been visiting these areas for almost a century and many have settled here and are citizens of this country. Both are Roman Catholics: tell me how many African Roman Catholics have asked the hands of the daughters of Goan Roman Catholics? Similarly, the majority here is of Sunni Muslims, and then there are many Sunnis from India and Pakistan who have been visiting these areas for years and many have settled here, have their businesses here and are also citizens. How many African Sunnis have married daughters of Asian Sunnis?

“Marriage is a serious matter. You don’t just get up when your son becomes young and go door to door and ask people to give their daughter to him in marriage. Even the Khojas who have lived here for generations, when proposals start coming, they don’t just accept the first one: they look at the person’s background, status, family environment and many other things before they decide. Similarly, even the Africans think before accepting a proposal; and I have heard from them, that they would not want their children to marry among the Asians because their children will be considered as those of mixed breed. (Some Khojas called such people *chawtara*.)...

“Today, by the grace of Allāh, Bilal Muslim Mission is now an established fact. And the children who are born now, and those who are growing up now, they know of Bilal Muslim Mission as an established institution. There is no discussion whether Bilal Mission should be there or not. At the most, there will be discussion whether *tablīgh* should be done in this way or that way... It is a pleasure to see now that many individuals whose fathers or grandfathers were opposed to the idea of the Bilal Mission but they themselves are full

The Light, June 1976.

supporters of Bilal Mission. I used to say that I do not expect the old generation to change its mentality and I am waiting for the next generation who will be supportive of Bilal Muslim. And, thanks to Allāh, my words proved to be true.”⁴⁷

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعُدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ
يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

And do not drive away those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening desiring His favour. Nothing of their account falls upon you, and nothing of your account falls upon them. So, if you drive them away, you will become one of the unjust. (The Qur’ān 6:52)

PRE-1968 TABLĪGH ACTIVITIES

Temeke: The Beginning Point

The tablīghī activities were present even before the formal registration of Bilal Muslim Mission in 1968.

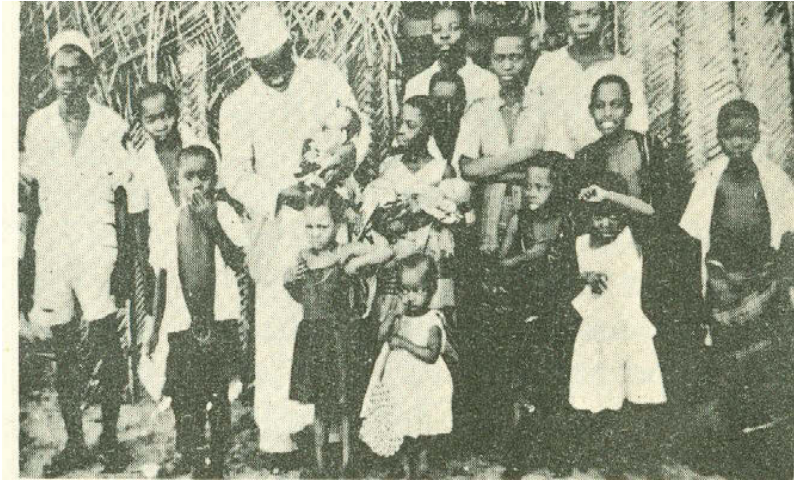
Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure was originally from the Rufiji region and studied at the religious academy in Zanzibar and then started a madrasa in Rufiji. In 1965, he established correspondence with ‘Allamah Rizvi and eventually accept the Shī‘a madhhab.⁴⁸

Then he moved to Dar-es-Salaam and started a humble madrasa in its suburb known as Temeke. Shaykh Ngongabure used to teach Arabic language and Sunni (Shāfi‘ī) fiqh such as *Safīnatu ’n-Najā*. During the evenings, ‘Allamah Rizvi would come to teach the senior students Shī‘a fiqh and ‘aqā’id. There were 15 to 20 students.

47 My father’s audio biography, cassette no. 5. Since this is a sensitive issue, I have transcribed the words of my late father, of course editing wherever necessary for flow and continuity.

48 See his interview in Amir Aḥmadi, *Shī‘ayān-e Tanzāniyā*, p. 189.

The Shining Star: ‘Allamah Rizvi



The small hut thatched with coconut leaves was the beginning of the Bilal’s madrasah. Shaykh MA Ngongabure with some of his children and students.

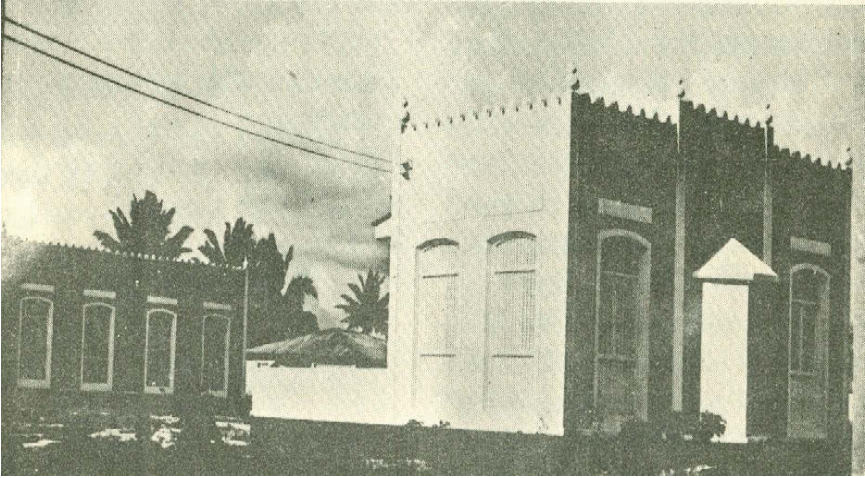
These sessions with the ‘Allamah exposed them for the first time to the Shī‘a school of thought. The seniors students wanted to have more time with the ‘Allamah.⁴⁹

In July 1968, a plot was obtained from the Ministry of Lands, comprising 57,790 square feet, surrounded by 3 roads on three sides and a playground on the fourth side. A small mosque and 2 classrooms were built. The windows and doors of the old Khoja Masjid were used for this masjid at Temeke. The masjid’s construction was completed by February 1969 and in March it was used for Muḥarram majālis in Swahili. The classrooms were ready by May.

The opening ceremony was postponed to coincide with the opening of the new mosque and imāmbāra of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat. It was opened by ‘Allamah Rizvi on 15 October 1969/3 Sha‘bān 1389.⁵⁰

49 Interview with Shaykh Ishāq Pingili done on my behalf in 2020.

50 *The Light*, vol. 20 (August 1986) no. 4, p. 10



This was the first masjid built in East Africa in an African neighbourhood. It was a humble beginning which accommodated two rows inside and two more rows in the courtyard.

* * *

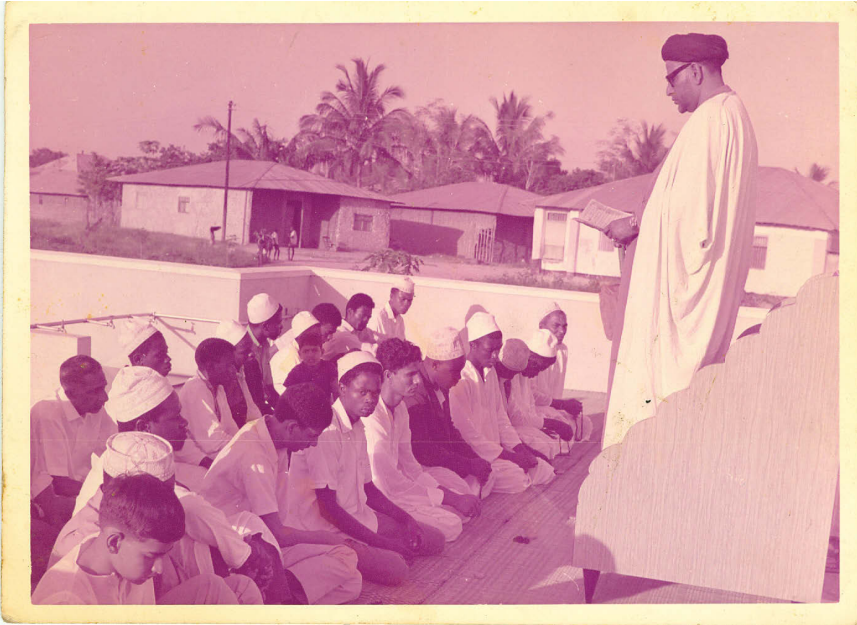
My father once narrated to me an interesting conversation about the first Bilal mosque: Down the road was a relatively large church. One day the Christian priest came to the grounds of the Temeke campus. He greeted the ‘Allāmah and started talking about the new mosque. He made a remark: “Your mosque is very small.” ‘Allāmah immediately responded: “I drive by your church on Sundays and see only a few people seated in the front pews while the rest of the church is empty. Here if I get just 10 people, my mosque is filled up!”

* * *

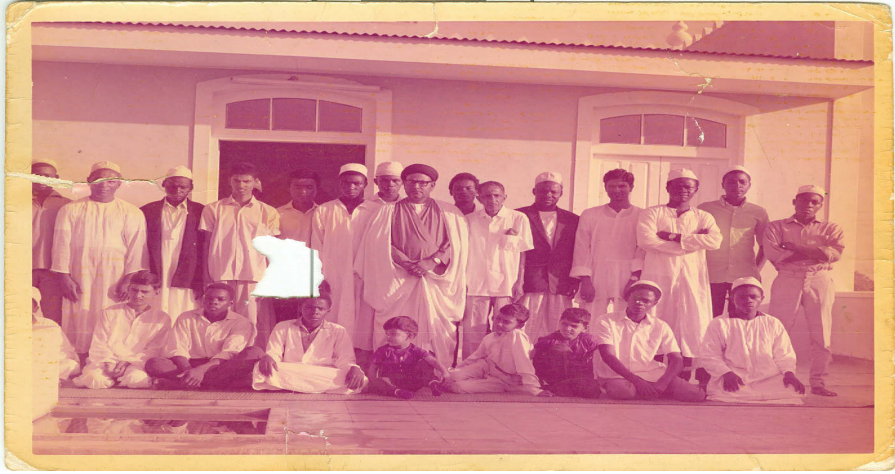
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



A scene from the first Salātul ‘Eid in late 1969 or early 1970.



Another scene from the khutba of ‘Eid
The young teen in the bottom left of this picture is the present writer.



A group photo after ‘Eid prayer. Besides the teachers & students, ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s family was present: Standing 4th from left, his eldest son Ali Imam, 4th from right, his youngest brother, Tawakkul Husain; sitting from left: the present writer, 4th is Murtaza, then Zaki Imam & Masud.

Rufiji Area:

Haji Ḥabib Kassim Manji had a sisal estate in Njia Nane, Rufiji area on Kilwa road. He had employed a Christian to teach the children of his workers. He asked ‘Allāmah Rizvi for a Shī‘a teacher who would teach the Muslim children about their religion from the Shī‘a perspective. ‘Allāmah sent Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Qāsim Ngurango for that task.

During those days Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer, Secretary General of the Supreme Council, visited Dar-es-Salaam; and ‘Allāmah Rizvi decided to take Mulla Asghar along with Fidahusein Abdullah Hameer and Habib Kassim Manji to visit the school at the sisal estate which was about 80 miles away. For the first time in Shī‘a history, Mulla Asghar heard the children reciting **in Swahili**: “*Imāmu wa kwānza, ‘Ali alyahis salām; Imāmu wa pili, Hasan alayhis salām...*” the first Imam is ‘Ali (a); the second Imam is Hasan (a)...” Mulla

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Asghar was overcome with tears of joy, and promised to provide uniforms for those students. Habib Kassim Manji pointed out that it would not be suitable to provide uniforms for Muslim students only; you should provide for the Christian students as well. There were about 85 to 90 students in total.

After returning to Dar-es-Salaam, uniforms were made for all the students at a cost of 600 Shillings. ‘Allāmah Rizvi had to make a number of calls to the Council’s office for the cost of these uniforms, and finally a cheque came in his name with a note from the President’s office that said, “This is being sent on your responsibility and hope that it is utilized in the right cause as it is from sihm-e Imam (a) funds.” In the words of ‘Allāmah, “it showed the lack of confidence in using the sihm-e Imam (a) for tablīgh among the Africans; and if it is not the appropriate usage, then the responsibility would be mine.”

This was the first financial help from the Supreme Council to Bilal Muslim Mission which had not been officially registered yet and had no bank account. My father didn’t want to cash that cheque or put it in his own account. He asked Mohamed Jaffer Gulam Hashim, the treasurer of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat, to help in this matter; and he agreed to open an account for Bilal Muslim Mission in the Jamaat’s ledger; and subsequent amounts were also channeled through the Jamaat for the sake of transparency and accountability. In this way, the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat was officially involved in the work of Bilal Muslim Mission.

Songea:

During that time, Maulānā Sajjād Ḥusain, the resident ‘ālim of Songea Jamaat, had converted an individual named Jume Eidi to Shi‘ism. Jume Eidi donated a large plot of land to Bilal Mission

upon which a madrasah was constructed. ‘Allāmah Rizvi would send teachers and missionaries to Songea to support their tablīgh endeavours. Two individuals in Songea deserve special mention in the tablīgh area: Alihussein Nagji who had established Hussaini Society⁵¹ in Lindi (in 1959) and Dar-es-Salaam, and would attend the *mawlidis* organized by the Sunnis and deliver speeches in Swahili in those gatherings. The other person was Haji Karamali Rajani who had put his personal vehicle at the disposal of Bilal Muslim Mission in Songea which was used by Shaykh ‘Abdullah Seif for his tablīgh tours. His vehicle was known as “*Gari la Bilal* –Bilal’s car.”

In early 1968, ‘Allāmah visited Songea with Mohammad Ali Pardhan, a lawyer and a friend, by a chartered plane (as there was no more commercial plane service) to lay the ceremonial foundation stones of the madrasah. A huge gathering was held in the suburb of Namtumbo, and the ‘Allāmah gave a speech in Swahili. After that he visited Songea multiple times. After Karamali Rajani, his elder son, Gulamabbas Rajani, became active in tablīgh.

After Jume Eidi died, his son, Nasoro started opposing the Bilal activities. He even tried to take the land back but then the dispute was settled whereby he was given a portion of the land back in exchange for a larger area of land beside it. Now there is a masjid, madrasah, boarding and teachers’ quarters in that complex. Songea contributes 5 to 10 students for the ḥawzah in Temeke, the main campus of Bilal Mission in Dar-es-Salaam.

The Light Bi-Monthly Magazine:

After ‘Allāmah Rizvi had reached Arusha in January 1963, that March, Ebrahim bhai sent a suggestion through Rafiq Somji that

51 “Hussaini Society” was a semi-madrasah program that organized separate daily maghribayn prayers for boys at the center to teach them ṣalāt practically.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

he should publish an article once a month and send it to the Shī‘a students who had gone to the UK or USA or other countries for higher education. There were about 70 students abroad at the time.

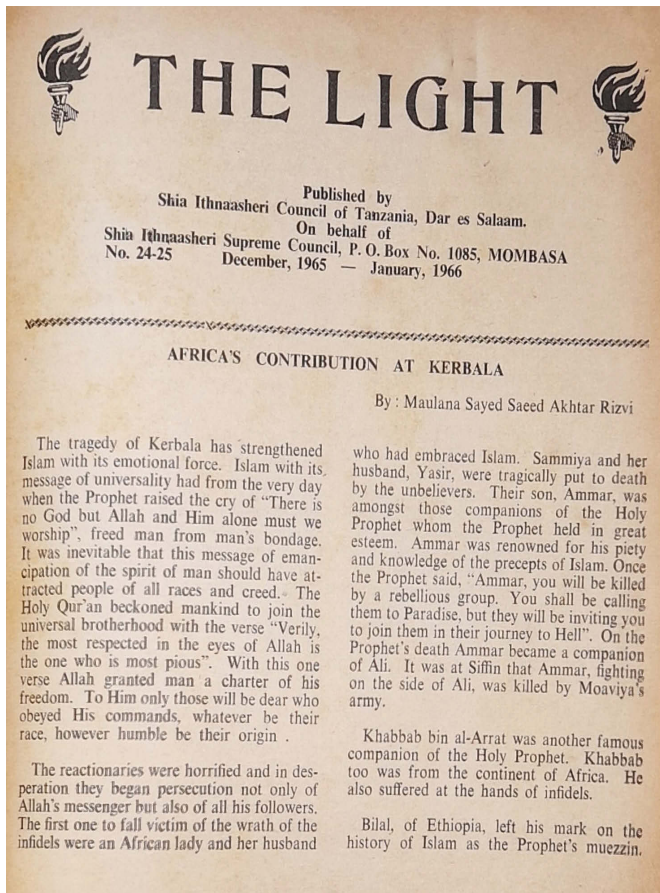
The ‘Allāmah suggested giving a name to this publication; thus the name *The Light* was chosen. Its first issue (in one and a half pages of foolscap size) was issued in April 1963. Rafiq Somji liked the first issue so much that he made more copies and sent it to the councillors and other prominent figures of the community in East Africa. It was appreciated by many readers. However, its frequency and the size of the publication was irregular. By the end of 1964, about 15 issues were published and its readership had increased to about 300.

When the ‘Allāmah moved to Dar-es-Salaam, Fida Hussein Hameer, then the current Secretary of the Jamaat, suggested publishing *The Light* in Dar-es-Salaam. ‘Allāmah suggested that instead of using the cyclostyle method it should get printed properly. The late Mohammedali Janmohamed, the owner of the Dar-es-Salaam Printers, graciously agreed to print *The Light* magazine at a minimal cost. That cost was never increased even when the magazine increased in size and number of print. His support for Bilal Muslim Mission for printing its magazines and books continued until the Mission acquired its own printing machine. All his sons (Gulam, Alihussein, Raza) were also strong supporters of Bilal Muslim Mission. May the Almighty reward them for their contribution towards the madhhab of Ahlul Bayt (a).

The magazine’s first three Dar-es-Salaam issues were published in the name of the KSI Supreme Council (Mombasa) but then they suggested changing the publisher’s name. So my father then asked the territorial Shī‘a Council of Tanzania (headed those days by Anver Rajpar) to use its name, and they agreed. The first issue published in the name of the Shī‘a Ithna-Asheri Council of Tanzania (Dar-es-

Salaam) was in September 1966. Once the Bilal Muslim Mission was registered in 1968, *The Light* from then on was published under the name of Bilal Muslim Mission.

The Light enjoys world-wide readership and was recognized as an authentic and authoritative voice of the Shi'a faith. Its articles were copied --sometimes without acknowledgment-- in Islamic magazines in India, Pakistan, Iran, UK, USA, and even South Africa. Some articles were even translated in Arabic and Persian magazines.

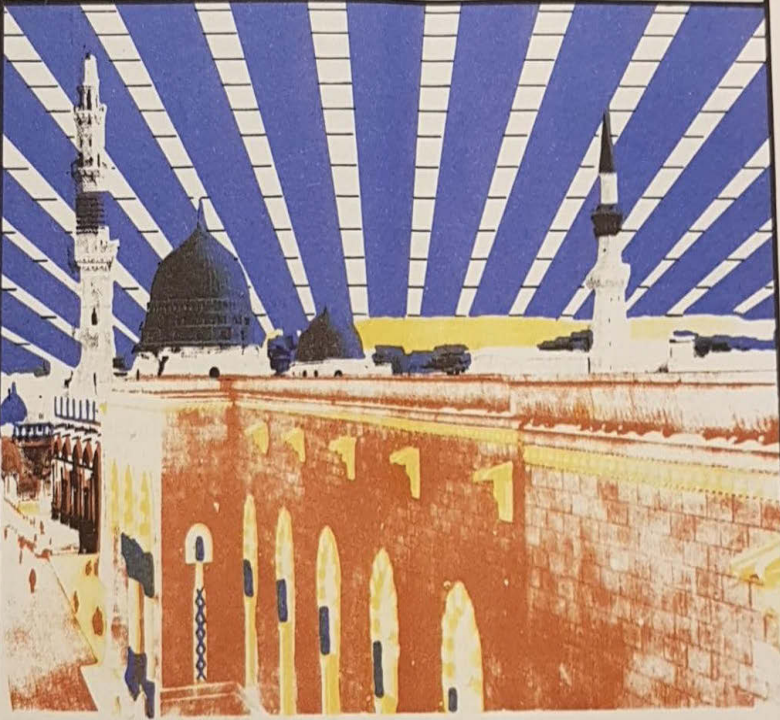


A photo of the first page of old edition of *The Light*

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

**THE
LIGHT**

VOL. XII ZIL-HAJJ, 1398 — DECEMBER, 1978 No. 6



BILAL MUSLIM MISSION OF TANZANIA
P. O. BOX 20033, DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA.

Sauti ya Bilal Bi-Monthly Magazine:

Mohsin Jaffer started tabligh work in Mombasa in his own spare time. During the first two years, he published three issues of the Swahili magazine with the title of *Sauti ya Bilal* (the Voice of Bilal). When Agha Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi Shushtari moved to Dar-es-Salaam to work with ‘Allāmah Rizvi in September 1967, *Sauti ya Bilal* was transferred to Dar-es-Salaam and from then on it has been published as a bi-monthly magazine for tablīgh among the Africans.

Agha SM Mahdi Shushtari was the editor of *Sauti ya Bilal* from 1967 until he migrated to Iran in 1976. Thereafter, Shaykh Dhikiri Kiondo became the editor.

According to Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer: “*Sauti ya Bilal*...has been generally acknowledged as one of the most informative and comprehensive religious periodicals in East Africa.”

Articles in the Tanzania Standard

The main national newspaper was known as the *Tanganyika Standard*; after the union of Tanganyika with Zanzibar, it became the *Tanzania Standard*.

Gulam Mahdi Haji was the circulation manager of that newspaper. ‘Allāmah first met him when he came for a visit to Arusha. He also had some interest in tablīgh and so he mentioned to him that the newspaper had various articles on Christian occasions but nothing when it came to the Muslim events. So when ‘Allāmah moved to Dar-es-Salaam, he established contact with Gulam Mahdi Haji and through him, he was able to get some of his articles published in the *Tanzania Standard* on the occasions of Eidul Fitr, Eidul Adhaa, ‘Āshūrā’ and Milādu ’n-Nabi; and also upon the demise of the Grand Āyatullāh Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

In its weekend issue known as “*Sunday News*,” the newspaper had a column entitled “*Thought for the Week*” which was written by a Christian priest on various issues. ‘Allāmah asked Gulam Mahdi Haji to suggest to his editorial board to have an equal space for a weekly Muslim column with a different title. He responded after two weeks that the editorial board, instead of giving equal space on Fridays for a Muslim column, had agreed that the same column be written by a Muslim priest every other Sunday that ‘Allāmah should write.

This is how ‘Allāmah Rizvi started writing short articles every other Sunday on social, moral and ethical issues for the national paper. These articles started in 1965 and continued until 1970 when the government started the nationalization policy that included the newspapers. Soon after that the “Thought for the Week” was discontinued.

According to Ahmed H. Sheriff, the first Chairman of Bilal Muslim Mission, “This column has proved very popular among Muslims and Non-Muslims alike; and, now, its Swahili translation appears in the weekly *Baraza* (Nairobi). Also, the *East African Standard* (Nairobi) has published many of these articles in its Muslim column.”⁵² It should be reiterated here that these articles were written with keeping non-Muslims in mind as the “Thought for the Week” column was published on the editorial page of the national newspaper.

The report of the articles of “Thought for the Week” was mentioned in the *Bilal News* (a newsletter of the Bilal Muslim Mission which was circulated to relevant organizations). Based on that report, Haji Hasanali P Ebrahim of the Peermohamed Ebrahim

52 Preface of the 1st edition of *Inner Voice*, 1969.

the world.

Thought for the week

“And say, ‘O My Lord, Increase my knowledge.’”
(Qur’an, 20:114)

RECENTLY two functions were held in Tanzania: The Holy Prophet's birthday and the Literacy Week. It was a very appropriate coincidence, as the following paragraphs will show.

Day in and day out, the Holy Prophet urged his followers to strive to create divine attributes in themselves to the maximum extent possible; and over all the attributes he gave precedence to knowledge. He made its acquisition the duty of every Muslim man and woman.

The Qur'an repeatedly and emphatically asks man to exercise his intellect; to acquire knowledge by study of nature and history; to travel through the land and observe things; to ponder and reflect over the laws of Universe; and to seek the help of God in inspiring knowledge by praying to Him: O My Lord, Increase my knowledge.

The main purpose of the Qur'an, according to Dr. Iqbal, is to awaken in man the higher consciousness of the manifold relations with God and Universe. It was in view of this essential aspect of the Qur'anic teaching that Goethe, while making a general review of Islam as an educational force, said to Eckermann: "You see, this teaching never falls. With all our systems, we can not go, and generally speaking no man can go, farther, than that."

This emphasis of the Holy Prophet of Islam on acquisition of knowledge was directly responsible for the fact that, in the words of George Sarton, "When the West was sufficiently mature to feel the need of deeper knowledge,..... It turned its attention first of all, not to Greek sources, but to the Arabic (i.e. Muslim) ones." (Introduction to the History of Sciences)

Briffault says in 'Making of Humanity': "The debt of our science to that of Arabs does not consist only in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture; it owes it its very existence. Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab (i.e., Muslim) civilization to the modern world."

S.S AKHTAR RIZVI

accorun
d'etat th
arrested

STATE

TREAS
39(2)(b) (

PARTI

Gray

Dunstan

Mohame

Mowbra

stan Li

gori Cl

Millin

divers

betwee

October

wit on

person

United

the U

where

cause

ing ac

ing b

Presic

REGISTRATION OF BILAL MUSLIM MISSION IN 1968

Babu Ladak of Moshi was one of the early supporters of my father in the path of tablīgh, and had pledged to provide for the wood-work of the first masjid to be built in Temeke. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1967. When ‘Allāmah went to Moshi for condolences, he also met Ahmad H. Sheriff Dewji. Besides the other issues about tablīgh, the ‘Allāmah also discussed an individual who had good knowledge of the faith and the Swahili language, and that he wanted to bring him in as his assistant, but that person was asking for more than the going salary of the resident ‘alims. Ahmad Sheriff Dewji agreed to sponsor the assistant.

From Moshi, ‘Allāmah travelled to Mombasa. There he had an informal meeting at the house of Haji Mohamedali Meghji (the President of the Supreme Council) with Mulla Asghar, Bashir Peera, Hasan AM Jaffer and Mohsin AM Jaffer regarding the formation of Bilal Muslim Mission.

Since the atmospheres of Tanzania and Kenya were different, and since the constitution of the KSI Federation of Africa did not have tabligh among the Africans as part of its aims and objectives, ‘Allāmah suggested that it was better to form two semi-autonomous organizations, one as Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania and one as Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya, and register them in those respective countries. Everyone agreed with this proposal.

After returning to Dar-es-Salaam, Mohsin Jaffer sent a draft of the constitution. My father made some changes based on the local laws. It was finally signed by five individuals as the founding members: ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff, Haji

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Hussain Nasser Walji, Haji Fidahussein A Hameer and Ahmad H. Sheriff Dewji. The first committee consisted of Ahmad H. Sheriff Dewji as the Chairman, Mohammed Rafiq Somji as the Honorary Secretary and Hussain Nasser Walji as the Treasurer.

In March 1968, the constitution was sent to the Registrar of the Societies. The initial response was that its registration was “undesirable” as they thought that there would be a conflict between the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat and the Bilal Muslim Mission. An appeal was then sent alleviating the Registrar’s concern since two of the Jamaat’s officials were among the signatories and pointing out that the Jamaat’s focus was on internal affairs while the Bilal Muslim Mission would focus on external affairs. Finally, the constitution was duly registered on **16 April 1968**.

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s meeting with Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm:

In between the submission of the constitution and its registration, in **March 1968**, my father went for **ḥajj and ziyārāt**. That was the same ḥajj season when the Grand Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm also attended unannounced. My father had met his sons on a previous ḥajj pilgrimage in April 1965 but this was the first opportunity to meet the Grand Marja‘ himself on 11 Dhul Ḥijjah in Mina. Maulānā Ṣādiq ‘Ali Shāh, the secretary of the marja‘, introduced my father. Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm recognized his name based on the various questions that he had sent while writing the book on Islamic Personal Laws. In a letter that ‘Allāmah wrote to the family, he says, “When I was introduced to him, he became very pleased and talked to me for a considerable time.”⁵³ When my father wanted to discuss Bilal

53 My father had saved some money for our eldest sister’s marriage. But since ḥajj was coming close, he did not feel comfortable delaying it. In a letter that he wrote from Medina on 15 March 1968 (16 Dhul Ḥijjah 1387), addressing me: he wrote: “In this ḥajj and ziyārat of mine, there is a great contribution of

Muslim Mission, the Āyatullāh asked him to meet him in Najaf and talk about it more comfortably. Again, on 14 Dhul Ḥijjah, he was invited along with all the ‘ulamā’ to meet the Grand Marja’.

From ḥajj, my father travelled to Syria and then from Lebanon to Iraq. He observed the early days of Muḥarram in Karbala, and then reached Najaf on the 12th of that month (11 April 1968) and was the guest of Maulānā Ṣādiq ‘Ali Shāh. The Grand Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm accorded him great respect and praised his endeavours for tablīgh among the Africans. While describing the expanding work of tablīgh, my father mentioned to Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm that working on both fronts of the Bilal Muslim Mission and the Jamaat was becoming difficult, and that he wanted to concentrate fully on the tablīghi activities. So based on his request, Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm wrote a letter to Haji Mohammedali Meghji, the President of the Supreme Council, to release ‘Allāmah from the Jamaat so that he could dedicate his efforts full-time for the Bilal Muslim Mission, and that his monthly hadiya be increased and paid from his portion of the sihme Imam (a).

‘Allāmah Rizvi then travelled to Iran next and then went to India to visit his parents. His journey from India to Dar-es-Salaam was by sea. He stopped over in Mombasa and met Haji Mohamedali Meghji and handed over the Marj’a’s letter to him in July 1968. It took the Supreme Council a year to act upon it.

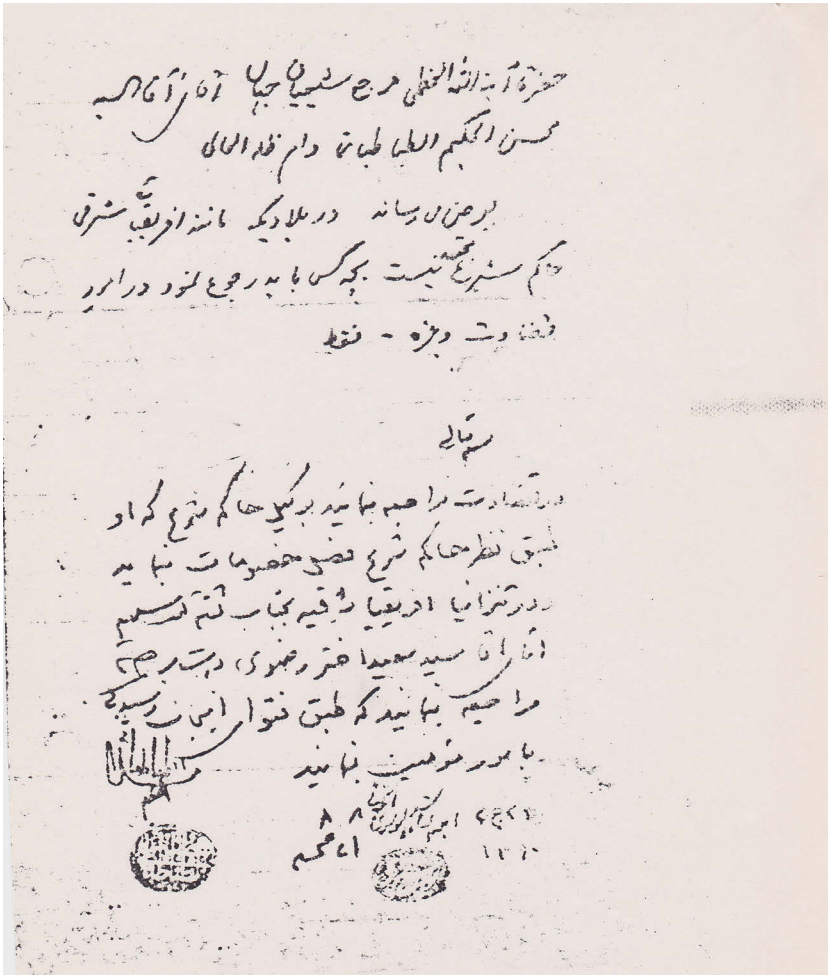
* * *

During this trip to Iraq, ‘Allāmah Rizvi asked Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm for authorization to act as a **religious judge** (*ḥākīm shara’*) in religious matters between the Shī‘as in East Africa. Based on that request, the Grand Āyatullāh S. Muḥsin aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī al-Ḥakīm

your mother and you all as you preferred my ḥajj trip over the trip to India.”

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

issued the ijāza on 21 Muḥarram 1388 (20 April 1968). Later on, the Grand Āyatullāh S. Abul Qāsim al-Khū’ī, also signed and confirmed this authorization on 21 Jumādi II 1390 (24 August 1970).



Translation:

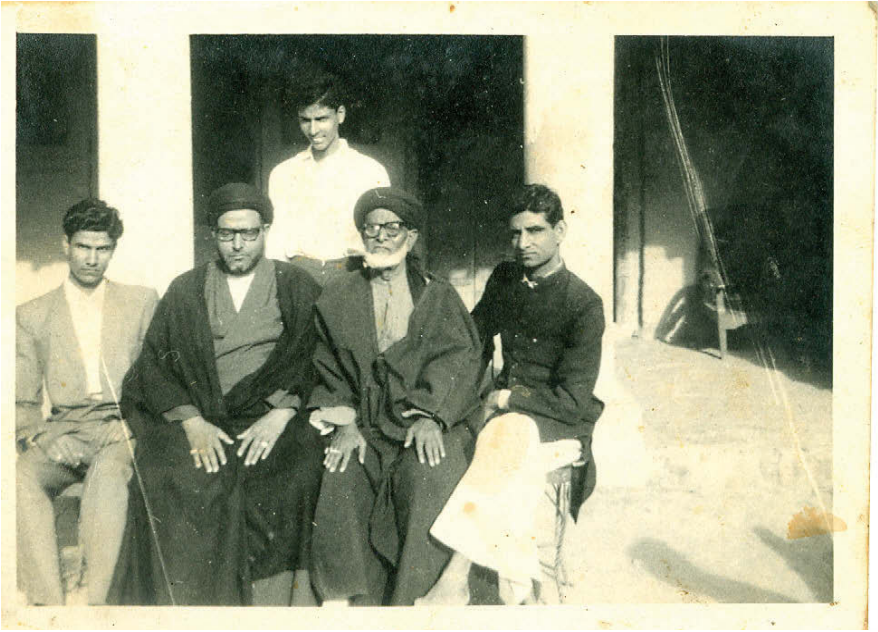
In the name of the Almighty

In religious judicial matters, [the mu’mineen should] refer to the representative of the Hākim Shara’ who will judge on disputes according to the fatwa of the mujtahid. And in

Tanzania, East Africa, they should refer to the respected Thiqatul Islam Agha-e Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may his grace continue) who will tackle the issues of the believers according to my fatwas.

Muḥsin aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (seal & signature) 21 Muḥarram 1388

Abul Qāsim al-Khū'ī (seal & signature) 21 Jumādi II 1390



After the 1968 ḥajj and ziyārat trip,
the 'Allāmah visited his parents in Gopalpur (Bihar) India.

Left to right: my youngest uncle Tawakkul Ḥusain, my father, my grandfather,
my uncle Ḥamīd Asghar, and my elder brother, 'Ali Imām, standing at the back.

* * *

'Allāmah Rizvi was part of the delegation of the Supreme Council headed by Haj Mohammadali Meghji that visited Somalia in **April 1969** for ten days. The delegation also met Somalia's only elected President Shermarke who gifted a portable Arabic typewriter to my father.

EXPANSION **OF TABLĪGH ACTIVITIES**

Training African Muballighīn

By looking at the internal and external challenges in tablīgh in Africa, ‘Allāmah Rizvi realized that it was essential to have muballighīn from the indigenous people. So with the inspiration of the verse 9:122, ‘Allāmah Rizvi acted during the early ages of success:

“It is not (right) for the believers to go forth all together (for jihād). So why should not a party from every section of them (the believers) go forth to become learned in the religion to warn their people when they return to them, hopefully they may beware,”

He selected five young African converts from the Temeke madrasa and taught them the elementary courses with the support of Agha Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi Shūshtari and Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure.

Then on **27 September 1968**, he sent them to Najaf under the patronage of the Grand Marja‘, Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm. Unfortunately, the political situation in Iraq under Ḥasan al-Bakri’s Bathist government interrupted their study in Iraq. So ‘Allāmah Rizvi arranged for them to move in 1970 to Sūr, Lebanon, to study in the institution of Imam Mūsa Ṣadr. Again, the precarious situation of southern Lebanon vis-à-vis attacks by Israel in that region (because of newly arrived Palestinian refugees from Jordan) made their stay unbearable.

Finally, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was able to get the five students moved

in early 1972 from Lebanon to Qum at Dārut Tablīgh Islāmi under the patronage of the late Āyatullāh S. Kāzim Sharī‘atmadārī. Then in June 1973, two more students were sent to Qum.

These were the first African students in the history of the Ḥawzah ‘Ilmiyya of Najaf and Qum. They were all students of ‘Allāmah Rizvi.



The first students to be sent to Najaf.

In the front row (right to left):

Shaykh Abdullah Seif Linganaweke, Shaykh Abdullāh Muhammad Nguruanga, Shaykh Suleiman Juma Mahanaka, Shaykh Abdur Rahman Rashid, and Shaykh Harun Rashid Pingili with their teachers in the back row (right to left)

Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure,

‘Allāmah Rizvi and Agha Muḥammad Mahdi Musawi Shustari.

With rapidly expanding activities, in late June 1973, the Mission called back two of those students, Shaykh Suleiman Mahanaka and Shaykh Abdullah Nguruanga. The former was assigned a teaching position at the Bilal madrasa in Temeke and the latter was trained for tablīghī activities among the Africans.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah addressing the gathering at the farewell meeting of students.



Dārut Tablīgh Islāmi (Qum, Iran) held a farewell party in which Shaykh. Sulemain Mahanaka & Shaykh Abdullah Nguruanga were awarded certificates by Āyātullāh Sharī‘atmadāri. Coincidentally, Hī Maulānā Syed Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan (the teacher of ‘Allāmah Rizvi) came to visit and was pleased to know that these two African graduates were students of his student!
(Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan can be seen in the center of the picture.)



Shaykh Abdullah Nguruanga receiving his certificate
from Āyātullāh Sharī‘atmadāri.

In a letter dated 16 October 1973, Maulānā Zafaru ’l-Ḥasan wrote: “It was a great pleasure to see your son in Qum. I reached there when Agha-e Shari‘atmadāri had organized the certificate ceremony for two graduates of Bilal Mission. Witnessing that scene, my heart prayed even more for you.”

On **30 June 1973**, two more students from the boarding Madrasa at Temeke, Ramadhāni Mgwame Mburu and Ishaq Abeid Pingili were selected to join other students for further studies at Dārut Tablīgh Islāmi, Qum.

Training the African ‘ulama in Qum and the muballigīn in Temeke, Dar-es-Salaam, increased the pace of tablīgh among the Africans. As a result of the Mission’s efforts tens of thousands of Africans accepted the Shī‘a faith in the Eastern African region. And now there are African Shī‘a shaykhs fulfilling the role of resident ‘ālims in the Khoja Shī‘a Ithnā-‘Ashari community in Africa and the West.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah Rizvi on a visit to Qum in 1974 with Tanzanian students during the ‘*amamah* ceremony of myself and Maulānā SM Sibtain Rizvi (of London). Standing in the back: A Nigerian student, Shaykh ‘Abdur Rahman Rashid, myself, another western African student, Shaykh ‘Abdullah Seif, Syed Mohammad Sibtain Rizvi. Sitting: Ishaq Abeid Pingili, ‘Ali Raza (Indonesian) and Shaykh Ramadhāni Mgwame Mburu (presently in Mombasa)

New Boarding House & Madrasah, Temeke (1975):

On 26 April 1975, the new boarding house and madrasah was officially opened in presence of a distinguished gathering of the Dar-es-Salaam community.

After the recitation of the Qur’an, Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure welcomed the guests; then the children of Bilal Madrasah recited a qasidah in Arabic. This was followed by an address by Haj Ahmad H. Sheriff, the chairman of the Bilal Mission. Then Agha

The Voyaging Star

S Muhammad Mahdi presented gifts to the contractor. Finally, the opening ceremony was done, amid the ṣalawāt, by ‘Allāmah Rizvi. Br. Dhikiri Ali Kiondo, the administrative secretary, fulfilled the role of master of ceremonies.

The building accommodates 16 students who are taught the elementary levels of Islamic studies. The cost of this building was donated by a lady from Arusha who preferred to remain anonymous.

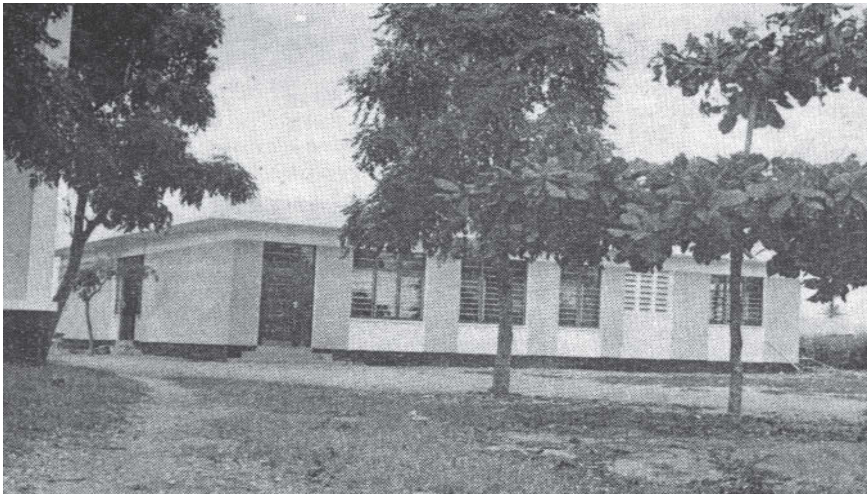
Some scenes from the opening ceremony of the new boarding and madrasah:



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Left to right: Hussain Nasir Wajli, Agha S.M. Mahdi Shushtari, Maulānā Ḥasan ‘Abbās Fiṭrat, ‘Allāmah Rizvi, an African Shaykh, Ḥasanali Walji Alibhai



The new madrasah.

Islamic Correspondence Course (ICC)

When ‘Allāmah Rizvi had visited Mombasa in 1967 and had an informal meeting with Supreme Council officials at the residence of Haj Mohamedali Meghji. Haj Hasan AM Jaffer, the Hon. Treasurer of the Supreme Council, suggested that a religious correspondence course be started, targeting students who had gone overseas for higher studies.

A plan was designed for “Islamic Correspondence Course” which was expected to have 22 units as follows:

1. Need of Religion
2. Tawḥīd: God of Islam
3. ‘Adl: Justice of God.
4. Nubuwwat: Prophethood
5. Life of the Holy Prophet
6. Qur’ān and Ḥadīth
7. Imamāt: Vicegerency of the Prophet
8. Qiyāmat: Day of Judgement
9. Life of Hadhrat ‘Ali (a.s.)
10. Lives of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn (a.s.)
11. Lives of 4th, 5th and 6th Imams (a.s.)
12. Lives of 7th and 8th Imams (a.s.)
13. Lives of 9th, 10th and 11th Imams (a.s.)
14. Life of 12th Imam
15. Life of Bibi Fatima - Womanhood in Islam
16. Prayers
17. Fast
18. Financial Code of Islam
19. Ḥajj
20. Jihād: Islamic War
21. Family Life of Islam
22. Moral Code of Islam

‘Allāmah Rizvi started writing units of the ICC. However, the content level was higher than expected and therefore the readership was limited to the students of the secondary or higher level.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

The first unit on *Need of Religion* was written in February 1970 and published on 16 April 1970; and the next seven units as well as units no. 17 and 21 were written and published without much delay. However, the increasing pressure of work did not allow ‘Allāmah Rizvi to complete the remaining units. (Much later, under the guidance of ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Dr. Dungersi was commissioned to write the biographies of the Infallible.)

However, the units that were published became extremely popular, and many of them were reprinted by publishers in Pakistan, Iran and the USA. Some of them were even translated by various organizations into different languages.

Ḥujjatul Islam Syed Murtaza Nūrī, the director of World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS), previously known as “A Group of Muslim Brothers” wrote:

“I have to inform you that as some of your publications which have been authored by you very nicely, they have attracted the attention of our Iranian brothers for more publicity of such publications. In this connection, our brothers have proposed to us that these publications should be published here in a beautiful form as well as better quality printing.

“In spite of the fact that I was fully confident that your basic aim to author such publications is to spread out Islamic truth to society⁵⁴ and the reprinting of these publications will definitely help your aim in this field, but, all the same, I deemed it advisable that first through a letter I should acquire your kind permission. Now, I would like to hear your opinion soon by return mail in this regard; and shall be very thankful to you too.

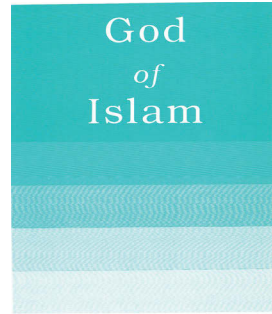
54 It is appropriate to mention here that my father never asked for any monetary compensation from Bilal Muslim Mission nor was he offered anything for writing all these books and articles. It was purely for pleasure of Allāh.

The Voyaging Star

“Of course, our aim to reprint the said publications is that we should be able to put them at the disposal of the truth seekers as much as possible and not for business purposes, while you are fully aware of our activities. Also, whenever you require any quantity from these publications, we are ready to supply you.”⁵⁵

* * *

The importance of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s scholarly works can be gauged by the second unit, ***God of Islam***, written in April to May 1970 and published in **1971** on the topic of existence and *tawhīd* (monotheism) of the Almighty.



by
Sayed S. Akhtar Rizvi

The book starts with the story of Imam Ṣādiq (a) which places the belief in God as part of human instinct; and then to prove the existence of God, the writer starts with the most obvious of concepts, “existence,” and, by using simple examples, presents the “mental existence” (*wujūd-e dhahni*) and the “real existence” (*wujūd-e khāriji*) to the reader; and finally by relating one to the other, he reaches to the idea of “possible existence” and “impossible existence” eventually leading to the “necessary existence -- God.” This section ends with the discussion on the qualities of the Necessary Existence.

55 As reported in *The Light*, vol. 6 (April 1972) no. 2, p. 8.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

This takes the reader to the discussion about the world of matter: whether or not it is eternal? And by proving that matter and this world is “possible existence,” the need of the Necessary Existence is proven.

Then ‘Allāmah moves on to the theory of Darwinism and its analysis; and then criticism of British philosopher Bertrand Russell’s arguments (in his “*Why I am not a Christian?*” and in his debate with Rev. Caplestone), and debunks the idea of creation by chance. Since Russell had claimed to be an agnostic, ‘Allāmah then talks about agnosticism.

This is followed by the theory of probability to prove creation by design which is supported by an article of a scientist, Cressy Morrison on the unity of God. The latter part of the book presents the debates of the Prophet on monotheism; ending with the qualities and beautiful names of God.

A comparison of this book with volume five of *Uṣūl-e Falsafa wa Rawish-e Realism* by ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’i with very extensive commentary by Shahīd Murtaza Muṭahhari, published in 1975, will show the level of erudition of ‘Allāmah Rizvi on Islamic theology. Interestingly, the basis of arguments in both works are very similar but there is one important difference: while the extensive commentaries by Shahīd Mutahhari were put in philosophical terminology and style with descriptions of how the philosophical arguments evolved historically, *God of Islam* never lets the reader sense that he or she is treading through a philosophical area of expertise. And therein lies the beauty of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s work: the most complicated theological or philosophical issue could be presented in a very simple style devoid of technical intricacies.⁵⁶

56 The need to show this comparison and the timeline (1970) is respectfully intended to dispel the mistake made inadvertently by the former ambassador of Iran to Tanzania, in a documentary produced by al-Mustafa International

The Voyaging Star

God of Islam has been translated into Urdu, Swahili, Hindi, Swedish, French and Spanish.

* * *

Haji Bashir Rahim, then the Chief Parliamentary Draftsman and Counsel to the Speaker, praised the ICC books as follows:

“I am very pleased for this opportunity to express my appreciation of the Correspondence Course in the Islamic studies organized by the Bilal Muslim Mission under the direct supervision of Maulānā S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

“With the hostility that Shi‘ism has suffered both from the non-Muslim world and certain groups of the Muslim community, the need for gearing our youths to an intellectual understanding of Shi‘ism cannot be over-emphasized. While quite often this hostility has been taken a direct, and sometimes, violent expression, not infrequently one comes across a literary work which *ex facie* purports to be sympathetic to the Shi‘ite doctrines, certain very subtle, but nonetheless destructive, criticisms are presented in such a form that they might well create in an uninformed mind a welter of confusion.

“Innumerable efforts have been made to counter such hostility by literary works of considerable magnificence and erudition. Unfortunately however these works remain inaccessible to the youths of our community, as practically all of them are in

University of Qum on the tenth anniversary of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s death, in which he sincerely praised the pioneering efforts of my father but erroneously said that “he wrote and translated some of the writing of Ustad Mutahhari and ‘Allāmah ‘Askari and published them in small booklets which had greater benefit for propagation.” He was referring to the 60s and 70s when Iranians had not yet entered the arena of tabligh in Africa. *God of Islam* and other works of the ‘Allāmah preceded the relevant books of Shahid Murtaza Mutahhari and ‘Allāmah ‘Askari which become famous only in the mid-seventies and later on. May Allāh bless them all for their contributions.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

languages with which we are not familiar.

“The reason has been that the literary works on Shi‘ism to which we can have easy access, falls far short of satisfying our need for an intellectual understanding of our faith. Many a youth, ensnared by the subtle traps which have been so cleverly laid on his path towards a proper understanding of the Shi‘ite faith, has either had his faith rocked by a traumatic confusion or has sought the line of least resistance -- that of refusing to examine his faith intellectually, being content with the belief that religion is a matter of spiritual faith irreconcilable with one’s secular activities.

“For these reasons the Islamic Correspondence Course is most timely, if not somewhat overdue...I have had the privilege of reading the booklets which have been published so far, and I must admit that I have been greatly impressed by their style, presentation of the subject matter, erudition and simplicity. If one is seeking for sensationalism of sectarian bigotry, then the Course is not for him. Every doctrine of Shi‘ism is explained in its historical background and clearly convinces a dispassionate reader of the strength of its logic.

“So far eight booklets have been published. The first few books deal with somewhat difficult subjects. Take, for example, the *Justice of God*.⁵⁷ The whole doctrine of ‘*adālat* (justice) is explained in a manner which combines lucidity with erudition, a combination which is found only rarely in works on philosophy... Despite the simplicity of style, it is possible that readers may have found the *Justice of God* a difficult subject to fully understand. Taking into account the intrinsic difficulty of the subject matter compounded by the difficulty of rendering it in

57 According to my father’s diary, he started writing this unit in April 1970 and finished it in July 1970.

the English language, which despite the fertility of vocabulary, has no words which can do justice of the nuances of Arabic expressions, the *Justice of God* is a remarkable achievement for which we must be truly grateful to its author...I am sure that when all the booklets have been published we shall have made a major contribution to Shi‘ism...

“No words can equal this development in paying tribute to Maulānā Saeed Akhtar Rizvi’s efforts. To the best of my information this is perhaps the first occasion when an original work on Islamic theology is sought to be translated from English to the languages which have for centuries enjoyed a virtual monopoly over original literary works on Islam.

“Finally, I would, with all humility and force of expression at my command, congratulate Maulānā Saeed Akhtar Rizvi for having succeeded in enabling us, a community residing a great distance from the various citadels of Islamic learning, to make not an inconsiderable contribution towards a better understanding of Islam in general and of Shi‘ism in particular...”⁵⁸

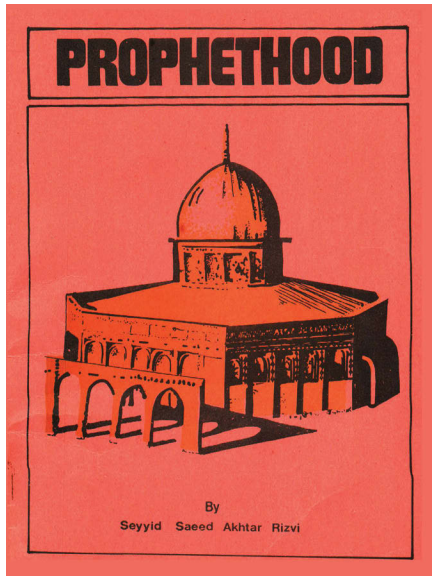
* * *

The fourth unit of the correspondence course on *Prophethood* was published in 1970. In 1972, *Nāma-e Astān-e Quds* (vol. 9, no. 1-2; Muḥarram 1391),⁵⁹ an organ of the Shrine of Imam Raza (a.s.) in Mashhad (Iran), published the Persian translation of some sections of *Prophethood*. In its introductory note, the editor writes, “In various chapters of this treatise, beneficial and deep issues have been discussed in simple language which has increased its usefulness and its appeal; for further benefit and awareness of the readers with this treatise, some parts of it which have been translated by Mr. Fath ‘Aliyān are being presented here.”

58 Bashir Rahim, *The Light*, vol. 6 (February 1972) no. 1, p. 7-9.

59 Thanks to HI Shk. M Hasan Mahdawi Mahr of Astan-e Quds for this.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



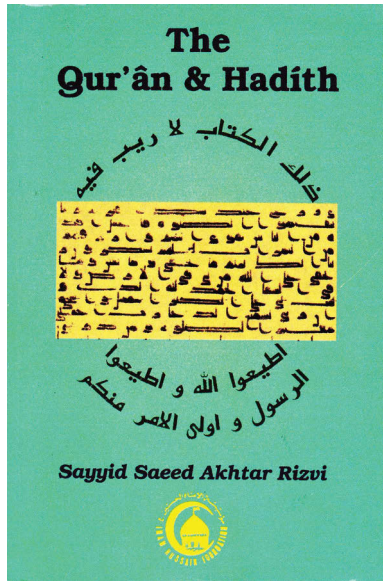
در مباحث مختلف این رساله مطالب سودمند و دقیقی مورد بحث قرار گرفته که چون به زبان ساده نگارش یافته مفید و شایان توجه است و برای مزید استفاده و آشنائی خوانندگان گرامی با این رساله سودمند بعضی از قسمتهای آن را که بوسیله آقای فتح علیان سرپرست موزه آستان قدس ترجمه شده است نقل می شود

* * *

Next was the unit on *The Qur'ān & Ḥadīth* published in 1971. It begins with the theme of nature and modes of revelation; followed by a chapter on the pre-Islamic revelations, including the interpolation in Tawrāt and Injīl. Should the New Testament be compared to the Qur'ān or ḥadīth?

Then comes a lengthy discussion on the Qur'ān, its collection and authenticity, its miraculous aspects, and the correct way of its interpretation. The last chapter deals with ḥadīth, its definition, status and categories, its recording and collection, and how to deal with the problem of fabrication in the early days of Islam.

This book was published three times, and then in 1994, I edited it, added notes and streamlined its arrangement. During my parents' visit to Toronto in that year, my father thoroughly reviewed it and a new edition was published in Beirut by Imam Hussain Foundation, followed by another edition in Dar-es-Salaam.



* * *

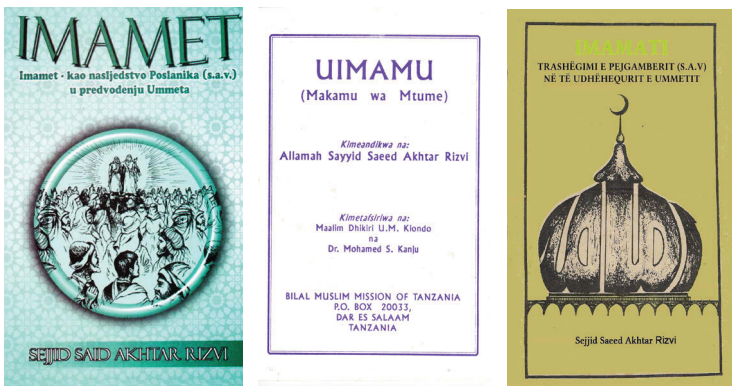
The seventh unit on the imāmat of Amīru 'l-Mu'mineen 'Alī bin Abī Tālib (a) entitled, *Imāmate: The Vicegerency of the Prophet* was first published in 1971. Then it was published many times and distributed worldwide in tens of thousands by the World Organisation for Islamic Services (WOFIS). It has also been translated into the Urdu, Gujarati, Bosnian, Albanian, French, Swahili, Indonesian, Spanish, Bangla, Amharic (Ethiopian) and Hindi languages. One would not be surprised to see that many American Shī'as saw the light of Shī'ism through that book.

Dr. Khalīl Ṭabāṭabā'ī, a nephew of H.I. S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm and founder of Imam Hussain Foundation, once mentioned to 'Allāmah Rizvi that his book on imāmate and other books on uṣūl-e din, despite their brevity, cover all the important issues and that they should also be made available in the Arabic language. The 'Allāmah took it upon himself to translate that book into Arabic and it was published by the Imam Hussain Foundation in Beirut in 1999.

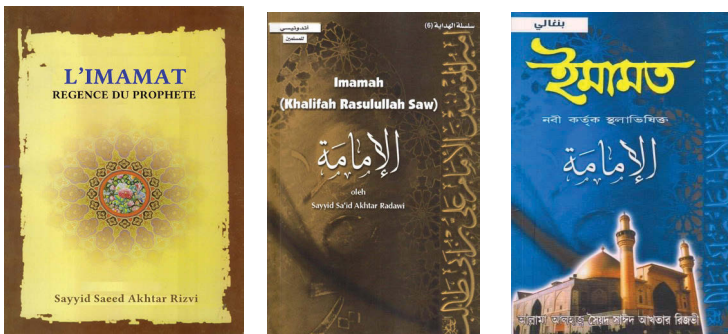
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Imamate (original) English; translations in Arabic and Urdu



Imamate's translations in Bosnian, Swahili, Albanian



Imamate's translations in French, Indonesian, Bengali



Imamate’s translations in Amharic (Ethiopian) and Hindi

Swahili Correspondence Course

Bilal Muslim Mission started a correspondence course in Swahili for the eastern African region. ‘**Allāmah Rizvi himself wrote a report** about its beginning and its impact on the tablīgh of Shi‘ism in June 1974. Here are the main points from that report:

“Shi‘as killed Imam Ḥussain, and that is why they beat their chests in repentance whenever they remember their deed.’

‘Shi‘as believe that ‘Ali was superior to the Holy Prophet of Islam.’

‘Shi‘as hate all the companions of the Holy Prophet.’ ”

“These and similar things are taught, by word of mouth, to the Sunni Muslims throughout the East African coast. Such ignorance is bad in itself; but when it breeds prejudice and hatred then, it becomes most reprehensible.

“It was to remove this ignorance that the Mission embarked in December 1972 upon the project of Islamic correspondence course in Swahili language. It is called ‘Masomo ya Kiislamu Kwa Njia ya Posta’ (Islamic Lessons by Post).

“The course consists of four booklets as roots of religion, biographies of the 12 Imams and Bibi Fāṭima, branches of religion

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

and Islamic ethics and morals. Each booklet contains a series of questions which the student have to answer and send to the Mission for checking and evaluation. Upon successful completion, the student is awarded a beautiful certificate. There is no fee whatsoever for this service.

“The first student, an African Shī‘a, was enrolled on 8 December 1972. We did not expect more than 50 or 60 students altogether; and for a few weeks, we did not even bother to give any roll numbers to the students. But by March 1973, we got 234 students.

“By then the scheme was attracting many people in far away places like Lushoto and Songea. And by end of 1973, there were 2737 students scattered throughout Tanzania. Now even people from Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Zambia and Zaire are also taking advantage of this scheme. There are farmers, secretaries, officers, teachers, army men, school and university students and factory workers; they follow Shāfi‘i, Ibādhi and Ḥanafi schools of Islamic shari‘ah; also there are many Christians from various denominations.

“Needless to say that the scheme has proved successful beyond our wildest imagination. Apparently, we could not ask for more. But the grace of Allāh knows no bounds. We have got some unexpected windfalls. And we feel that, according to the command of the Qur’ān to ‘proclaim the bounties of Allāh,’ we should bring them to the knowledge of our readers.

“So far [i.e., by June 1974] about 400 students have completed this course. Out of this number, a few have written us that they have accepted the Shī‘a faith as the original religion of Allāh brought by the Last Prophet, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafa (s.a.w.).

“We most humbly thank Almighty Allāh for this result, which obviously is not due to any effort on our part but solely by the tawfīq and grace of Allāh. We just hope and pray that on the Day of Resurrection, we may be counted among the humblest servants of

the True Faith.

“And more heartening about these conversions is the fact that all of them have accepted it after fully studying it. Theirs is a well-considered judgement, based on knowledge and understanding. In fact, it was this kind of conversion that was our ardent desire from the very beginning.”⁶⁰

* * *

By mid 1986, more than 4,000 students had completed this course; and 13,000 more were still enrolled. With the increase of students in Kenya, Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya also started printing the booklets in Mombasa and maintained the Kenyan students.

* * *

Rotating Seminars:

Most of the converts in Tanzania accepted Shi‘ism by studying through the Swahili correspondence course. The Mission would try to invite them to Dar-es-Salaam or send them to a nearby Jamaat for an orientation about Shī‘a Islam and receive practical training for prayers, etc. However, not all converts could avail of such an opportunity. And so it was decided in 1976 to hold regional seminars from time to time to meet them, provide networking amongst themselves, discuss the possibilities of tabligh in their areas, and to teach the new converts.

(a) Mwanza Seminar:

Mwanza, in the north-west of Tanzania, was chosen as the venue of the first seminar from 26 to 28 **November 1976**. The Mwanza

60 For this report, see S.S.A. Rizvi, “Masomo ya Kiislamu Kwa Njia ya Posta,” *The Light*, vol. 8 (June 1974) no. 3, p. 10-11.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Jamaat graciously offered to host the seminar. The Mission had sent invitations to 35 converts in that region and it was gratifying to note that 26 of them were able to attend, some of them reached there after considerable hardship owing to a lack of adequate transport.

The seminar opened at 9 p.m. on 26th November and started its work on the 27th under the chairmanship of ‘Allāmah Rizvi.

The first address was given by Shaykh Mohamed Ali Ngongabure on “Proofs that Shī‘a Ithnā-‘Ashari Madhhab is the only True Madhhab,” followed by introductions by the converts and questions and answers regarding the speech.

The second address was given by Shaykh Harun Rashid Pingili on “Some Details About Wudhu and Prayers” covering the Shī‘a method of wudhu and prayer according to the Qur’ān and ḥadīth. This was followed by a question and answer session.

At night, Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff recited a majlis and ‘Allāmah Rizvi talked about the activities of the Bilal Mission.

On 28 November, the first address was given by Shaykh Khamis Kitumbo on “‘Ismat and Imāmat.” After a tea break and a group photo, ‘Allāmah Rizvi talked at length on the concept of Ulul Amr and other related issues.

Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff talked about the history of Bilal Muslim Mission and the importance of tabligh. This was followed by a breakout session divided by regions to discuss the best methods of tabligh which were noted by Haji Ali MJ Sheriff for deliberation in the future.

Shaykh Ali Awsat, a teacher at Temeke Madrasa, spoke on Shi‘ism. The night ended with a majlis by the ‘Allāmah on the wafāt of the 5th Imam (a). The seminar ended with thanks and appreciation from both the hosts and the participants.

In the words of Haji Ali MJ Sheriff, the seminar achieved ten

times more than its expected goals.

(b) Kalemia (Zaire) Seminar:

Through the initiation of Suleiman Banza, a muballigh in Bujumbura (Burundi), a seminar was held in Kalemia (Congo) on 27 February 1977. Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure and Shaykh Khamisi Kitumboy conducted the seminar. As a result of this work, about 70 people accepted Shi‘ism.

(c) Arusha Seminar:

A similar seminar was conducted in Arusha, in north east of Tanzania, on 15th to 17th July 1977. The Arusha Jamaat hosted the participants, and it was chaired by the late Gulamhussein A Peera and was addressed by Shaykh Abdullah Ngurangwa and Shaykh Harun Rashid Pingili.

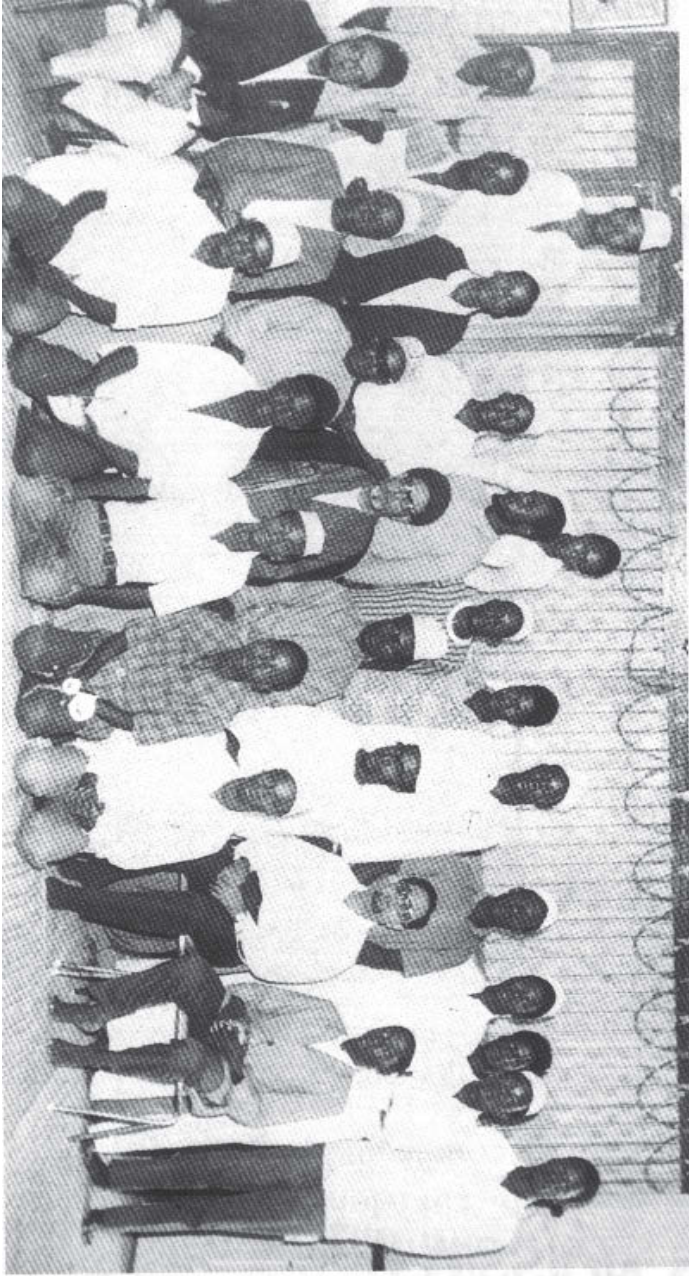
(d) Ujiji Seminar:

Another seminar was conducted in the Ujiji region. The Kigoma Jamaat hosted that program which was organized from 7th to 11th **April 1978**. It was to end on the 10th but was extended for one more day because of the enthusiasm of the participants. It was attended by 60 converts as well as some local Sunni Shaykhs who were taking an interest in Shi‘ism. It was conducted under the guidance of ‘Allāmah Rizvi by Shaykh Abdullah Ngurangwa, Shaykh Dhikiri U. M. Kiondo, Shaykh Khamis Kitumboy and Shaykh Harun Rashid Pingili. All the lectures were followed by question and answer sessions.⁶¹

* * *

61 See the report *The Light*, vol. 12 (June 1978) no. 3, p. 13-16.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah Rizvi with the fellow muballighīn, Bilal officials, participants and Muwanza Jamaat officials.

The Voyaging Star

With the popularity of the Swahili correspondence course, Bilal Muslim Mission decided to publish it in English in order to benefit English-speaking countries.



‘Allāmah Rizvi with his muballigīn & host from Kigoma Jamaat



‘Allāmah Rizvi with his muballigin & the participants

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Out of the four booklets of this course, the first three were translated by Shaykh Muḥammad Ali Gongabure from an Arabic book with many changes and additions made by ‘Allāmah Rizvi. The fourth booklet was an original work in Swahili authored by Agha-e Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdi Shushtari.

Then the four booklets were translated into English by Haji Mohsin MR Alidina (then of University of Dar-es-Salaam) and published under the title of “Islamic Religious Course.” These booklets proved so popular that a publisher in Karachi plagiarized the whole set and printed it as one book with a new title – without mentioning the original authors, translator and publisher.⁶²

External Challenge by the Qāḍianis

Haji Raza Versi (owner of Afro Stories, Dar-es-Salaam) had an interest in tabligh. A person who used to regularly visit his store was Shaykh Muhammad Munawwar, the main Qāḍiāni missionary in Tanzania. One day during a conversation, he said to the Qāḍiāni missionary that, we Shī‘as are also into tabligh. Muhammad Munawwar came to know that ‘Allāmah Rizvi also attends Sunni celebrations and gathering. In order to tarnish the image of ‘Allāmah Rizvi among the Sunnis, a pamphlet was distributed among the Sunnis that the Shī‘as:

1. Don’t believe in the integrity of the Qur’ān;
2. Abuse the companions of the Prophet;
3. Abuse the Prophet’s wife, ‘Ā’isha;
4. Believe in the permissibility of mut‘ah;
5. Wipe their feet in wudhu (instead of washing them).

62 See the report in *The Light*, vol. 10 (December 1976) no. 6, p. 22-26 and also *Bustani ya Elimu* (1991) which has the proceedings as well as questions and answers of these seminars.

When this pamphlet was brought to the attention of the Bilal Muslim Mission, the committee discussed the issue and decided that it was better to ignore it.

Then the Qāadianis started writing anti-Shī‘a articles in their monthly magazine issued from Nairobi. My father wrote a response in *The Light* magazine.

Then a new convert from Tunduru (in the southern region of Tanzania) sent 8 to 10 questions in Swahili. My father answered (in 24 foolscap cyclostyled pages) in English, which was then translated by Br. Mwangamilo and sent to the convert. Later on, it was discovered that the Qāadianis were circulating the same questions in that region. So ‘Allāmah Rizvi circulated his answers in the Tundura and Songea area.

The incident of these questions and answers was mentioned in the monthly Bilal News (which was a brief report of Bilal Muslim Mission’s activities circulated among interested Shī‘a organizations). Haji Hassanally P. Ebrahim (of Karachi) read about it and asked for a copy of the questions and answers. My father sent him the English responses. Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer suggested to my father to add and elaborate on certain topics. After finalizing the manuscript, it was sent to Haji Hassanally P Ebrahim who published it in **1971** as a booklet entitled *Muhammad is the Last Prophet*. This booklet was then reprinted twice in Dar-es-Salaam in 1971 and 1972, and then multiple times in Tehran by the World Organisation for Islamic Services (WOFIS).

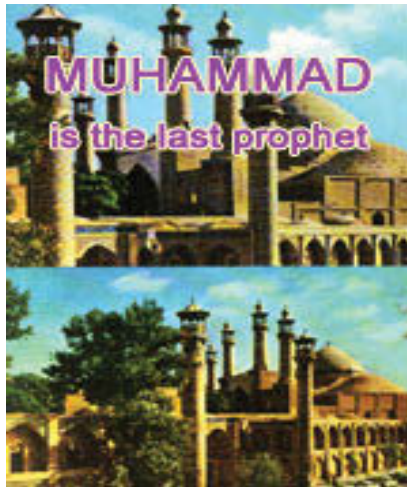
This book was then translated into Swahili and was circulated widely. It had a great impact in countering the propagation of the Qadianis. The Qadianis sent the English version of the book to their headquarters, Rubwah, in Pakistan, for its rebuttal.

Once Dr. Khaleel Muhammed (presently at San Diego State University) read the book *Muhammad is the Last Prophet* and

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

commented to me that “This is the best book written on the finality of the Prophet and in criticism of Qadianism.”

One of the African muballighin had visited the Qadiani stall at the Agricultural Show, Nairobi. He came back to the stall of Bilal Mission and narrated his conversation with the Qadiani missionary who was complaining that we are under pressure in Pakistan because of its government and in East Africa they were under pressure because of the Bilal Muslim Mission.



‘ALLĀMAH RIZVI RECOGNIZED BY THE K.S.I. SUPREME COUNCIL

On **16 April 1976**, at the Conference of the K.S.I. Supreme Council of Africa, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was recognized by Mulla Asgharali MM Jaffer, Chairman of the Supreme Council, for his contribution in the field of tabligh. The citation awarded to him at that conference was as follows:

The Voyaging Star

“Janab Maulānā Syed Saeed Akthar Rizvi Saheb Qibla,
Fakhrul Afazil.

It is my proud privilege to present to you this citation commending your excellent services to the Federation of the Khoja Shī‘a Ithna-Asheri Jamats of Africa. Your earnest desire to serve my Community in the name of Allāh and your persistent diligence to see this desire fulfilled, cannot be amply rewarded by a simple eulogy or a superficial tribute. As such, these few lines citing the unique record of your contributions are an acknowledgment coupled with our gratitude and the prayers for your well-being.

Your services are on record since 1959 when you were first posted to Lindi Jamat as a resident Aalim after a short stay in Dar-es-Salaam. Later you were at Arusha where, besides attending to the duties of the resident Aalim, you lent a helping hand to the then President of the Federation, the Late Haji Ebrahim Hussein Sheriff and his colleagues. Later in 1965, you began to serve our Dar-es-Salaam Jamat as a resident Aalim.

With the establishment of the Bilal Mission by my Council, you were relieved of your duties as a resident Aalim so that you could devote your full time to the Mission. **The zeal and candour with which you have served this great cause of Islam needs no emphasis, and it may be safely said that with the passage of time the Mission has grown to be synonymous with your name.**

Many Ulema have come across the stage of our Community with greater renown and aplomb; few indeed have had the influence and impact as momentous as yours. **I am pleased to note that your dedication coupled with brilliance, your intellect and**

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

its utility, your wisdom and application, have all left an indelible impression on the history of the enshrinement and furtherance of our religious heritage.

The formation of the Bilal Muslim Mission is a singular achievement of my Council. But for the existence of the Council, an organisation like the Bilal Muslim Mission probably could never have been organised, and prosper the way it has today. This is a result of unity, discipline, organisation and the confidence that the Council has enjoyed.

By the same token it can safely be said that but for your enthusiasm and dedication, Bilal Muslim Mission could not probably have achieved what it has today.

Bilal Muslim Mission is your child whom you have lovingly reared and nourished. Through this Mission, you have served my Community in Africa and abroad, and have carried the banner of Islam to non-Muslims throughout the world. In Africa, as a result of the Bilal Muslim Mission our African brethren heard and accepted the sacred teachings of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his Ahlul Bait. **While our Prophet had one Bilal as a shining example from Africa, you have, through this Mission, followed his wake by creating several of his type in the distant and remote places of this great Continent.** Added to this you have inspired many members of my Community to work for the cause under your able and scholarly guidance.

In these days of the Greater Concealment of our 12th Imam, your zeal to serve as his dedicated, brave, forbearing and illustrious assistant warrants our praise and appreciation. We pray that

The Voyaging Star

Allāh, His Prophet and Ahlul Bait (p.b.u.t.) amply reward you here and hereinafter.

May you be ever with us. Amin.

Signed,
Asgharali M.M. Jaffer
Chairman

Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania)
16th April 1976
Supreme Council's Office,
PO Box 81085,
Mombasa,
Kenya

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi

THE FEDERATION OF THE KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI JAMATS OF AFRICA



Janab Maulana Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi Saheb Qibla,
'Fakhrul Afazil'

Dar es Salaam,

Salamun Alaikum.

It is my proud privilege to present to you this citation commending your excellent services to the Federation of the Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamats of Africa. Your earnest desire to serve my Community in the name of Allah and your persistent diligence to see this desire fulfilled, cannot be amply rewarded by a simple eulogy or a superficial tribute. As such, these few lines citing the unique record of your contributions are an acknowledgement coupled with our gratitude and the prayers for your well-being.

Your services are on record since 1959 when you were first posted to Lindi Jamat as a resident Aalim after a short stay in Dar es Salaam. Later you were at Arusha where, besides attending to the duties of a resident Aalim, you lent a helping hand to the then President of the Federation, the Late Haji Ebrahim Hussein Sheriff and his colleagues. Later in 1965, you began to serve our Dar es Salaam Jamat as a resident Aalim.

With the establishment of the Bilal Mission by my Council, you were relieved of your duties as a resident Aalim so that you could devote your full time to the Mission. The zeal and candour with which you have served this great cause of Islam needs no emphasis, and it may be safely said that with the passage of time the Mission has grown to be synonymous with your name.

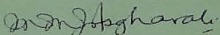
Many Ulama have come across the stage of our Community with greater renown and aplomb; few indeed have had the influence and impact as momentous as yours. I am pleased to note that your dedication coupled with brilliance, your intellect and its utility, your wisdom and application, have all left an indelible impression on the history of the enshrinement and furtherance of our religious heritage.

The formation of the Bilal Muslim Mission is a singular achievement of my Council. But for the existence of the Council, an organisation like the Bilal Muslim Mission probably could never have been organised, and prosper the way it has today. This is a result of unity, discipline, organisation and the confidence that the Council has enjoyed.

By the same token it can safely be said that but for your enthusiasm and dedication, Bilal Muslim Mission could not probably have achieved what it has today. Bilal Muslim Mission is your child, whom you have lovingly reared and nourished. Through this Mission, you have served my Community in Africa and abroad, and have carried the banner of Islam to non-Muslims throughout the world. In Africa, as a result of the Bilal Mission our African brethren heard and accepted the sacred teachings of our Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and his Ahlul Bait. While our Prophet had one Bilal as a shining example from Africa, you have, through this Mission, followed his wake by creating several of his type in the distant and remote places of this great Continent. Added to this you have inspired many members of my Community to work for the cause under your able and scholarly guidance.

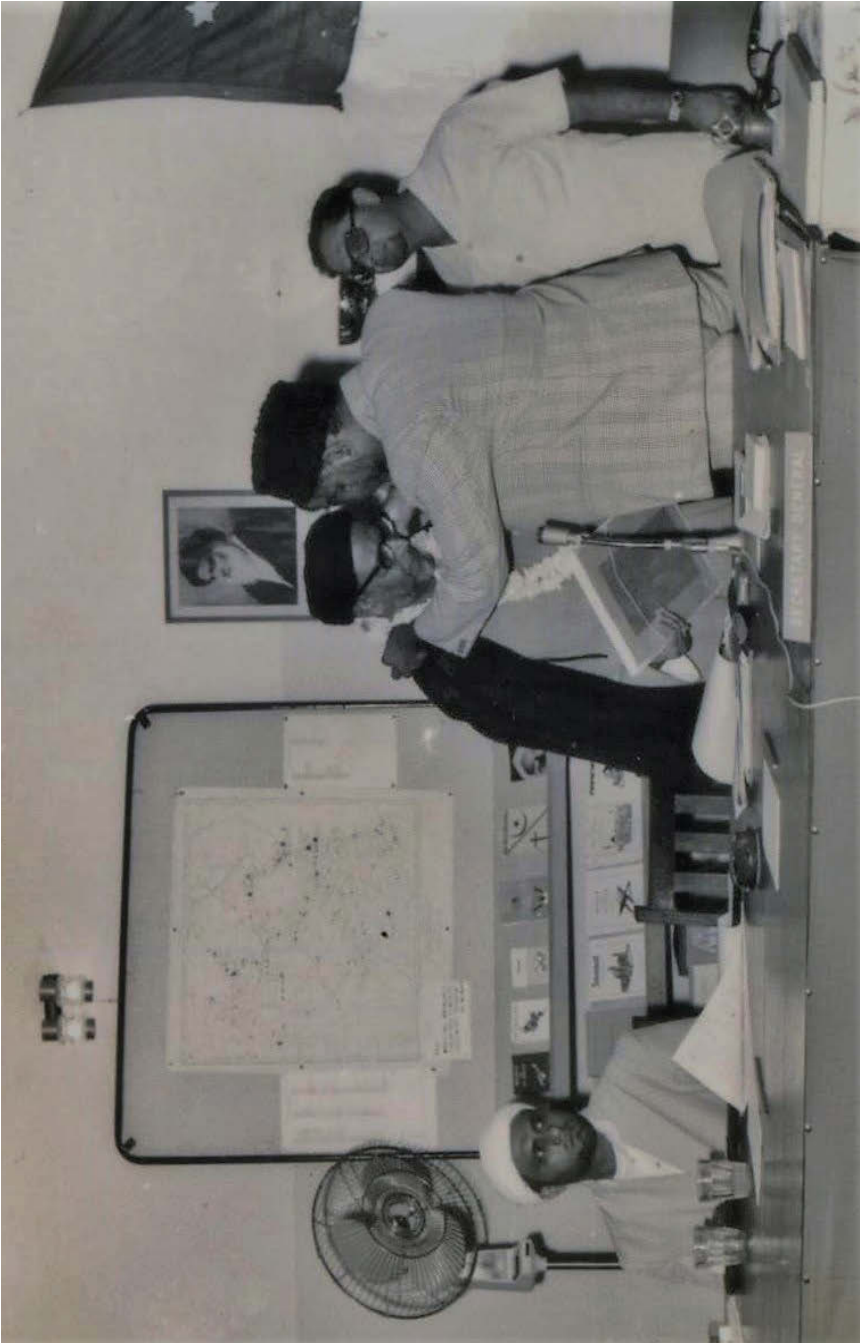
In these days of the Greater Concealment of our 12th Imam, your zeal to serve as his dedicated, brave, forbearing and illustrious assistant warrants our praise and appreciation. We pray that Allah, His Prophet and Ahlul Bait (p.b.u.t.) amply reward you here and hereinafter.

May you be ever with us. Amin.


(ASGHARALI M. M. JAFFER)
CHAIRMAN

DAR ES SALAAM (TANZANIA)
16TH APRIL 1976

Supreme Council's Office,
P. O. Box 81085,
MOMBASA
Kenya



Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer placing a garland on 'Allāmah Rizvi

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer presenting the award citation to ‘Allamah Rizvi

Shaykh Omar Jumaa Mayunga becomes Shaykh Ali Jumaa Mayunga

Shaykh ‘Ali Jumaa Mayunga (b. 1947) described his spiritual journey in a speech given at seminar organized by Jāmi‘atu ’l-Muṣṭafa, Dar-es-Salaam, on the 10th anniversary of the ‘Allāmah’s demise.

Shaykh Mayunga first described his background of being raised in a Sunni-Sufi family (from the Qādiriyya/Uwaysiyya ṭarīqah) but gradually converting to the Wahhābi sect and becoming a champion of that ideology. In one of his visits to Mombasa, he met his old friend Shaykh ‘Abdullahi Nāṣir, who was known as a Shi‘a voice in Kenya. Shaykh Nāṣir took him to the library of Bilal’s Mombasa office where he was welcomed by Haji ‘Ali Mohamed Jaffer and showed him the library. Haji saheb gave him *Fadhā’ilu ’l-Khamsa min Ṣiḥāḥi ’s-Sittah* by al-Firūzābādī and *An-Naṣṣ wa ’l-Ijtihād* of Sharafu ’d-Dīn al-Mūsawī. He was surprised to see the aḥādīth on the virtues and status of the Ahlul Bayt from the six canonical books of the Ahlu ’s-Sunnah! (This shows how Wahhābis try to hide the virtues of the Ahlul Bayt even from their learned people.) To be assured that these are genuine quotations, he would refer to the actual Ṣiḥāḥ books which were available in that library. Finally, Shaykh ‘Abdullahi Nāṣir told him that the only ‘ālim who can properly answer your questions and convince you is in Dar-es-Salaam. When you go to Dar-es-Salaam, go to the Khoja masjid and ask them for the location of Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. **[This was in 1986.]**

Then he spoke about his initial meetings with the ‘Allāmah: he had presented four questions about Shi‘ism:

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

1. The succession of Prophet Muḥammad (s): Who took his place as successor?
2. The status of the Qur’ān: What is the difference between your Qur’ān and our Qur’ān?
3. Isn’t taqiyyah the same as nifāq? What is the proof for it?
4. What about mut‘a (the temporary marriage)?

‘Allāmah Rizvi assigned three days of the week for him to come and have a discussion from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The first discussion is obviously the most fundamental issue in the Shī‘a-Sunni debate. And whenever ‘Allāmah would present a historical account or ḥadīth, Shaykh Mayunga would insist on seeing the actual reference and would not accept a secondary source on that issue. Obviously not all reference books were always available, and so some references had to be postponed for the next meeting. Shaykh Omar Mayunga said that whenever I would insist on looking at the original reference, the ‘Allāmah would say, “*Wewe kweli Omar – You really are Omar!*” He said, “It was only later on that I realized what he meant when he used to say, ‘You really are Omar!’”

This discussion continued for three months covering all these four issues. Finally, one day, Shaykh Mayunga said to his wife, “We are now neither Wahhābi nor Anṣāru ’s-Sunnah.” So his wife asked, “Then what are we now?” He replied, “We are now Shī‘a.”

Then he went to my father’s office. ‘Allāmah asked: “What brings you here today?” Shaykh Mayunga replied, “I want to tell you that I, Omar Jumaa Mayunga, I am Shī‘a Ithna ‘Ashari from yesterday. And if I die, I don’t want the Wahhabis to come and take me; you should make sure things are done per Shī‘a ways...Now I want you to teach me your laws...”

This is how Shaykh *Omar* Jumaa Mayunga became Shaykh ‘*Ali* Jumaa Mayunga!



Shaykh Mayunga (left) Shaykh Musabbah (right)
the day that both received ijāzah of riwāyat from the ‘Allāmah.
(Ijāzah-e riwāyat means the authority to narrate aḥādīth through his chain of
scholars of ḥadīth going back to the earliest sources.)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

The books written and translated by Shaykh Mayunga after his conversion to Shi‘ism include:

1. Tasfiri ya Dua-e Kumayl (1987)
2. Mut‘a Ndoa Sahihi (1990)
3. Meza ya Uchunguzi (1992)
4. Muongozo wa Wasomao (1993)
5. Tarekh ya Kiislamu (1996)
6. Qur’an Inayobainisha (1st edition, 2003)
7. Kitabu Kinachobaininsha (2nd edition, 2008)
8. Zao la Saqifa (2012)

The most famous of his work is the Swahili translation of the Qur’ān, *Qur’an Inayobainisha* that he based on the guidance of the teachings of Ahlul Bayt (a).⁶³ ‘Allāmah Rizvi wrote a brief introduction to this translation on 5 June 2002, just two weeks before he passed away.

63 Gerard C. Van De Bruinhorst has extensively discussed Shaykh ‘Ali Mayunga’s Swahili translation in ‘Historicising the Shi‘i Swahili Qur’an Translation by Ali Jumaa Mayunga,’ in *Approaches to the Qur’an in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Zulfikar Hirji (Oxford: OUP, 2019) p. 189-230. He also discusses Shaykh Mayunga’s meeting with my father and his discussions based on the speech that the Shaykh made on the commemoration of my father’s tenth anniversary.

Dhikiri Omari Mohamed Kiondo **becomes Dhikiri Ali Mohamed Kiondo**

Dhikiri Kiondo was born in 1946 Lushoto, Tanga in the Wakilindi clan of the Wasambaa tribe in a family of staunch Sunni Muslims. After graduating from high school in 1966, he was then selected for a teachers training course at Butimba Teachers Training College, Mwanza, in 1967-1968.

It was during his teachers' training program in February 1968 that he sent his first letter to the Shī'a Ithna-'Ashari Council of Tanzania with 24 questions about Shi'ism. The letter was forwarded to 'Allāmah Rizvi, and that was the beginning of a long correspondence between the two. In the words of my father, his initial questions "showed that he was an intelligent youth eager to learn the truth about Islam; and also that he was completely in the darkness about Shi'ism."⁶⁴

Dhikiri Kiondo first heard about the word "Shī'a" from a Christian teacher at a missionary school who used to mock the Muslim pupils in his history class. One day, he said, "Muslims in East Africa are of two divisions: Sunni and Shī'as, Dhikiri, did you know this before?"

"No Sir. What I know is that I am a Sunni," he replied shyly. Then the teacher explained: "Shī'as oppose the majority of the Muslims." This sentence remained in his thoughts for years.

While thinking about the reasons for this split among the

64 Volume 2 of my father's *Your Questions Answered* consists entirely of the 35 letters of Dhikiri Kiondo and answers from my father from 1968 to 1974 on about 90 questions of various types with four appendices.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Muslims, he remembered what he had been taught: that if a person does something good or evil, it is because of God - so that means that God Himself has created two groups: one for paradise and another for hell. But this didn't seem just to him.

All these thoughts led him to seek answers to his questions. “The questions were passed to Maulānā S.S. Akhtar Rizvi, who since then has been answering my questions with much care, politeness and humbleness. Maulānā S.S. Akhtar Rizvi opened my eyes, I found that all my doubts were easily removed through Shī‘a doctrines. I felt that the way of the peace of mind was the way of Shi‘ism.”

Gradually Dhikiri and his wife were convinced of the truth of Shi‘ism but it was a difficult decision to go against the ancestral beliefs.

Almost a year after corresponding with one another, on 11 December 1969, ‘Allāmah Rizvi invited Dhikiri to embrace the Shī‘a faith: “During the last two years we have developed a firm bond of love and brotherhood between ourselves. And I think it would be a betrayal of confidence if I do not tell you frankly that you cannot attain the peace of mind unless you follow the path shown by the holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) and his Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). I mean, Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari faith, which is the true Islam as brought by the Prophet. Therefore, I cordially and with full confidence invite you to accept Shi‘ism, so that your intellect and faith remain no longer in conflict with each other.” Finally, in his letter of 9 February 1970, Dhikiri and his wife followed the guidance of Allāh and accepted Shi‘ism. He wrote, “Thanks for troubling yourself in trying to show me where the truth is. Now it is clear to me that I am lost and I should find the right path. It has taken me a long time to realise that

I am in the wrong way. I thank Allāh for showing me the right way by means of your services. May He save others also. I kindly ask your service to give me more guidance so as to get more knowledge about my new and true faith.”

In one of his articles, Shaykh Dhikiri wrote, “‘Allāmah Rizvi opened my eyes thru letters, correspondence course and books of Bilal Muslim Mission. I found that all my doubts were easily removed through the Shī‘a doctrines. I felt that the way to the peace of mind was the way of Shī‘ism.”

My father met Dhikiri first time on 21 August 1970 when he was doing his National Service. Dhikiri recalls that meeting: “It was in 1970, in Arusha when I first sat peacefully with Shī‘a Brothers and my great teacher, my spiritual Father ‘Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi, a person who opened my eyes to the path of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). I still remember that Sunday when ‘Allamah Rizvi came to see me at National Service camp at Oljoro J.K.T., near Arusha. There we spent four hours where I received first direct lessons about Shi‘ism, what an extraordinary day it was.” Three days later, Dhikiri came to Arusha where my father introduced him to Haji Ali MJ Sheriff and Haji Ahmad H. Sheriff.

In August 1973, the Bilal Muslim Mission sent Dhikiri to Iran for religious studies under the patronage of ‘A Group of Muslim Brothers’, Tehran (which was later on known as World Organisation for Islamic Services, WOFIS). Because of visa issues, he had to return in September 1974.

‘Allāmah Rizvi advised him that “people like you can do a lot because you have access to the young minds and you can influence their way of thinking even indirectly. **First of all, you should**

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

yourself acquire the necessary knowledge. Secondly, you should make yourself a good [role] model of Ithna-'Ashari faith, so that people are attracted first to you and then, through you, to your faith. That was the way of tabligh of the Holy Prophet and our Imams. Thirdly, you should have friendly discussions and discourses with your friends and thus help in removing the prejudice and ignorance which is prevalent in this part of the world regarding your faith.”

In February 1975, Dhikiri resigned his teaching post to become the Administrative Secretary of the Bilal Muslim Mission where he, under the guidance of his teacher and mentor, undertook the important work of translating and writing books in Swahili language. Upon departure of Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Shushtari to Iran in 1976, Dhikiri Kiondo was appointed as the editor of *Sauti ya Bilal*, the Swahili bi-monthly magazine of the Mission.

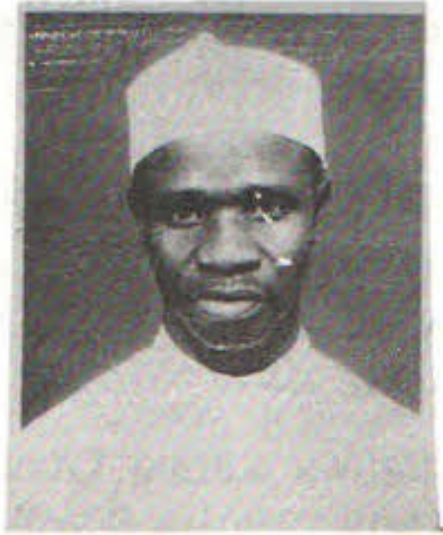
Shaykh Dhikiri UM Kiondo contributed to the tablighi activities also by attending and giving speeches in seminars organized by Bilal Muslim Mission at Mwanza, Arusha, Ujiji and Songea. He also represented Bilal Mission in the 1st conference of World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League (WABIL) in London in 1993 and another conference by Ahlul Bayt World Assembly (ABWA) in Tehran.

Among the books translated by Mu‘allim Dhikiri UM Kiondo into Swahili are the following works of his teacher:

1. Elements of Islamic Studies
2. Islam
3. Muhammad is the Last Prophet
4. Who is Ulul Amr?
5. The Holy Prophet

6. Need for Religion
7. Importance of Hijab
8. Shī'a Sects
9. Pork

...and many other publications by other writers.



In 1991, the Shaykh established the Tanzania Ithna-‘Ashariyya Community (TIC) and held its first meeting in the Bilal Husainiyyah where Shaykh Dhikiri was elected Chairman of TIC. With an increase in TIC activities, he resigned from the Bilal Muslim Mission in 1994 and was engaged in TIC activities until the year 2000.

Later on he was involved in the education programs of Sibtain Seminary Secondary School at Yombo, and continued translating books in Swahili. As a trained teacher, he was always at the forefront in advocating education and economic stability in society.

Shaykh Dhikiri Ali Mohamed Kiondo passed away on 21 January 2005 (10 Dhul Hijjah 1425) in Dar-es-Salaam. The first funeral

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

prayer was held at the Khoja Shī‘a masjid in town and another at the Masjid al-Ghadir, the main campus of Bilal Muslim Mission in Temeke. He was buried in Bilal’s cemetery in Yombo Vituka, Dar-es-Salaam.

* * *

Mahmud Kishunga on
“Why God Didn’t Help the Grandson of
His Most Beloved Messenger?”

Mahmud Rashid Kishunga was a motor mechanic from the West Lake Region of Tanzania. In 1965, he was converted to Shi‘ism by Maulānā Syed Intizar Husain who at that time was the resident ‘ālim of Singida. In 1966 he came to Dar-es-Salaam where ‘Allāmah Rizvi arranged his employment in a garage.

An interesting conversation with Mahmud Rashid Kishunga has been narrated by ‘Allāmah Rizvi:

In 1967, Mahmud Rashid Kishunga was admitted into Muhimbili Hospital, Dar-es-Salaam. During one of my visits, I gave him a copy of *Kitabu cha Sala* (Book of Salat), the first Swahili publication of the Bilal Muslim Mission, which had come out of the press that very day.

When I visited him next time, he told me about an interesting discussion he had with a Christian priest. The priest had come to visit a patient whose bed was next to Kishunga’s. He saw *Kitabu cha Sala* and with permission of Kishunga looked at it here and there. He saw the pictures of the prayer, noted the hands which were not folded; and asked Kishunga, which sect of Islam he belonged to, and was told, ‘Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashariya’.

Then the following discussion took place:

Priest: “Do you believe that the Prophet was the most beloved of all prophets in the presence of Allāh, and His dearest one?”

Mahmud: “Yes.”

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Priest: “How many children did your Prophet have?”

Mahmud: “One daughter, Bibi Fatima (a.s.).”

Priest: “Was she married?”

Mahmud: “Yes, to ‘Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.).”

Priest: “How many children did they have?”

Mahmud: “I know of two sons, Hasan (a.s.) and Husain (a.s.).”

Priest: “Do you know that Prophet Muhammad loved his grandsons?”

Mahmud: “Yes, he loved them very dearly.”

Priest: “How did Hasan and Husain die?”

Mahmud: “I do not know much in detail; but I have been told that Imam Hasan (a.s.) was poisoned and Imam Husain (a.s.), together with his children, relatives and companions, was martyred in Karbala very brutally.”

Priest: “Well, my friend, doesn’t it seem strange to you that the dearest grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (who was according to your belief, the dearest to God) was killed with such unparalleled brutality, and still God did not save him? You will have to accept that either there is no God at all, or if there is one, He is very weak.”

Mahmud: “Yes, Sir, I agree with you that God is really very weak.”

Priest: “Why do you say so?”

Mahmud: “Let us say that you and I are fast friends. Suppose, I have a son and you have a grandson. Of course, being your friend, I will love your grandson. But you will agree with me that I can never love your grandson as deeply as my own son.”

Priest: "Yes, it is but natural."

Mahmud: "Now, Sir, will you, please, tell me what you believe about Prophet Jesus (a.s.)?"

Priest: "We believe that he is the son of God."

Mahmud: "How did he die?"

Priest: "He was crucified and died on the cross."

Mahmud: "Well, Sir, you see, that is why I told you that although there is a God, He is very weak. He is so weak that He could not save His own son! How can we expect such a weak and powerless God to save the grandson of his friend?"

This reply abruptly ended the arguments. The priest said that he must rush to another place, and hurriedly took his leave.

* * *

Another interesting incident occurred with Mahmud Kishunga in 1972 which 'Allāmah Rizvi narrates as follows:

Mahmud Kishunga rented a room in a house in Ilala (Dar-es-Salaam) area. There is a mosque nearby, where he went at sunset for maghrib prayer. He prayed with his hands unfolded, as taught by the Shī'a laws. When he finished his prayer, a gentleman asked him which madhhab he belonged to. Kishunga said that he was an Ithna-'Ashari. That gentleman asked derisively, "Why, you are an African and you are following the religion of the Indians!"

Mahmud said: "Now that you have pointed it out, I realize that I have committed a great mistake. Really, being an African, I should not have accepted the madhhab of the Indians. Now, dear Sir, please tell me about yourself: Whose religion do you follow?"

The gentleman said that he was a follower of the Shafi'i madhhab.

Mahmud: "Well, this Imam Shafi'i (may God have mercy on

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

him), which country did he belong to?”

Gentleman: “He was an Arab.”

Mahmud: “Then, please tell me why do you, a true son of Africa, follow the ‘religion’ of an Arab?”

The gentleman left him with the parting shot: ‘You are a troublesome man.’⁶⁵

* * *

65 S.S.A. Rizvi, *The Light*, October 1974; also see his *On to the Right Path*, p. 37-39.

A Dream Comes True

by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

(The Light, December 1972)

Never before have we advertised our sentiments on these pages. But today I want to make an exception to this practice.

We, the founders of Bilal Muslim Mission, have been a dreaming people from the very beginning. The difference between us and other day-dreamers is that we not only dream, but also try to turn our dreams into reality. We dreamt establishing an institution for propagation of true Islam in East Africa; and, lo, the Bilal Muslim Mission came into being in 1965.

Then we dreamt of praying the next Eidul-Fitr with African Shī'as. And when the next Eid came in 1966, there were enough converts to establish Eid prayer together.

We dreamt of having our own centres; and now we have got them in Dar-es-Salaam, Songea, Mombasa and Mackinnon.

* * *

Now a unique pattern developed: as soon as we dreamt of something, Allāh turned it into reality. And it is happening with startling rapidity: in this short period, we sent many African Shī'as for higher studies to the Middle East; we have already published 24 books in English and Kiswahili, and many more are in the pipeline. (Compare it with 23 books published by a 'very active' [non-Shī'a] Mission in more than 40 years!) We have regular magazines in English and Kiswahili; we have an Islamic Correspondence

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Course in English, and a Junior Course in Kiswahili. We run several madrasas, have two boarding houses, conduct religious examinations in the whole East Africa; and now we are going to have our own printing press. And what is more important, the number of converts is increasing.

And we achieved all this in face of all types of difficulties; adverse propaganda, even by many Shī‘a Ithna-‘Asharis; opposition from many so-called Muslims, lack of skilled man-power; too heavy dependence on a few helpers and many such hurdles.

* * *

Anyhow, upto now we were passing through a time very much like the Meccan period of Islam: the progress of conversion was slow and the number of converts was less than 500.

We earnestly wanted a change in this situation. We often dreamt of mass conversions, a picture of which is given in this Surah of the Qur’an:

“When comes the help of Allāh and victory, and you do see the people enter Allāh’s religion in crowds, then celebrate the praise of your Lord and pray for His forgiveness.; for He is Oft-returning (in grace and mercy).”

This was our biggest dream so far. And by mercy of Allāh and grace of 14 Ma‘sumeen (a.s.) and the help of our 12th Imam (a.s.), this dream has come true in Kenya.

* * *

And it has happened in the way the early Arab tribes accepted Islam. Most of them became Muslim because they were impressed with the honesty, truthfulness, sympathy and kindness of the Last Messenger of Allāh, and with the general behaviour of the Muslims.

* * *

In Islam, every Muslim was a Missionary. Be he a trader or physician, a teacher or labourer, a peasant or a judge, he had to be the perfect example of Islamic character and manners. And it was this upright character which attracted people towards Islam. It was to this aspect of Islam that Imam Ja‘far Ṣādiq (a.s.) referred in this ḥadīth: “*Kunu lana zinan wa la takunu lana shayina -- Be for us an adornment; and do not be for us a shame.*”

People of other faiths and religions do not know what Islamic books teach. They only see how the Muslim behave. And through that observation, they form their views about Islam. If the Muslims behave like true Muslims in all walks of life, there will be no need to appoint any missionaries for propagation of Islam. The character of the Muslims will be enough to attract the whole world towards Islam.

* * *

The national highway between Mombasa and Nairobi passes through Taru and Mackinnon (90 kms from Mombasa). The railway line passes through the same route, and the station is called Mackinnon Road. This area is the ancestral homeland of Waduruma tribe. Most of them followed the Roman Catholic Church. Their elected chief, Mr. Joseph N’galaa Chuphi (now Yousuf Ibrahim N’galaa Chuphi) controls an area of about 900 square miles. He is well-known for his integrity and honesty, and for his fervent desire to see his people prosper in both worlds.

* * *

He was a farmer and has business contacts in Mombasa and other places. In Mombasa, he had opportunities to see from very near the

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

family members of Kassamali Gulamhusein. What impressed him most was their regularity of prayers and their sincere obedience of the rules of Islamic shari‘at. Even in the midst of important business discussions, they used to postpone the talks and close the office when the time of prayer arrived. Before that, the chief had known some Muslims of other sects, and had found their behaviour not attractive. Now that he saw these Shī‘a Ithna-‘Asharis, he realized that here was a religion which so completely controlled the life of its followers. Naturally, he was curious and wanted to know more.

* * *

This led to many discussions with these businessmen, and they explained the tenets, beliefs and shari‘ah of Shi‘ism to him.

He was at once attracted to this faith, which he found so logical and reasonable. When after some time he expressed his desire to embrace Islam, he was told to wait a little longer and study it in details. They told him that in our faith, one MUST understand the matters of belief before accepting them. He was very much fascinated by this assertion, because his church had always taught him that ‘you should just believe without understanding, as religion is a mystery, beyond the human intellect.’ Now, for the first time, he was being told to understand before believing. This difference of approach showed him the difference between a blind submission (heritage of colonialism) and enlightened search for truth (the true independence).

* * *

After many months, he was ready to enter into the fold of Islam. And so on Saturday 28th Sha‘ban 1392 (7th October 1972) Mulla Abdur Rasul H. Khaki, Agha Sayyid Mohamed Mahdi, Mr.

Mohamed Jaffer Kassamali Gulamhusein, Mr. Gulamabbas Habib A. Janmohamed and Haji Mohsin AM Jaffer (Hon. Secretary of Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya) went to Mackinnon; and the Chief with 23 of his family members became Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari. By 19th Shawwal (26th November 1972), 181 people had become Shī‘a. A religious teacher was sent there from Dar-es-Salaam on 13 October 1972.

Then on the invitation of the Kenya Mission, Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff (from Arusha) and I went to Mombasa on 2nd December 1972. Next day, being Sunday, our group comprising of Mulla Abdur Rasul H. Khaki, Haji Ahmad Husain Sheriff (President of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania), Haji Bashir Peera (Secretary-General of the KSI Supreme Council), Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff, Mr. Mohamed Jaffer Kassamali Gulamhusein, Haji Mohsin AM Jaffer and myself went to Mackinnon Road where a public meeting was arranged.

The Chief welcomed us and then I spoke on the Christian’s theory of the original sin, and explained the contrast between this theory and the Islamic theory that every child is born a Muslim. I explained how the Christian’s belief degrades the whole humanity by condemning them as sinners from the very birth, while Islam elevates the humanity as born without sin.

Then Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff explained the matters of faith. On that day 61 families, comprising 253 souls, accepted the true faith.

* * *

Then we discussed the details of the construction of a mosque, a madrasah, a primary school and the house for the religious teacher.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

A 10 acre land has already been donated by the tribesmen for those buildings.

A dispensary has already been started there. Dr. Mustafa Rahim goes there weekly to attend to the sick persons. The medicine is provided free by the Mission.

So, one of our major dreams has come true. At the time of writing this article more than 800 people have become Shī‘a in that area.

* * *

Still, the trouble with us is that we are never content with what we have got. It is human nature, isn’t it? As soon as a dream becomes reality, we start dreaming even more ambitious dreams.

What are the other dreams we dream? Well we now dream...

But why not wait some more; we would like to present them as facts some time.

* * *

My father had once mentioned that when he gave the speech to the Waduruma tribe at Mackinnon Road, he wanted to give a personal touch to their conversion to Shi‘ism. He told them that the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (a) did not discriminate between Arab and non-Arab, or white and black. He gave the example of the mothers of the Imams who came from different races and regions. “I am from the descendants of the ninth Imam whose mother was from Nubia, which is in Sudan, just north of your region. And so some percentage of my blood is Nubian!” The crowd became joyous to know that “the *sharifu* (i.e., the sayyid) is one of us!”

BEYOND THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Gradually the Bilal Mission's scope of activities widened to include Thailand, Indonesia and Japan in the East, and Europe, the USA, and Caribbean islands in the West.

Four things in particular expanded the scope of 'Allāmah Rizvi's work:

First: The bi-monthly **magazine**, *The Light*.

Second: The books written for the **correspondence course**.

Third: The many contacts from around the world generated by those who would send their questions to be answered by 'Allāmah Rizvi. Remember we are talking about the era before fax, email, or the internet; all correspondence was done through the postal service.

These questions and answers were later put together in a series of books entitled as *Your Questions Answered* in 7 volumes:

Vol. 1: (1968-1971) 113 questions from East Africa, Europe, USA.

Vol. 2: (1971) 35 letters between Dhikiri & Rizvi.

Vol. 3: (1972-1975) 117 questions from East Africa, UK, Europe, Canada, USA, Pakistan & India.

Vol. 4: (1975-1978) 105 questions.

Vol. 5: (1986-1990) 99 questions from East Africa, UK, Germany, Poland, Canada, USA, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, and Singapore.

Vol. 6: (1990-1994) 118 questions from the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Iran, UAE, Muscat, Sweden, Norway, Germany, UK, USA,

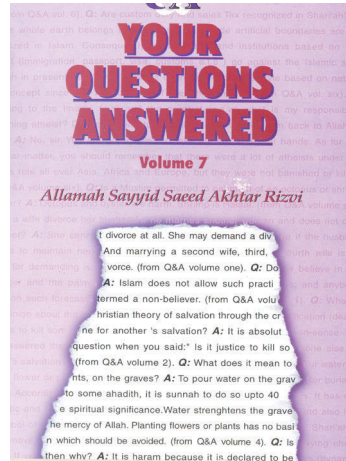
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Canada, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Ghana, Nigeria,
Botswana, Kenya and Tanzania.

Vol. 7: (1995-1998) 96 questions.



Vol. 1



Vol. 7

In all, the questions came from **24 countries** (in alphabetical order): Botswana, Canada, India, Indonesia, Iran, Germany, Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, Malaysia, Muscat, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Singapore, Sweden, UAE, USA. And the total number of questions comes to about **700**; all through the postal system.

These questions cover a variety of subjects from theology to jurisprudence, history to morality, contemporary problems to socio-political issues. Some answers required lengthy responses and were placed as an “Appendix” to some of these volumes. One example was a discussion on *Sects in Islam* which was later on published as a booklet by WOFIS (Tehran).

Bashir H. Peera, Secretary-General of KSI Supreme Council in

the 1970s, wrote: “I have just received the book, *Your Questions Answered*. On perusal, I am convinced that this book is a must for every home and every student. The compilation of these questions and answers will contribute towards better understanding of our religion by our overseas brothers now settled throughout Europe, America, Sweden, Belgium and elsewhere. The Mission has reached another milestone in its endeavours to convey the message of Islam. It is my earnest prayers that Allāh may reward you in plenty for your sacred contributions in the field of literature.”⁶⁶

* * *

Fourth: The wide reach of his easy-to-read books. In the opening ceremony of Ḥawzah ‘Ilmiyyah’s new facility in Temeke, Dar-es-Salaam, on 31 August 1986 (25 Dhul Hijjah 1406), Haji Fidahussein Abdullah Hameer, the Chairman of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, said,

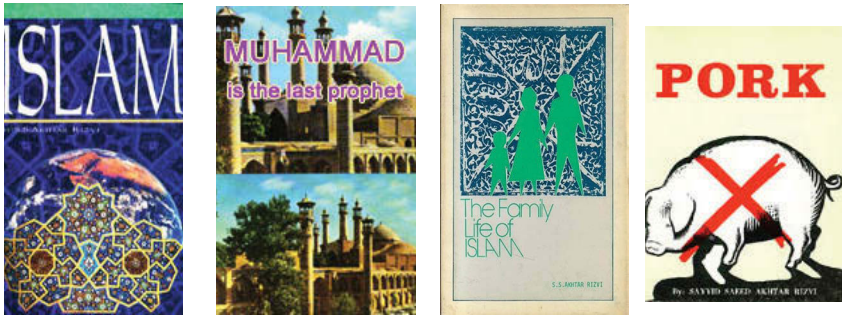
“This Mission’s continued success is due to untiring efforts and contribution by Hujjatul Islam Maulānā Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi. Without him this Mission could not have been what it is today. Maulānā, because of his hard work and dedication, became well-known throughout the world as a dedicated missionary and a scholar of great repute. Maulānā Rizvi has written a number of **books** in English, which we have published and which have become popular from one corner of the world to another i.e., from Canada and United States of America in the north to Trinidad in the South and from Britain and Sweden to Japan. Alhamdulillah, these books are in big demand. His books have also been translated into French, Italian, Indonesian and many other languages.”⁶⁷

66 See *The Light*, vol. 7 (June 1973) no. 3, p. 9.

67 See *The Light*, vol. 20 (August 1986) no. 4, p. 9-10.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Besides the publications of ‘Allāmah Rizvi through the Bilal Muslim Mission, his writings were also widely circulated by the World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran. WOFIS not only reprinted his booklets and books with newly designed color covers and good quality paper, but also had many of them translated in other languages. ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s publications like *Islam, God of Islam, Muḥammad the Last Prophet, Imāmate: the Vicegerency of the Prophet, The Family Life in Islam, Sects of Islam* and his other works were published and distributed by WOFIS in tens of thousands around the world free of charge.



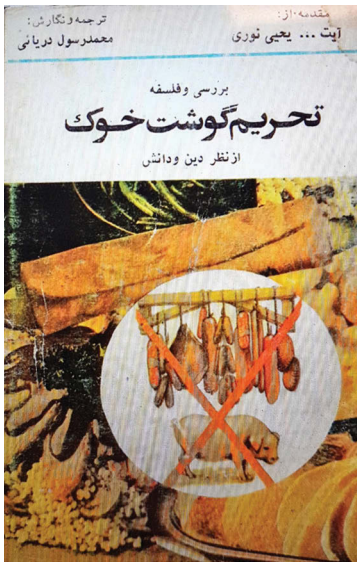
(1) The booklet, *Islam*, first published in 1967, is an introduction on Shī‘a Islam written in a coherent and lucid style. It is based on lectures given in 1964 and 1965 by ‘Allāmah Rizvi at the Makerere University College, Kampala, and at University College, Moshi, in the presence of learned scholars of various religions. It was then published multiple times and distributed worldwide by A Group of Muslim Brothers, Tehran (which was later known as WOFIS), It was also translated into French, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, Burmese, Swahili, Hausa (Nigerian), Sindhi and Thai languages.

A letter from Imam A.R.O. Ahmed of Nigeria, says: “I read with great regard your lecture on Shi‘ism published in July 1967, and presented by A Group of Muslim Brothers of Iran, and I found it

very educative on the subject. But since this is the first lecture I had read on the Shi‘a Ithna-‘Ashari sect, I could not satisfy my thirst, therefore, I should be very grateful if you can supply me with more lectures or books on the principles and laws of Shi‘ism which may be in Arabic or English.”⁶⁸

* * *

(2) ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s booklet *Pork*, published first time in 1972, also became very popular. It was not only widely distributed around the world by WOFIS, it was also translated into French, Swedish, Indonesian and Portuguese languages. Interestingly, it was also translated entirely into Farsi and included in a book entitled as *Tahrīm-e Ghūsht-e Khūk*. In the introduction to this book, it says:



قسمت اول که بحث و گفتگویی است در مورد گوشت خوک ترجمه ایست که بوسیله فاضل ارجمند جناب آقای سید سعید [اختر] رضوی برشته نگارش در آمده و پرسشها و پاسخهایی در ضمن آن بیان شده است

“The first part [of this book] consists of a discussion and conversation regarding the prohibition of the pork is a translation of the writing of the respected scholar Agha-e Sayyid Saeed [Akhtar] Rizvi which has

been presented in the form of questions and answers.”

A letter from a Khoja Ugandan refugee in the U.K., Mohamedhusein Dhanji, says, “I received the copies of the booklet ‘Pork’ which you had so kindly sent to me. I gave one copy to the

68 See *The Light*, vol. 7 (June 1973) no. 3, p. 17.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Christian priest who regularly comes to visit us in the camp. He was astonished to read it and said, ‘From today I will never eat pork.’ I gave another copy to a lady-teacher and she also said that from then on she would not touch pork.”⁶⁹

Mr. Aḥmad Hussein Shahāb, Secretary General, Islamic Research Centre, Jakarta (Indonesia) wrote a letter in 1974:

“Dear Brother in ‘Aqīdah, I can never forget the lunch with you sometimes ago [16 April 1970] in Dar-es-Salaam; but more than that I never can forget the meeting which made our brotherhood stronger. Your magazine the Light is still coming regularly, and it is very important for us here.

“With honour I have to tell you that two of your valuable booklets “Islam” and “Pork” have been translated and published in the Indonesian language, first printing each 5,000 copies. Of course, it is not enough, but our condition permits us only to such; and samples has been sent to you by airmail. I hope you will receive them in good condition.

“Sir, I have also an idea, since you are a great religious scholar of high level, that booklets on Ahlel Bait being prepared to be printed in English, Indonesian and other languages. Because I tell you frankly, that my own children are reading books of Hans Christian Anderson, Mark Twain, etc. Unlike us, followers of Ahlel Bait, followers of others have prepared literatures on many items for children. While from common Islamic literature is only 1001 nights or others, but not on Ahlel Bait. This is something which all the *marāji*’, wherever they are, have to think over seriously.

69 Ibid.

“I tell you frankly, that for children, even for adults, fiqh (jurisprudence) only is too awful, though it is important. So to influence the youth is to tell more on history, tales, stories, and other things attractive to their age and level. As the Great Imam (a.s) said: ‘Speak to people according to the level of their knowledge.’ If you can prepare this will be a great help to all followers of Ahlel Bait (a.s).”⁷⁰

* * *

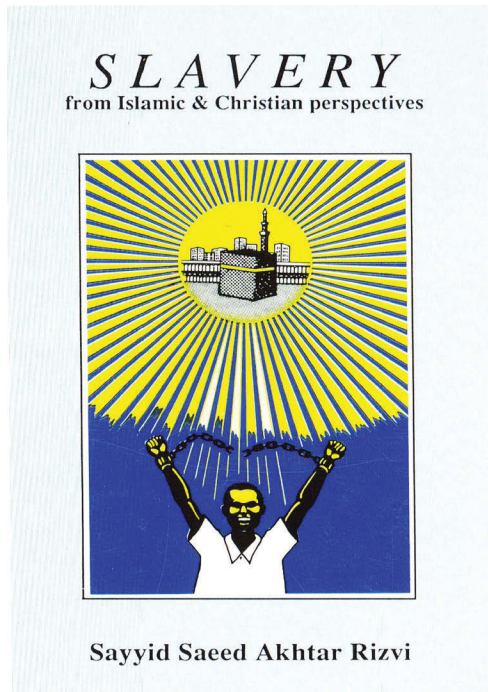
(3) Haji Hasanali Peer Ebrahim had requested ‘Allāmah Rizvi to write something on the issue of slavery. This resulted in the book *Slavery*, published by Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust (Karachi) in 1972, and then also reprinted in Dar-es-Salaam. Haji Hasanali Peer Ebrahim wrote:

“Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania has very ably and painstakingly written this book. Like a research scholar that he is, he has objectively treated the theme of this book. He has marshalled fact after fact from history; quoted from the holy Qur’an, the traditions; and contemporary writers on the subject; and cited Islamic and ancient laws. He has clearly and vividly shown that Western civilization is not so great a champion of emancipation of slaves as it poses to be. In fact this book will prove to be an eyeopener for those who blindly nod in approval to the propaganda about Western humanism.”⁷¹

70 See *The Light*, vol. 8 (December 1974) no. 6, p. 4.

71 Publisher’s preface to the 1st edition.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Mohsin AM Jaffer wrote, “The book is indeed excellent. It is a masterpiece. I have read Sheikh Muhammad Kassim Mazrui’s book on Slavery in Kiswahili, published by Islamic Foundation, Nairobi and had been impressed by it but after reading your book, I find that that book cannot even be mentioned in par with your book. This book should be given as widest publicity and distribution as possible....

“There is also a need for an abridged version of this book for students and masses who might not prefer to read a long book. By a concerted effort we might succeed to undo the propaganda of Christians against Islam.”⁷²

It was presented in September 2001 at the Conference on Racism in Durban (South Africa) by Ahlul-Bayt Foundation of South Africa.

⁷² See *The Light*, vol. 7 (June 1973) no. 3, p. 9.

The **World Organisation for Islamic Services (WOFIS)** was the most active Shī'a tablīghī organization in Iran in late 60s to 80s focusing on propagation beyond the Middle East. After identifying effective and useful Shī'a books, it would reprint them in an improved format, printed in large quantities. It also embarked on obtaining useful books translated into various foreign languages. All these publications of WOFIS were distributed world-wide by airmail free of charge. WOFIS was started by the late Dr. S. Muḥammad Husayn Shahrīstānī (an engineer who was well-versed with religious sciences and also known as *mu'tamadu 'l-marāji'*) with financial support of his family members and headed by its very capable director, Ḥujjatul Islam wal Muslimeen Syed Murtaza Nūri (d. 8 November 2020). He was the soul of that organization. The prominent scholar, the late Shaykh Muḥammad Razā Ja'fari, played an integral role in selection and supervision of the publications done by WOFIS. May Almighty Allāh reward them all for the pioneering work in spreading the message of Ahlul Bayt beyond the Middle East.



The author with H.I. Syed Murtaza Nūri in 1994

Shī‘ism in Guyana

“Saeed Akhtar: the father of Shī‘ism of Guyana”

Emergence of the Shī‘a community in **Guyana (South America)** is a direct result of the long distance correspondence between ‘Allāmah Rizvi and Br. Latif ‘Ali. He was the first person in that country who converted to Shi‘ism in 1972 after a long correspondence with the ‘Allāmah. Latif ‘Ali was instrumental in spreading the message of the Ahlul Bayt in Guyana and also in Trinidad and Tobago.

What you read below is a combination of what Latif ‘Ali wrote in a section of *Why I Became a Shī‘a* and in a tribute and message that he sent me for the special 40th day memorial event:

“For four years, I had served a Sunni association as General Secretary. I was zealous, for, to me Sunnism was original Islam. But whenever the topic of Karbala arises our president limits us to the descriptive aspects and excludes the causes!...A Sunni clergyman once told me that Shī‘as are people who claim that ‘Ali should have been the Prophet...that angel Jibraeel made a mistake and delivered his message to the wrong person...A Jesuit priest from India told me that that Sunni was a liar and that I would one day find the Shī‘a faith the best in Islam...

“It seemed providential, for another Sunni lent me a book called the *Eternal Miracle* published by A Group of the Muslim Brothers in Iran. [This organisation’s name was then changed to World Organization for Islamic Services (WOFIS).] He spared no pains in warning me that the booklet is excellent but written by a kafir and asked me to avoid correspondence with the said brothers... My searching mind made me crave to read more so I

contacted the publishers. They sent me *Islam* by Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi and a letter instructing that all my questions will be answered by Sayyid Akhtar based in Tanzania...

“Soon, I was to realize how stupid I was to believe that Allāh is responsible for my actions. I saw how Sunni lied to us about Imam ‘Ali (a.s.). Then I had to decide whether I would opt for Saqeefa Conspirators or ‘Ali (a.s.). For Husain (a.s.) or Yazeed and the list goes on. Sayyid Akhtar gave me the answers one by one. Never tiring, never being harsh that I would ask stupid questions. And I remind you dear brothers, Sunni ask very stupid questions. It takes someone who was Sunni to fully realize that. “I have yet to come upon a mind so keen on logic as Brother Rizvi. But what aspects of this unique booklet made me turn towards Shi‘ism? In this section [on justice of God] I have been fully convinced of the Shī‘a view as compared to Sunni view...”

“I am very grateful to the Bilal Muslim Mission whose Chief Missionary, Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, once more enlightened me on the subject of the Imamate...”

“In 1972, I became Shī‘a and Sayyid Akhtar was so delighted that his work bore fruits as I started to pass on his booklets. Many of you are aware of ‘Allamah’s works in your communities in Tanzania but few realize the power of his correspondence programs.

“To you brothers I say: Too many of you take things for granted being born in Shī‘a homes. Had you been like us astray in the wilderness, you would realize what it is to see the light of guidance. Just try to put yourself in our location, scantily clad people, booming music all around, slanderous lies about Shī‘as, Abu Hurayrah and Abu Darda for narrators!

“To take one man out of this is really an achievement.

“To witness this conversion grow into a movement is yet greater.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

“As Sayyid would say, ‘Gold and silver have I none but that which I have I will give you. Therefore be ready to learn.’

“Now we do not boast but we pay tribute to Sayyid Akhtar by telling you dear brothers and assuring you. There is no Wahhabi in these parts who can match the Lions of Sayyid Akhtar!...

“Finally we say to you all. As you read Fatiha for our beloved just let it dwell upon your thoughts: ‘Isn’t it wonderful that in this remote jungle ‘*ashadu anna Ameerul Momineen ‘Aliyyun Waliyullah*’ is heard five times daily?!’ Then beg Allāh to bless Sayyid Akhtar.

“Many more should emulate his work. O Shī‘as, do not neglect your duty. There are many thirsty people who need the Fountain of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). Alas do you have the patience of Sayyid Akhtar?”⁷³

* * *

In an article on “History of Shi‘ism in Guyana,” Latif ‘Ali describes the growth of Shi‘ism as follows: “‘Allāmah Rizvi, the tireless teacher by correspondence, and Latif Ali, the disseminator. It is not enough to thank the Sayyid but in du‘as here he must always be remembered.”⁷⁴ Latif ‘Ali indeed was a good student! Once three active members of the Wahhabi movement in Trinidad were sent to Guyana to debate with Latif ‘Ali. At the end, they also became Shī‘a; and it was the beginning of the new awakening in Trinidad and Tabago.

When Latif ‘Ali’s conversion to Shi‘ism became known, the family of the girl who was betrothed to him, refused to give their

73 See *Why I Became A Shī‘a?* published by Shaykh Hasan Sa‘id, Tehran, and the special magazine published by me on the 40th day memorial program in Toronto.

74 Latif ‘Ali, “History of Shi‘ism in Guyana,” *The Right Path* (April-June, 1997) and ‘A Message and Tribute’ dated 17 July 2002 sent to me and published in the souvenir magazine published on my father’s 40th memorial event.

daughter to a ‘kafir’. He asked ‘Allāmah Rizvi to find for him a practicing Shī‘a girl who would be ready to go to and live in Guyana. The ‘Allamah requested some friends in Bombay and Gujarat to look for a suitable girl. After a few months, Latif ‘Ali wrote to the ‘Allamah that a Hindu girl (who was a teacher in the same school where Latif ‘Ali was teaching) had accepted the true faith. He gave her the name ‘Zahra’, and as usual sent her Declaration Form to him. When my father saw in the form that Zahra was single, he immediately wrote to them that they should get united in marriage. They accepted this suggestion; and filled in the form that my father sent them authorizing him to recite their nikah. When the form was received by my father, he recited their nikah (this is when he was in India) and sent a telegram to them about it; and they also got officially married according to the law of the land.

Remember that my father never got the opportunity to visit Guyana. It was in the early eighties when my father, as the Director General of the newly formed World Ahlul Bayt League (WABIL), invited Latif ‘Ali to the first conference in London that they met one another.

The relationship between him and Latif ‘Ali was like a father and his son. When I visited Trinidad and Guyana in 1988, in a gathering of Shī‘as at Latif ‘Ali’s home, it was indeed a pleasure to see about 30 families who had become Shī‘a through his tablighi activities. The highlight of my visit was when he introduced me to the gathering by saying, “We all know Saeed Akhtar as our spiritual father; this is his real son.”

Upon the demise of my father, I had requested Br. Latif ‘Ali to come to Toronto for the special 40th day memorial event. Visa issues prevented him from attending the event, and so he sent me the message that has been quoted above. He began the message with poetry:

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

“Our beloved Prophet (s) has said: ‘One who has taught you is your father.’ It is but a small tribute if I say that **Sayyid Akhtar Rizvi is the father of Shi‘ism in Guyana...**

*A candle that rose in Bihar but in effulgence did grow.
In Dar-es-Salaam as a star he did glow!
With convincing logic how simply he did show.
In every letter the warmth of love did flow.*

*O Allāh, he took us out from darkness to light!
Today Guyana knows of Ahlul Bayt.
Four hundred souls no longer blame you.
For whatever they do.*

*O Allāh, how would we have known of Saqeefa?
Or the door of Zahra?
O Allāh, Sayyid Akhtar took us through the jungle of corruption.
His light shining through the fog of history and we saw Husayn.*

*This is what Yazid could not imagine.
The message he sought to extinguish crossed the continents.
Here it is in the northern tip of South America.*

*Yazid lost! Oh dear Sayyid Akhtar.
Who says you are not here?
In every heart you are.
In Guyana your lions will forever roar:
Ya Muhammad! Ya Aliyyu!*

* * *

Below are pictures of my visit to the Guyana in 1988:

The Voyaging Star



The First Shī‘a of Poland

An article was published in the April 1977 issue of *The Light* magazine in which Mr. Omar Amir Szwarc wrote about his own conversion to Islam and then to Shi‘ism. Here is the excerpts of his article:

“I became a Muslim in 1962 when I was only 17 years old. I was brought up a Protestant, but from a very early age I had doubt in the Christian teachings...I always had strong faith in God, but I could not find Him in the church...I was searching for the truth in other religions such as Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism, yet no one could give me the right direction towards the truth.

“During those days, fortunately, I came across a book on Islam. I found that only Islam teaches the perfect Unity of God...At that time I come to know **Shaykh Omar Al-Muhtady Schubert** of **Germany** who had been at that time the President of the Islamic Community at Hamburg. Although he sent some pamphlets; *Islam* by Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi...*Fast...God of Islam* by Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi...

“Some months ago, I came to know a Muslim brother, a student, from Kuwait who is Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari and with whom I had many talks on Islam...That brother taught me also how to say prayers in accordance with the Shī‘a way. Thus, I am the first and only Shī‘a Muslim in Poland...”

Haj ‘Ali Haider Abidi was a Shī‘a of Indian origin who had settled in Germany decades ago and is among the pioneer Shī‘as in that area. He narrates the story of Shaykh Omar Al-Muhtady Schubert’s conversion: Omar Schubert first became an Ahmadi. It was only

after the Shī‘a mosque was built in Hamburg upon instruction of the late Grand Āyatullāh S. Ḥusayn Burujardi that Omar Schubert started attending that mosque and was exposed to Shi‘ism. He had many discussions with the mosque’s director Agha-e Muhaqqiqi. However, he was not fully convinced. It was only after he saw some publications of ‘Allāmah S. Saeed Akhar Rizvi of Bilal Muslim Mission that he started corresponding with him in the 1960s and 70s. It was through the guidance of the ‘Allāmah that he finally accepted Shī‘ism.⁷⁵

Interestingly, the Shī‘a website, www.aqaed.com in a section on the Shī‘as of Poland, accessed in November 2020, mentions that the website of the Polish Shī‘as has publications “from the respected scholars such as Sayyid Mujtaba Mousawi Lari, Shaykh Murtaza Mutahhari, Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Sayyid Husain Nasr besides the writings of ‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī and Āyatullāh al-Imam Khumayni and others.”

* * *

Helping the Shī‘as of Thailand

Thailand has a Shī‘a community who are entirely descendants of a Persian merchant who came from India to Thailand almost a century ago. He was welcomed by the King for his expertise and settled there. He married a local woman. Now, the number of his descendants reaches to about 2,500 souls. They lost touch with the Shī‘a centers of learning in India, Iran and Iraq. The most common book they used for their rituals was *Jāmi‘ ‘Abbāsi*. Of course, the rituals of Muḥarram continued with a Thai flavour to it.

In the early 1970s, Abdul Hasan N. Ahmadchula, a travel agent by profession and an active member of the Thai community, established

75 Haj ‘Ali Haider Abidi was kind enough to share this information via a telephone conversation and subsequently sent me couple of pages from the history of Shī‘as in Germany that he is writing in Urdu.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

a link with Bilal Muslim Mission after reading *The Light* magazine. The August 1973 *Light* issue has a letter from Abdul Hasan asking for earlier copies of the magazine. He visited Karachi and Iran to establish contacts with Shī‘a centres. During his visit to Qum in March 1973, we became friends and maintained correspondence for a few years.⁷⁶

When the community decided to send four of their youths to study religion in Qum, they sought the help of ‘Allāmah Rizvi who wrote to Darut Tabligh Islami to grant admission to the Thai students. Based on my father’s recommendation, the four youths were admitted in Darut Tabligh Islami, and arrived in Qum in May 1977.⁷⁷ Since I was already there in Qum, I also played a role in helping them settle in at Darut Tabligh Islami and established strong bond of friendship with them.

* * *

The global reach of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s work spread far beyond the scope of his dream – and that could not have been possible except for his sincerity in doing tablīgh for sake of Almighty Allāh.

His life was an embodiment of the Sūrah an-Naşr:

“When the help of Allāh and victory comes, and you see the people entering into God’s religion in groups, then sing the praise of your Lord and ask for forgiveness for He is indeed the Most Forgiving.”

Today there are many tablīgh and da‘wah organizations in Kenya, Burundi, Malagasy, Congo, Mozambique which carry

76 When I moved from Iran to India in 1982, he had invited me to settle down in Thailand. From the various invitations I received, based on an istikhārah and my father’s advice, I chose to settle in Canada for my work.

77 See the letter of Supass Suwakool (Ghulam Raza), the secretary of Masjid Padungtham Islam in Bangkok, in the *Light*, vol. 11 (August 1977) no. 4, p. 21.

the name ‘Bilal Muslim Mission’. Many similar organizations were formed independently in Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Sweden and America inspired by the success of Bilal Muslim Mission.

10TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF BILAL MUSLIM MISSION IN 1974

The Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari Jamaat of Tanga held a function to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the resolution which brought the Bilal Muslim Mission into existence at the Supreme Council’s conference at Tanga in 1964. The officials of the Supreme Council, the Bilal Mission and other interested individuals came from different cities to attend that celebration.

‘Allāmah Rizvi was invited to present the success and achievements of the Mission. The objectives of the Mission can be described in two words: **reminding** (those who are within the faith) and **converting** (those who are outside the faith). Here is an outline of his report:

Converting:

- Now we have African Shī‘a communities in Dar-es-Salaam, Songea, Mackinnon Road, Bundibugyo and scores of towns and villages of Tanzania. (This was achieved without any material inducement to the converts.)
- We have madrasahs in Dar-es-Salaam, Songea, Mackinnon Road, Hola and Mombasa.
- Our shaykhs teach in government secondary and primary schools.
- Our Temeke madrasah is to prepare teachers and shaykhs. Five students were sent to Najaf (then Sur, and finally Qum). Two

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

more were sent to Qum in 1973. Now three of them are back to help us in tabligh work. Two students from the Temeke madrasah are working in Kenya.

- We have reorganized the Temeke campus: a spacious boarding house has been built for outside students. We also have boarding houses in Songea and Mackinnon Road.
- “Masomo ya Kiislamu” the junior correspondence course in Swahili was started in December 1972; presently we have 3,750 students from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, Burundi and Zambia. This has helped many to see the light of Shi‘ism.

Reminding:

- The bi-monthly magazine, the Light, was primarily established for the community’s youths who had gone overseas for education. It has established a niche of honour in the Islamic world for itself.
- The Islamic Correspondence Course, once completed, will enable youths to teach religion in primary and secondary schools. Some of its textbooks have been reprinted by WOFIS for free distribution around the world.
- Other books in English and Swahili on pertinent issues which have become popular; some of them have been translated in French and Indonesian languages.
- We conduct annual exams of the madrasahs of the Jamaats; and have published diniyat books in Swahili, Gujarati and English for that purpose.
- Since the exodus of Uganda, we have maintained close connections with those refugees in Europe and North America.
- Answering religious questions that we receive from our brethren and others from around the world.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ *The Light*, vol. 8 (December 1974) no. 6, p. 20-22.

VISIT TO LAHORE & LUCKNOW

In May-June 1976, ‘Allāmah Rizvi travelled with his family to Pakistan and India on a personal visit to see relatives and for the wedding of my older brother, ‘Ali Imam. He also was able to visit Lahore and Lucknow to meet some personalities and institutions.

He arrived at **Lahore** airport on 6 May 1976 and was greeted by Maulānā Syed Sadiq ‘Ali Shah, Mr. Sufi Mohammad Anwar (trustee of Jāmi‘atul Muntazar), members of Imamia Students Organisation of Pakistan and some teachers and students of Jāmi‘atul Muntazar. They welcomed him with banners and slogans of takbīr and ṣalawāt.

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s 5 day stay in Lahore was filled with events:

1. Imamia Students Organisation was an active and progressive student organisation formed to create fraternity among Shī‘as in universities across the country, and to promote religious values among them. ISO had organized three events:

(a) 8 May 1976, 5:30 p.m.: ‘Allāmah Rizvi attended the annual meeting of the Engineering University (Punjab) branch of the ISO. The event ended with a speech by the ‘Allāmah on “Responsibilities of the Intelligentsia towards removing anti-Islamic character of the present Muslim societies.”⁷⁹

(b) 9 May 1976, 5 pm: ‘Allāmah Rizvi attended a study circle at the residence of Dr. Ghulam Shabbir where Maulānā Murtaza Husain Fazil read a paper on “Development of Shī‘a Theology in Past Centuries.” Then Dr. Mohammad ‘Ali Naqvi (son of Maulānā Syed Amir Husain Naqvi and ex-General Secretary of ISO) asked the guest of honour to talk about “Tabligh of Shi‘ism in Africa” in

79 This speech was published in *The Light* (June 1977) as “The Muslim Intelligentsia & Its Responsibilities.”

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

which the ‘Allāmah explained the history and achievement of Bilal Mission in details.

(c) 10 May 1976, 5 pm: ‘Allāmah Rizvi attended a meeting at the Punjab University’s main campus. The theme of the meeting was “Islamic Ethics.” The first address was given by Maulānā Syed Azhar Hussain Zaidi, followed by a speech by Maulānā Syed Sadiq ‘Ali Shah, ending with a speech by the ‘Allāmah.

2. A visit to Jāmi‘atul Muntazar: This was the biggest madrasah in Pakistan at that time. Its syllabus reached to the level of *Rasā’il* of Shaykh Anṣārī in 12 years. Most of its teachers were graduates of the Ḥawza-e ‘Ilmiyyah of Najaf and had 127 students. There was a boarding house and meals were served free of charge. The complex included a masjid, a good library and 4 teachers’ flats.

3. A visit to Muzaffarul Madāris Madrasatul Wā‘izeen on 8 May 1976: This madrasah was established by Nawwab Muzaffar ‘Ali Khan Qazalbash and he managed its expenses. Its Secretary was Maulānā Shabīhul Ḥasanayn Muḥammadi and Principal was Maulānā Yūsuf Ḥusayn. Maulānā S. Murtaza Ḥusayn Fazil also taught there. It had six students and they were to gain expertise in one or two subjects to qualify for preaching duty.

4. Imamia Mission: This institution was established in a similar structure to that of Imamia Mission of Lucknow, primarily to disseminate Shī‘a literature. Khawājah Ḥabīb ‘Ali (the managing trustee) and others opened the office on a Sunday to facilitate the ‘Allāmah’s visit. Maulānā S. Murtaza Ḥusayn Fazil, Mr. N.A. Rizvi and other staff members were present. They wanted permission to translate some of his books (such as *Justice of God* and *Day of Judgement*) in Urdu.

* * *

In the second leg of his journey, my family visited India. Their first stop was **Bombay** where ‘Allāmah met Haji Gulamali Bhanji, Secretary of Idara-e Tabligh Ahle Bait which helps madrasahs in towns and villages of Gujarat and Maharashtra and also helps in maintenance of the masājid. He also met Mr. Yusuf Laljee, the author of the popular book *Know Your Islam*.

Before going to Bihar, my family also stopped in **Lucknow** where my father visited various institutions and scholars of the city.

Maulānā Dr. Syed Kalbe Sadiq, who was the Hon. General Secretary of **All India Shī‘a Conference**, held a reception for ‘Allāmah Rizvi on 3 June 1976 at Qaumi Ghar (the head office of the Conference). It was attended by almost all ‘ulamā’ and other dignitaries present in Lucknow.

In that reception, Dr. Kalbe Sadiq introduced the Bilal Muslim Mission and then ‘Allāmah Rizvi explained the history and development of the Mission. At the end, he emphasized the need for scholars who could teach in Arabic and were willing to struggle hard in the cause of tabligh. He also asked for contributions from writers and translators for the *Light* magazine.

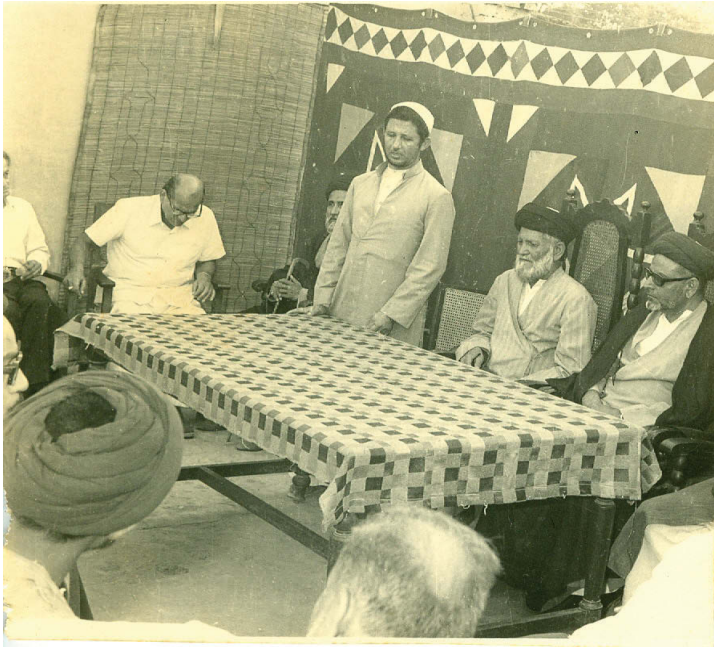
The report and photos of the reception were prominently published in the weekly *Sarfaraz*. Reports of the function were also published by the daily *National Herald*, the *Qaumi Awaz* and the weekly *Nazzara*. (See some pictures in the next pages.)

‘Allāmah Rizvi also visited **Madrasah-e Nāzimiyyah**, as well as **Tanzeem-e Makatib** which was the most organized institution in northern India. Its mandate is to establish, supervise and manage the makatib in villages and towns, and conduct exams. It has course books of Urdu, diniyat and tajwid for the primary levels.

The motivating person behind Tanzeem was Maulānā Syed Ghulam ‘Askari saheb who had invited the ‘Allāmah to visit.⁸⁰

80 Based on a report in the *Light*, vol. 10 (December 1976) no. 6. p. 33.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Dr. S. Kalbe Sadiq speaking at the reception by
All India Shī'a Conference, Lucknow



‘Allāmah Rizvi addressing the august audience.



Another view of the reception at Lucknow
(5th from left in first row is the present author who had joined the family for this trip from Iran to attend my older brother's wedding.)



H.I. Maulānā S. Hamidul Hasan, the Principal of Madrasah Nazimiyyah
with 'Allamah Rizvi at the reception.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



While visiting Madrasah-e Nāzimiyyah,
‘Allāmah Rizvi in a group photo with his teacher Maulānā Rasūl Aḥmad saheb
(sitting in the middle with a white cap).

To the left of Maulānā Rasūl Aḥmad is Maulānā Ḥamīdul Ḥasan,
my younger brother Masud Akhtar, myself, Maulānā Shahenshah Ḥussain
(teacher at Nāzimiyyah). My other brother, Zaki Imam, can be seen standing at
the back with folded hands.

* * *

On this trip to India in 1976, my elder brother, Ali Imam, got married in Gopalpur. My father also settled my two younger brothers, Zaki Imam and Masud Akhtar, in India to pursue their higher studies. Zaki Imam initially went to Udaipur (Rajasthan) but then he finally settled in Gopalpur (Bihar) with my uncle and pursued his bachelor’s commerce degree in Siwan. Masud Akhtar settled in Gorakhpur (Uttar Pardesh) with my younger uncle and pursued his bachelor’s commerce degree in that city.

FAREWELL FOR ‘ALLĀMAH RIZVI

‘Allāmah Rizvi permanently left East Africa for India, on 16 August 1978. A gathering was held in his honour at the Boarding House (in Upanga) on 12 August 1978 at 10:30 pm to bid farewell to him and then “sehri” was served.

A moving message of appreciation was read by Shaykh Dhikiri Ali Kiondo on behalf of the members of Temeke Centre staff. Then Shaykh Twalib Sultan read poetry in Arabic. After a speech by Haji Hussein Nasser Walji, Maulānā Shaykh Zafar Abbas presented ‘Allāmah Rizvi with an Ivory Gong.⁸¹



Shaykh Zafar ‘Abbas presenting a souvenir to ‘Allāmah Rizvi

* * *

81 Report by Abdul Sadiq Mwangamilo, “Chief Missionary on a Long Leave,” *The Light*, vol. 12 (October 1978) no. 6, p. 15-17.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

It seems appropriate to end this chapter with the words of His Excellency Dr. Tavokkoli, the former Ambassador of Iran to Tanzania, in which he described the impact of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s work as follows:

“If you go now to the region, you will be able to sense the presence of Shī‘ism. You will sense that the environment is filled with the name of Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Ṭālib, the Noble Prophet (s) and the Infallible Imams (a). This is result of a series of his endeavors.”⁸²

* * *

82 Visit <https://www.al-m.ca/biography> to view the documentary, “*Akhtar-e Pur Furūgh (Bright-Shining Star)*,” produced by Al-Mustafa International University (Qum) in 2012 in memory of my father.

Chapter Five

The Illuminating Star

A Long Sojourn to India & the West
(1978 - 1986)

Return to **India**

First Visit to the **West**

Move to the **UK** (1981)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِيْنَا
لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“As for those who strive hard for Us,
We will most surely guide them towards Our ways;
and Allāh is most surely with those who are the good-doers.”

(The Qur’ān 29:69)

ALONG SOJOURN TO INDIA & THE WEST

1978-1986

Return to India

Based on some personal and other important considerations, ‘Allāmah Rizvi decided by late 1976 to leave Africa and return to India. Of course, his decision to leave Africa was not an easy one.

Even his friends in other countries were concerned. Hujjatul Islam Syed Murtaza Nūrī (the director of WOFIS) wrote to him: “I am very surprised and concerned with this decision of yours because you had taken very concrete and great steps for furthering the cause of Shi‘ism in East Africa, and you continue to do so even now...I believe that by leaving East Africa, the condition of Bilal [Mission] in Tanzania and Kenya will suffer even though some people might think that they will be able to continue without you but I believe that furthering the tabligh requires a scholarly source and you are that source – if you leave, there will emerge a serious void. Anyway, I hope you reconsider your decision. If your stay in Tehran works out, it probably would not be appropriate to leave Africa totally; maybe, you can spend few months a year in Africa to supervise the activities whose foundation was laid by yourself...”⁸³

The ‘Allāmah was firm on his decision and finally, he left Tanzania on **16 August 1978**.

83 His letter dated 12/6/1354 (solar AH) = 3 September 1975

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

He left Tanzania with his respected wife, his younger daughter Zainab, and his youngest son Murtaza. (His three older sons were already in India and I was in Iran). The plan was to go for ‘umrah, then for ziyārat in Iraq and Iran, then visit Karachi, Pakistan, to visit my mother’s family, and finally to India.

However, during the ‘umrah trip, while travelling from Medina to Mecca at night, the driver lost control and the vehicle overturned. Al-hamdu-lillah, they all survived but were seriously injured and taken to a hospital in Rabigh. My father sent a detailed telegram to HI S. Murtaza Nūrī in Tehran about the accident. RE Group, a global architecture firm had an office in Jeddah. This firm was owned by Agha S. Murtaza Nūrī’s relative, Dr. S. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shahrīstānī. His people immediately came to Rabigh and made sure that all required treatments were provided and also facilitated their travel and stay in Mecca, to complete their ‘umrah.

After recovering from the accident and completing the ‘umrah, they had to shorten their trip and went directly to Karachi to recuperate with our mother’s family for few a weeks. Finally, they reached India in **October 1978** and gradually settled down in Gopalpur, Bihar.

* * *

Translation of *Tafsīr al-Mizān*

A year before he left Africa, the officials of WOFIS had met ‘Allāmah Rizvi on his ḥajj journey and approached him to undertake the translation of the most important *tafsīr* work of contemporary times written by the late ‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī.

The publisher’s preface of *al-Mizān* says the following:

“It was a grace of Allāh that He inspired us a few years ago to prepare and publish a *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān in English. We wanted it to be a *tafsīr* that would help the reader to understand

the divine Book and its verses, as much as practically possible — a *tafsīr* that would bring its sublime meanings and divine themes nearer to the human mind; would explain the context in which the verses and chapters were revealed, would cover the points that are necessary for understanding its meaning and fully comprehending its import — all this without ignoring the traditions of the Prophet and his Ahlu 'l-bayt (a.s.) in arriving at the final conclusion. On the other hand, we wanted it to be in sympathy with the mentality of the present day's readers, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, looking at the problems that boggle their minds and the questions that demand responsible and knowledgeable answers — to the extent it is related to the Qur'ān and its explanation.

“After much deliberation, we found that *tafsīr al-Mīzān*, satisfies our both requirements to a great extent.

“So, seeking the help of Allāh, we decided to get it translated in the English language. Even before embarking on this work, we were fully aware that it was a gigantic task; we understood that the responsibility would be heavy and the efforts to bring this scheme to completion herculean; the expenses would be huge and the difficulties himalayan. We knew all of it, and our only weapon was, and is, our reliance on Allāh. We sought His help to make our dream come true; and to help us reach the end goal and prepare and publish the complete set.

“A few years ago, we entered into an agreement with someone to translate the first volume; but he did not fulfill his promise, although we gave him all the time and facilities —and even more — that were needed for it.

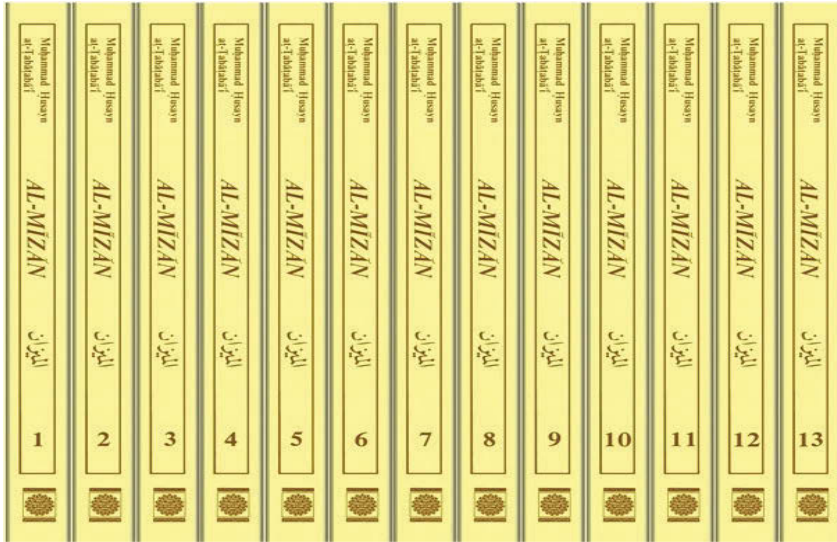
“At last we requested al-'Allāmah ar-Raḍawī to take this important responsibility on his shoulders, and we are thankful to Allāh that al-'Allāmah ar-Raḍawī fulfilled his promise.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

“We have written in short about al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī (s/o as-Sayyid Abu ‘l-Ḥasan [1309/1891 --1394/1974]) in the preface of his book, *The Family Life of Islam*, in which we, inter alia, wrote: as-Sayyid ar-Raḍawī is one of the most sincere preachers of Islam and an active scholar, both when he was in Tanzania in the Bilāl Muslim Mission (an Islamic organization active in Tanzania), and also now that he has returned to his own country of India. In the way of spreading Islam he has rendered enormous services and has been most active. “al-‘Allāmah ar-Raḍawī has written scores of books and booklets in English, Urdu and Swahili, many of which have been published; and we have given in the above-mentioned preface some titles which have been published by us. Some of his books have been translated and published by us in French, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indonesian, Hausa and some other languages.

“Here we must express our thanks to him for the efforts he has made and the difficulties he has overcome in rendering *al-Mīzān* into English. The original Arabic book is replete with academic terms of all disciplines, Islamic as well as non-Islamic, and with philosophical discussions related mostly to metaphysics. The learned translator has discharged his trust faithfully and conveyed the original idea into English truthfully. What you find in your hands is the true rendering of what al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’i wrote in Arabic. The translator has written some footnotes where he thought it necessary – without altering the original text in any way. We left the entire responsibility of the translation in the hands of the translator, relying on his erudition and knowledge of Arabic language, philosophy and Islamic subjects and his long experience in rendering purely Islamic esoteric ideas into a western language like English. Now he is personally

responsible for the English translation, just as al-‘Allāmah at-Ṭabāṭabā’i (may Allāh have His mercy on him!) was personally responsible for the explanation of the Qur’anic verses, and the general discussions he wrote in tafsir *al-Mīzān*.⁸⁴



Wherever ‘Allāmah Rizvi had disagreement with the conclusions of ‘Allāmah at-Ṭabāṭabā’i, he wrote his views in footnotes. Such critical footnotes range in length from a paragraph to a few pages on various issues:

- Arabic grammar (e.g., vol. 1, p. 35, vol. 8, p. 226);
- Contradictions in the writer’s arguments (e.g., vol. 1, p. 203, 212)
- Shortcoming in the author’s arguments (e.g., vol. 2, p.84; vol. 5, p.171-2, 231, 257, 263; vol. 6, p.22, 75, 78; vol. 8, p.279, 319).
- The most extensive criticism that he has on ‘Allāmah at-Ṭabāṭabā’i’s views relates to the marriage of Adam’s children (e.g., vol. 7, p. 214-225).
- Also see his notes on the issue of Fadak in vol. 8, p. 12-14; and on the issue of ta‘ṣīb, p. 24-27.

84 See the publisher’s preface to the first volume of *Al-Mizān*.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

The publication of the English translation started in **1982** and the twelfth volume was published in **2003**. From 1982 to 1984, the ‘Allāmah was able to finalize five volumes. However, between 1984 to 2000, he was able to produce only three volumes as his attention was also devoted to a series of other activities and some of his own writing works in Arabic, Urdu and English. from 2000 to 2002, he was able to finalize four more volumes.

When my father passed away in June 2002, he had just completed one-third of the 13th volume. I had promised Hujjatul Islam Syed Murtaza Nūrī to complete the remaining two-thirds of it. The thirteenth volume was published in 2015. The publisher’s preface of the 13th volume states:

“Most regretfully, the esteemed translator ‘Allāmah Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar Rizvi passed away on the morning of 20th June 2002 when he was busy with the translation of volume thirteen of *al-Mīzān* (may Allāh have mercy on him). It has come in a ḥadīth: ‘When a religious scholar dies a void is created in Islam that nothing can ever fill it.’ The demise of ‘Allāmah Rizvi was indeed a great loss for the Shī‘ah world. It became very difficult for this Organization to find a deserving translator capable to finish the English translation of the 13th volume of *al-Mīzān*.

“Finally, a decade after the death of the esteemed translator, his son, the venerated ‘Allāmah, Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi, may Allāh bless him, came forward to complete the remainder of this volume with the proposal and persuasion of this Organization. The late ‘Allāmah had completed the first draft of the translation of just over one-third of the 13th volume, from the beginning of chapter six of the Holy Qur’ān till verse 41. Then his son worked on finalizing the first draft of the late scholar, editing the text and completing the missing parts, and then he continued the translation of the rest volume for which we thank Allāh that he

had completed it.

“We pray for the continued success of Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi, who, in spite of his busy religious activities in Canada and elsewhere, has completed this volume, and we hope that he will continue the journey that his late father had started.”

Reviving the Religious Environment

‘Allāmah Rizvi was disappointed with the religious environment of Gopalpur, and he could not be indifferent to it. The first thing he did was reviving the Jāmi‘ masjid where Friday prayer had been stopped for quite a few years. He also started attending the mosque for maghribayn salat. Gradually the people started to gravitate to him and the attendance in the masjid grew. Friday prayer was also revived, and the mu’mineen from surrounding villages also started attending the weekly gathering.



Jāmi‘ Masjid of Gopalpur. It was renovated by my father, and in 2017, I aided in having marble floors installed inside and in the courtyard.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

His exhortations changed those who had been addicted to intoxicants, they repented and reformed themselves. I was able to sense his impact on the people during my stay especially in 1981 and then 1982-1983 when I had to fulfill the duties of imam-e jum‘a in his absence, when he visited New York twice.

Charity Work in India

In Chapter Three we witnessed ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s enthusiasm for improving the situation of the community from his young age, more in the context of the **Anjuman-e Wazifa-e Sadaat-o-Momineen** and how he rejoined the Anjuman upon his return to India.

‘Allāmah Rizvi always promoted AWSM. Once in the early 1980s, he had gone to Gorakhpur to visit his younger brother S. Tawakkul Husayn. He went to the nearby Shī‘a mosque and saw that some young people who had started praying in that mosque had decided on their own initiative to renovate the mosque. My father was impressed with their commitment. One of those people was Syed Ainul Raza Kararvi, a senior officer at Indian Railways who had previously read my father’s *Family Life in Islam* and appreciated his work in the promotion of the faith. My father encouraged him to become the local secretary for Anjuman-e Wazifa-e Sadaat-o-Momineen. Syed Ainul Raza Kararvi became a good volunteer of AWSM and presently he is the editor of the monthly *Wazifa*.⁸⁵

During his stay in Africa, ‘Allāmah became the *wasīla* for some mu’mineen to help deserving individuals in the Indian provinces of Bihar and UP. There are numerous entries in his dairies on this issue: he diligently wrote the amounts sent, names of the recipients, and, in case of the ‘ulamā’ who became distributors of the charity, he also got receipts from them and passed them to the donors.

85 As narrated to me by Mr. Syed Ainul Raza in a telephonic conversation.



AWSM annual meeting in 1981 at Gulzarbagh, Patna
‘Allāmah is seated first from the right.

* * *

One of the most important charitable organizations in India is the **Imaan Foundation** with its office in Mumbai popularly known as “Najafi House”. It was founded in **1981** under the direction of the Grand Āyatullāh al-Khuṭī by his special representative, Hujjatul Islam Syed Mohammed Musawi for the welfare of the Shī‘as of India. Imaan Foundation, under the supervision of H.I. S. Musawi, was managed by Haj Roshanali Dawood Nasser and then by his son Muhibb Ali Nasser.⁸⁶

H.I. Musawi visited all the Shī‘a localities in India and established an excellent network of social leaders and scholars for helping the community. He would also upgrade masājid and imāmbargahs as

86 After the demise of the Grand Āyatullāh al-Khuṭī, Imaan Foundation is now supported by the Grand Āyatullāh S. ‘Ali as-Sistānī.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

well as support religious seminaries by providing monthly grants to the teachers and the imāms of the masājid. Indeed many Shi‘a assets which were in a state of decay, found new life through his efforts. For its charitable work in Bihar, Imaan Foundation (which was then formally registered as Alimaan Charitable Trust) considered ‘Allāmah Rizvi as the ideal individual to coordinate their activities as well as verify applications. This verification process was done discreetly so the local applicants would not know about it. This networked verification process was very useful since some individuals would ask for the same type of assistance from both Imaan Foundation as well as from ‘Allāmah Rizvi separately.

* * *

Although ‘Allāmah Rizvi moved to the West and then back to Africa in the 1990s, his charitable work in the Bihar area continued. I also within my means in Canada used to facilitate charitable work with the support of generous mu’mineen. However, all this charity work was done on a personal level. Eventually, the political atmosphere in India gradually became challenging for Muslims due to right-wing parties and so I suggested my father form a registered charity for this purpose, so that our work could become official and transparent. This was also suggested by my brother Zaki Imam.

And so in **1995**, the ‘Allāmah established **Bilal Charitable Trust of India** in Gopalpur to formalize the charity work that was done by and through ‘Allāmah Rizvi in Bihar for many decades. My uncle, the late Syed Hameed Asghar Rizvi, worked hard to get the Bilal Trust duly registered at the provincial and federal levels; and, as the President of BCTI, he dedicated his time to its projects until the end of his life in year 2015.

The KSI Africa Federation, Imaan Foundation of Bombay and various mu’mineen in different countries, including from Canada through this writer, have continued to strengthen the Bilal Charitable

Trust of India. Until now, more than 25 mosques and imāmbārgahs have been fully or partially constructed and more than 39 houses for people with no shelter have also been built. In 1995-1996, with the full support of the KSI Africa Federation, “Bilal Colony” was built which consists of six flats for those who cannot afford housing.

BCTI also established and operated al-Mahdi Institute, Gopalpur, which consists of al-Mahdi English Medium School and al-Mahdi Institute of Information Technology. While the School continues, the technology institute has since closed. There is also ongoing charity work involving providing food, clothing, marriage expenses, and medical aid to the deserving Shī‘as in that region of India.

First Visit to the West

New York: In 1981, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was invited for the Ramadhān program by the New York Jamaat and so he travelled there in **July 1981**/Ramadhān 1401. The programs were organized at the residence of Aunali Khalfan (of the Tahṛīk-e Tarsīl-e Qur’ān Inc.) and at Al-Khoei Islamic Centre in Queens.

London: On the way back to India, he stopped in London for four days. There his friend, Dr. Jafarali Asaria strongly suggested that he should move to London and be associated to his Imam Sahibuz Zaman Trust. Upon inquiring about the nature of work, he was told that he may do whatever he wanted to do because that would be for the cause of our faith - he would be free to plan his own activities. And so my father accepted this proposal.

* * *

This invitation was give in Shawwal 1401, however due to the upcoming marriages of his three children (me, my brother Zaki Imam and my sister Zainab) in Dhil Hijjah around Ghadir (October 1981), ‘Allāmah Rizvi could not move to London at that time.

Personal Tragedy: Losing a Son

New York & London: In **July 1982**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was again invited for Ramadhān to New York. I had returned back from Iran in June of the same year. My father left for the USA and asked me to fulfill the duties of the main masjid of Gopalpur in his absence, and also to take care of my older brother, ‘Ali Imam, who had been ill and bed-ridden since March 1982. My brother had been under the care of different doctors of the area but there was no improvement to his condition. Finally, during Ramadhān, upon recommendation of a local physician, I decided to take him to a specialist in Ranchi which was in the southern part of Bihar. We returned to Gopalpur with an unfortunate diagnosis, that he was suffering from meningitis and it had reached to a point where recovery was not possible.

I had kept my father abreast by mail and also sent him copies of the specialist reports. He showed it to some doctors in New Jersey and they agreed with the unfortunate diagnosis. After New York’s Ramadhān program, my father stopped in London in early August for a week-long program. He was in London when my brother, Syed Ali Imam Rizvi, passed away in the early morning of Friday, **13 August 1982** (22 Shawwāl 1402) at the age of 30. He was buried beside his mother’s grave in Gopalpur on the same evening.

It was a very difficult decision but after consulting elders, we agreed not to send a telegram informing my father of my brother’s demise since he was alone in a foreign country and it was a long journey back from London to Gopalpur. My father reached home a few days after my brother’s burial. No one had words for how to break the sorrowful news to him but with the family-members’ demeanor, he sensed that something tragic had happened. He looked around and saw the missing bed where my late brother was cared

for. It was indeed a big shock for a father to lose his 30-year-old son. But following the example of Imam Ḥusayn (a), he sat down and constantly recited *inna lil lāhi wa inna ilayhi rāji‘ūn, rizan bi qadhāihi wa tasliman li amrih*. It was only when my late brother’s 6-year-old daughter, Ruqayya, approached him, that he hugged her tightly and cried out loud.

My late brother was survived by his wife and two children, Ruqayyah and a 3-year-old son, Hasan Imam. His youngest son, Zaighum Abbas was born a month after his demise.

The *chehlum* majlis for my late brother was held on 12 September 1982 (23 Dhul Qa‘dah 1403) and was addressed by HI Maulānā S. Shamīmūl Ḥasan Rizvi of Banaras.

After this tragedy, my father’s heart was never at ease in Gopalpur.

Move to the UK

Finally, in **December 1982**, he moved to London with the support of Imam Sahibuz-Zaman Trust.

His various activities under ISZT included a 1-week **intensive course** for youths, a 1-week program for married couples, and other courses on various subjects. The fame of these intensive courses spread to other countries as well.

The Islamic Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari Jamaat of Toronto (Canada), through Gulamabbas Sajan and Mahmud Devji, requested Imam Sahib-uz-Zaman Trust to conduct an intensive course in Canada. And so with support of ISZT, my father visited North America in **August to October 1983**.

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s journey started from **Toronto** where he conducted a week long intensive course for youths. People still remember that first intensive course which sparked a wave of intensive courses in North America.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Group photo of the first intensive course in Toronto 1983.
(‘Allāmah Rizvi with organizers and teachers (Maulana SM Zaki Baqri, Mahmud Deyji, Gulnabbas Sajjan and others)
at the Muhammadi Islamic Centre which was later on named as Jaffari Islamic Centre.



Group photos with some participants & organizers (Maulānā Baqri, Marhum Mahmud Devji and others) of the first intensive course in Toronto in 1983.

From there he travelled to **New Jersey** where another similar course was conducted for the youths at a summer camp. According to Dr. Manzoor Naqi Rizvi, the plan was that ‘Allāmah Rizvi would spend the day at the camp with the youths and return to the residence of Dr. Rizvi for the night. But the very next day, while he was passing by a classroom, he heard one of the teachers describing an Islamic belief incorrectly to the young people. He decided to spend nights at the camp as well even though he had sprained his ankle.⁸⁷

From New Jersey, he went to **Houston** where a number of lectures were organized at the university. See the pictures below:

87 Dr. Manzoor Rizvi, “‘Allāmah Jalil, Muhaqqiq-e be ‘Adil, Muballigh be Tamthil,” in *Tawhīd Mail*.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



On this trip, ‘Allāmah Rizvi also visited **New York, Washington, Detroit, St. Antonio (Texas), Los Angeles and Vancouver.** I had moved with my wife to Vancouver in the summer and my father spent a few days with us and our first-born child, a baby girl who was born in September 1983.



My father with my daughter, Aliyyah, in Vancouver in 1983



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



With my father in Vancouver in 1983

He travelled back to **Toronto**, then **Kitchener** and New York before flying back to London. This trip helped him to become familiar with, and evaluate, the Shī‘a community in North America and help create awareness about the faith.

* * *

In his trip to Dearborn - America’s predominantly Arab town near Detroit, Michigan - ‘Allāmah Rizvi visited the Islamic Centre of America, established by the late Shaykh Muḥammad Jawād Chirri of Lebanon. When he saw the names of the directors on the notice board and noticed that some were non-Muslim names, he was delighted thinking that these individuals must have converted to Shī‘a Islam. When he asked Shaykh Chirri about it, he was told that these are Shī‘as of Lebanese origin but have changed their names

in North America. My father remembered the Urdu proverb, “*ye to sirf nam ke Muslim hain* -- they are just Muslims by name,” and he said to himself: they have not even maintained their names!

* * *

‘Allāmah Rizvi returned to London in October 1983. There was also a plan to start a correspondence course under Imam Sahib-uz-Zaman Trust but unfortunately it did not materialize.

Formation of the World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League

In **January 1983**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi met the respected Hujjatul Islam wal Muslimin, Sayyid Mahdi al-Ḥakīm, the son of the late Grand Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, as well as his official spokesman. S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm asked ‘Allāmah Rizvi to join him in an ambitious project of forming a world organization for the Shī‘as.

On **20 January 1983 / 5 Rabi ath-Thani 1403**, a meeting was held at the house of his eminence Sayyid Muḥammad Baḥrul ‘Ulūm in which six people participated:

Sayyid Muḥammad Baḥrul ‘Ulūm (London)

Sayyid Mahdi al-Ḥakīm (London)

Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Fadhlullāh (of Lebanon)

Dr. Khalīl Ṭabāṭabā’i (of Dubai)

Shaykh Ḥusayn Chehade (of Sierra Leone)

and Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (London)

HI Sayyid Mahdi al-Ḥakīm and Dr. Ṭabāṭabā’i presented the results of the field surveys of the various Shī‘a communities around the world and also deliberated on their problems. The participants in that meeting came to the conclusion that the only solution was

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

to establish a world organization. These six individuals agreed to establish the “World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League.”⁸⁸ A preparatory committee was established with S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm as the Secretary General, SS Akhtar Rizvi as the Director, Khalīl Ṭabāṭabā’i as the Treasurer, and S. Baḥrul ‘Ulūm as the Deputy Secretary General. The first task was to draft a constitution, invite all Shī‘a organizations and leaders to the first conference, and have the constitution ratified.

S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm and S.M. Fadhlullāh went for a visit to India. Then the former went to Iran and the latter went back to Lebanon. In the meanwhile, my father and S.M. Baḥrul ‘Ulūm in London worked diligently in drafting the constitution. It was a challenging task as they had to use appropriate terminology to deflect the false accusations of extremism and radicalism from Shī‘a Islam.

At the same time, 20 members of the al-Ḥakīm family were killed by Saddam Ḥusain and 120 of them were put in prison. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm was in Iran those days. In the words of my father, “When he returned and we met with him, I was thinking that he would be distressed after the martyrdom of 20 family members and the imprisonment of 120 others relatives. But I was surprised to see that he didn’t let his family’s suffering overwhelm him regarding his mission of WABIL; rather, after the initial greeting, he started asking for an update on WABIL’s tasks. I was forced to interject and ask for recitation of Surah al-Fatiha in memory of the *shuhada*’ of his family. I was amazed to see his patience, steadfastness and spirit of sacrifice for the faith. Very few people were like that.”⁸⁹

The constitution draft was finalized, a circular letter was prepared, and inaugural conference invitations were sent to more

88 During deliberations by the Central Council, the name was finalized as “World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League” (WABIL).

89 My father’s audio files.

than a hundred associations, organizations and trusts, from Japan to the UK, from Canada to Guyana. An overwhelming majority accepted the invitation although some of them could not come to London due to logistic problems.

85 delegates from 32 countries attended the conference; obviously in terms of population, the largest delegation was of India, followed by Pakistan and then other countries. This was the first largest Shī‘a non-pilgrimage gathering on a global level!

A selected list of the attendees shows the diversity of the Shī‘a world:

Representatives of the Marāji‘:

Āyātullāh Khumayni,

Āyātullāh Khū‘ī,

Āyātullāh Gulpaygānī,

Āyātullāh Mar‘ashi,

Āyātullāh ‘Abdullāh Shīrāzi.

Shk. M. Mahdi Shamsuddīn (Lebanon)

S. Safdar Ḥusayn (Pakistan)

Shk. al-Ghurayfī (Dubai)

Shk. M. ‘Ali Taskhīri (Iran)

Dr. Rajā‘i Khorāsāni (NY)

S. Muḥammad Musawi (Bombay)

Dr. Muḥammad Samāwi Tijāni (Tunis)

M. Shaffe Akbar (Burma)

S. Ṭāhir Jarwali (India)

Mulla Asghar MM Jaffer (London)

Shk. Masīḥ Muhājiri (Tehran)

Dr. Jaffer Ali Assaria (London)

S. Baqar Ali (Australia)

Dr. Mohammad Ali Naqvi (Pakistan)

S. Badrul Hasan Abidi (India)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Shk. Ismail C. Thant (Thailand)
Abbas Zeitoun (Australia)
Br. Latif Ali (Guyana)
Br. Mohammad G. Dhirani (Tanzania)
Shk. ‘Abdul Mun‘im Zayn (Senegal)
Shk. Muḥammad Jawād Chirri (USA)
Dr. Ali al-Emari (Germany)
Dr. Karrār Ḥusain (Pakistan)
S. Ḥamīdul Ḥasan (India)
S. Zishān Haider Jawādi (India)
Roshan Dawood Nasser (India)
Prince Anjum Qadr (India)
Aḥmad al-Khateeb (Kenya)
S. Mohammad Hasnain Abidi (India)
Maharaj Kumar Mohammad Ameer Haider Khan (India)
Dhikiri Kiondo (Tanzania)
S. Wafadar Haider Abidi (Bangladesh)
Dr. Abu Hashim (Ireland)
Qasim Hussain (London)
S. Shamim-ul-Hasan Rizvi (India)
S. Ghulam Askari (India)
Kamber Asadi (Dubai)
Mirza Mohammad Alim (India)
Abdul Momin Hussam (Malagasy)
Mohammad Hussain Dhanji (Pakistan)
Mirza Murtaza Pooya (Pakistan)

The Central Council deliberated on the constitution and then presented it to the General Assembly in the conference on 25-27 Shawwāl 1403/5-7 August 1983.

In the final session, an election for the first Executive Committee

for 9 members was held. 15 names were proposed:

1. H.I. S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm	65 votes
2. H.I. S. M. Baḥrul ‘Ulūm	64 votes
3. Dr. S. Khalīl Ṭabāṭabā’i	61 votes
4. H.I. S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi	55 votes
5. H.I. S. Muḥammad Musawi	55 votes
6. H.I. S. Jawād Gulpaygānī	50 votes
7. H.I. Shk. M. Mahdi Shamsuddin	43 votes
8. H.I. Shk. M Ali Taskhīri	37 votes
9. Dr. S.M. Ali Shahristāni	36 votes
10. Mulla Asgharali MM Jaffer	32 votes
11. H.I. Shk. Salmān Ghaffāri	22 votes
12. Rt. Comd. Qasim Husain	19 votes
13. Br. Ahmad al-Khateeb	17 votes
14. H.I. S. Abdul Ameer Safiyuddin	10 votes
15. H.I. Shk. Nūrullāh Shāhābādi	07 votes



SSA Rizvi, SM Baḥrul ‘Ulūm, S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm, Dr. Khalīl Ṭabāṭabā’i

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Scene of du‘a waḥda at the end of the conference



‘Allāmah Rizvi discussing a matter with S. Baḥrul ‘Ulūm & S. Maḥdi al-Ḥakīm

“I earnestly put my heart in WABIL’s activities and had great hopes that through it we will bring about betterment in the religious and social situation of the Shī‘as globally. From 1983 till now, in the 12 years [until 1995] -- whatever expectations we had did not materialize. I was the Director for three years. There was no financial source to even pay the salary of the staff working at WABIL’s office. Sayyid Mahdi al-Ḥakīm was expecting that the Shī‘as of the Gulf area would support his project but that region went through a recession. Moreover, some officials of Iran formed a wrong impression, that WABIL was established in opposition to the Islamic Republic or that some of its members were against the revolution. This was a ridiculous thought that people like Sayyid al-Ḥakīm was anti-revolution. And so some senior ‘ulamā’ of Iran who had said that ‘you do the work of tabligh and upliftment of the Shī‘as as we can’t do it directly and we will help you’ also did not fulfill their pledge. Sayyid al-Mahdi continued to finance WABIL’s office by his own resources. And so at the second conference in 1985, I told Sayyid Mahdi that I would be on the committee but would not take on any position. Unfortunately [without sufficient support and resources], I didn’t see any possibility of progress or fulfillment of the objectives for which WABIL was formed.”⁹⁰

Sayyid Mahdi al-Ḥakīm, in January 1988, visited Khartoum (Sudan) for a conference. The Iraqi Bathists government had been monitoring his activities and movements, and sent assassins to Khartoum where he was shot dead in his hotel lobby on 19 January 1988. With the martyrdom of Sayyid Mahdi al-Ḥakīm (may Allāh elevate his status), all hopes for the revival of WABIL were shattered.

* * *

90 Based on the audio cassette no 6 of my father.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah Rizvi working at his desk at home in London in the 1980’s.

In **September 1984**, Muhammadi Trust of the United Kingdom invited ‘Allāmah Rizvi for Muḥarram 1405. These majālis were held at Acton Hall (London) from 26 September to 7 October.



Reciting Muḥarram majlis at Acton Hall, London, 1984

ایکٹن ٹاؤن ہال میں امام حسینؑ اور شہدائے کربلا کی یاد میں

عشرہ محرم کی مجالس

۳۶ ستمبر تا ۷ اکتوبر ۱۹۸۴ء
بوقت ۸ شب
منعقد ہونگی

مولانا سید سعید اختر رضوی صاحب مختلف پہلوؤں پر ۹ بجے اردو میں تقریر کریں گے
مولانا انگیزی میں نوجوانوں کے لئے تاریخ کر بلا پر ۸ بجکر ۲۵ منٹ پر تقریر کریں گے
عاشورہ کی مجلس انجے دن ۷ اکتوبر کو ہوگی

R 2073

Muhammadi Trust
Flat 1, 2 Orme Court Bayswater Rd.
London W.2. Tel: 01-229 9040

The advertisement for these majalis in the *Daily Jang* (London) on 25 Sept 1984

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Chapter Six

The Rotating Star

**Return to Africa
(1985 to 1990)**

The Decade of the 1990s

Highlights of Activities in Tanzania & the Region in 1990s

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Writings & Publications in 1990s

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Travels for Tabligh in 1990s

Last Trip to Canada

Return to Dar-es-Salaam

The Sad Demise of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Wife

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

قال أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب
طبيبٌ دَوَّارٌ بِطَبِّهِ قَدْ أَحْكَمَ مَرَاهِمَهُ وَ أَحْمَى مَوَاسِمَهُ
يَضَعُ ذَلِكَ حَيْثُ الْحَاجَةُ إِلَيْهِ
مِنْ قُلُوبٍ عُمِيٍّ وَ آذَانٍ صُمٍّ وَ أَلْسِنَةٍ بُكْمٍ
مُتَتَّبِعٍ بِدَوَائِهِ مَوَاضِعَ الْعَفْلَةِ وَ مَوَاطِنَ الْحَيْرَةِ

Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Ṭālib (a) said:

“The Prophet was like a roaming physician
who has set ready his ointments and heated his instruments.

He uses them wherever the need arises
for curing blind hearts, deaf ears, and dumb tongues.
He followed with his medicines the spots of negligence
and places of perplexity.”

(Nahjul Balāghah, sermon 102)

RETURN TO AFRICA

1985 to 1990 **Visit to East Africa**

Nakuru, Kenya:

In 1985, Dr. Asaria asked H.I. Sayyid Mahdi al-Ḥakīm to release ‘Allāmah Rizvi for 3 months so that he could go to Nakuru, Kenya, to establish a madrasah. S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm said that this is a religious work and in line with objectives of WABIL, so there is no reason to refuse such a request.

My father first went to India, then from there he went to Dar-es-Salaam for a week, then Nairobi, and finally reached Nakuru. In Nakuru, he set up the madrasah.



Husain Day program in Nakuru on 7 Safar 1407 / 12 October 1986

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Reconnecting to Dar-es-Salaam & Bilal Mission:

However, his one week’s visit to Dar-es-Salaam in **July 1985** and observing the state of affairs of Bilal Muslim Mission had deeply distressed him. In consultation with the Supreme Council of KSI Jamaats of Africa, it was decided that ‘Allāmah Rizvi would travel to Iran and enter into an agreement with Sazmān-e Tablīghāt-e Islāmi (Organization of Islamic Propagation) to assist the Mission in enhancing the madrasahs.

And so from Nairobi, my father went to Karachi where my mother and youngest brother, Murtaza, had come from India as a condolence visit upon the death of my maternal uncle. Then they all went back to India together.

Finally, my parents went to Iran where my father finalized the agreement between Sazmān-e Tablīghāt-e Islāmi and the Supreme Council of KSI Jamaats of Africa. The signatories of this agreement on behalf of the Sazmān were H.I. Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ali Tashkīri and H.I. Shaykh ‘Ali Asghar Awhādi, and on behalf of the Supreme Council were my father and Haj Muhammad Dhirani. The main points in this agreement were as follows:

- a) enable the Mission to receive benefits of the latest educational experiments carried out within important ḥawzahs;
- b) provide the Mission with all necessary textbooks;
- c) prepare the syllabus for Mission’s seminaries;
- d) sending competent teachers in order to improve the teaching and raise the standard of the studies;
- e) establish libraries

Among other things, the agreement also talked about cooperation on strengthening the madrasa of the Mission and starting a teachers’ training course.

It was also agreed that all the teachers sent by the Sazmān (even if they are posted to surrounding countries) shall first be sent to Dar-es-Salaam so that they could be briefed by ‘Allāmah Rizvi about the general condition in Africa, and about the region to which they could be posted in particular. After the orientation, they would then be sent to their assigned posts.⁹¹

From Iran, my parents travelled to London. My father discussed the situation of Bilal Muslim Mission with Syed Mahdi al-Ḥakīm and he decided to go to Dar-es-Salaam for a year. The June 1985 issue of the *Light* magazine has a report titled “Welcome to Maulānā Rizvi” in which the Mission was expecting him to reach Dar-es-Salaam by the end of that year.

With the arrival of ‘Allāmah Rizvi back in Dar-es-Salaam, the year **1986** proved to be very productive for Bilal Muslim Mission. Many developments took place:

‘Allāmah Rizvi laid the foundation stone on 31 August 1986 / 25 Dhul Hijja 1406 for a new 3-storey building in Temeke’s Bilal campus to be known as “Markaz As-Sayyid Al-Khoui” which would comprise of a Husayniyyah Haidariyyah on the ground floor and Madrasatu Ahlil Bayt (a.s.) on the top two floors.

Haj Fidahussein Hameer, Chairman of Bilal Muslim Mission at the time, said at the speech on 31 August 1986 ceremony,

“This Mission’s continued success is due to [the] untiring efforts and contributions by Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

91 See the “Annual Report 1985” of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania for the details about this agreement.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

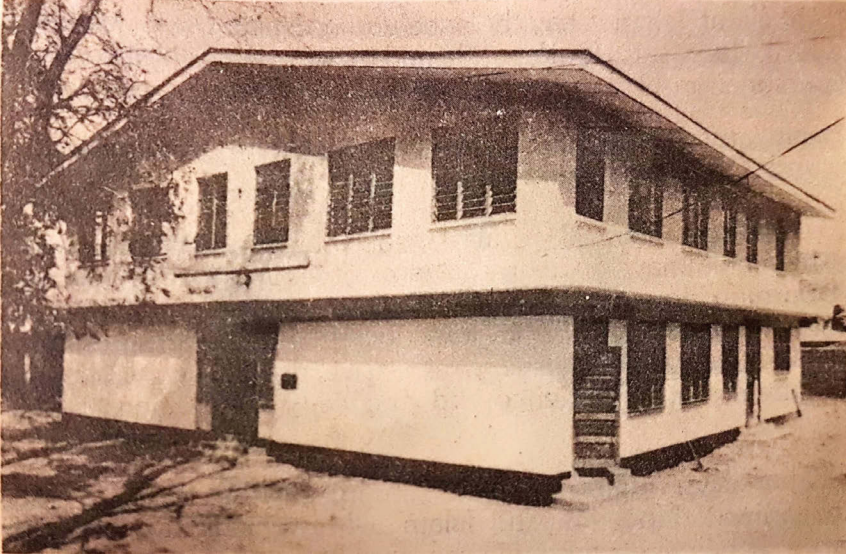
Without him this Mission could not have been what it is today. Maulānā, because of his hard-work and dedication, became well-known through the world as a dedicated missionary and a scholar of great repute...And now, in spite of ill health, advanced age and back-bending commitments to international da‘wah, Maulānā has agreed to come back to Dar-es-Salaam and help us establish Ḥawzah ‘Ilmiyya and Markaz As-Sayyid Al-Khoui.”⁹²

On the same day, there was also the opening of the two-storey ḥawzah building whose opening was done by Maulānā Syed Sajjād Ḥusain on behalf of Haj M.G. Dhirani.



‘Allāmah Rizvi laying the foundation for Markaz Al-Khoui, 31 August 1986

⁹² *The Light*, vol. 20, no. 4 (August 1986), p. 10-11.



Hawzah building opened in 1986

Based on the agreement signed with Sazmān-e Tablīghāt, two qualified teachers (Shaykh al-Khazraji and Shaykh al-Muwahhidi) came to Dar-es-Salaam in April 1986 and took charge of the Madrasatu Ahlil Bayt (a.s.) and its boarding.

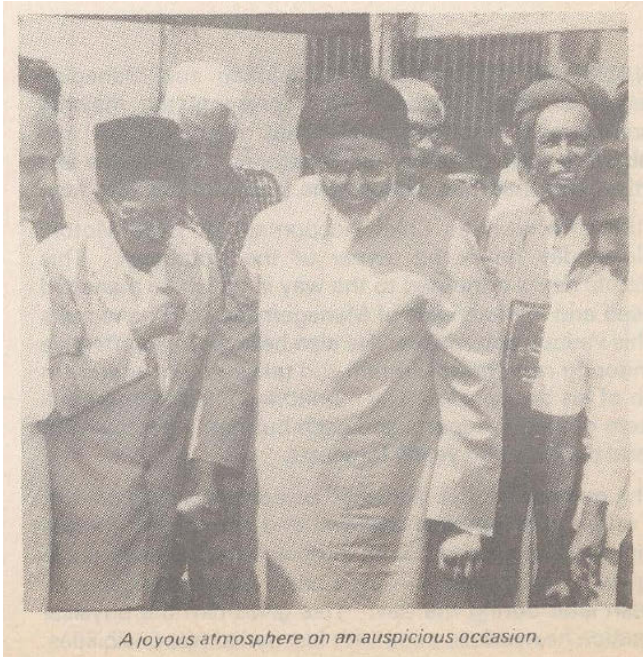
H.I. Shaykh ‘Ali Aghar Awḥadi also came for a visit to Dar-es-Salaam in **May 1986** and in consultation with ‘Allāmah Rizvi, they came up with various syllabi:

1. Four-year ḥawzah syllabus for the Madrasatu Ahlil Bayt (a.s.) lil ‘Ulūm.
2. Three-year syllabus for the children’s madrasah.
3. Seven-year syllabus for religious education given in the government’s primary schools.
4. One-year’s teachers’ training course.
5. Three-month’s crash course for teachers.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



New Hawzah known as Markaz as-Sayyid al-Khoui upon its completion in 1990



Haj Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff Dewji seen with ‘Allāmah Rizvi in a joyous mood after the laying of the foundation in Mombasa in 1986

In **June 1986**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was invited by Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya for laying the foundation stone of a building project of the Mission in Mombasa. Haj Razaali Rafiq, the Chairman of the BMM of Kenya, in his speech attributed the success of Bilal Mission to ‘Allāmah Rizvi, “whose concerted efforts and long foresight coupled with dedication, led to its formation in Tanzania.”

In **1986**, the Chairman of the Federation conferred upon ‘Allāmah Rizvi the **Jaffery Medal**, “for his impressive performance related to tabligh work in general and his dynamic record of service with the Bilal Muslim Mission”⁹³

Another Trip to the West (1987)

Dubai: In Ramadhān **1987**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi spent the important days of the holy month in Dubai and then he travelled to India. Then in **August 1987**, he travelled to London before continuing his journey to the US.

London: In London, H.I. Syed Mahdi al-Ḥakīm discussed the plans for the 3rd conference of WABIL.

Medina, N.Y. & Jamia Waliul ‘Asr: The background of this trip to the USA involves Dr. S. Manzoor Naqi Rizvi of New Jersey who had written to my father. He expressed wishes to start the same kind of tablighi work in America, as my father had done in Africa, and that he wanted his help in establishing this program. My father wrote back, stating that he was not young anymore, and that even after his return to Africa, his work consists only of advising and guiding other missionaries and teachers, and that his main task was translating the *Tafsir al-Mizan*. Dr. Manzoor Rizvi assured my father on the telephone and in writing that his work in America also would be confined to giving advice and guidance, and that he too would

93 *Federation Samachar*, December 1986, courtesy of Mustafa Pirmohamed.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

not wish the said translation work to suffer in any way. So ‘Allāmah Rizvi agreed to visit for 3 or 4 months to assess the situation.

When my father reached New Jersey, he realized that the plan had changed and that he was expected to establish a ḥawzah and a boarding school “Jamia Waliul ‘Asr” in Medina which was in the northern section of New York state (close to Canada). He thought that the ḥawzah could serve as a base for the proposed tablighi plan; and therefore, after initial reluctance, he agreed to stay for two years.



‘Allāmah Rizvi addressing a function of Jamia Waliul ‘Asr, Medina, NY, USA. Dr. Manzoor Rizvi and ‘Allāmah S.M. Husayn Jalali can be seen on the stage.

However, he stayed there only for 3 months during which he helped in selecting a syllabus and modifying it according to the environment, and spent at least 4.5 hours every day in teaching the students besides the overall supervision of the students at the boarding school. At his age, this was an exhausting schedule, yet he hoped that when another teacher came, he would be able to devote some time to writing and tabligh. Unfortunately, this did not go as he had hoped as the institution was severely understaffed. And so by January 1988, he sent a letter from India removing himself from

that project with the assurance that the initial task of establishing the Jamia Waliul ‘Asr was done and hopefully it would achieve its goal with new teachers.⁹⁴

During this trip to the USA, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was able to visit other cities for lectures:

- **25 October 1987:** he gave a lecture at the Husain Day program in **New York** on the “Concept of Martyrdom in Islam.”
- **28 October 1987:** he gave a lecture at the University of California, Merrill College, **Santa Cruz**, on “Islam: Religion of Peace.”
- On the same day: he gave another lecture at UCSC’s Oakes College on “Islam in U.S.A.: Its Prospects & Problems.”
- **29 October 1987:** he gave a lecture at the Anthropology Department of UCSC on “The Culture of the Muslims in India.”

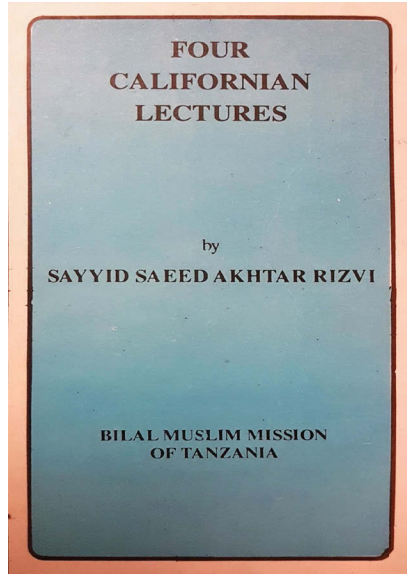
The lectures at the University of California, Santa Cruz’s campus, were organized by Professor Noel King who we have mentioned earlier in the section on Africa. These lectures were later compiled in book format.

In introducing ‘Allāmah Rizvi in these lectures, Dr. King said, “Also here you may meet directly a scholar of Islam who is no orientalist or westerner, looking in from within: even so he shows no atrophy of that methodological self-consciousness, analytical genius and ability to define of which western scholarship is justly proud. Though he speaks from within and is unconscious of the latest mines our trendy faddists have planted in academic language, he can show us what the traditionally trained mind can do to set forth the truth. His expressed respect for orthodox traditional scholarship

94 Based on the copy of his letter to the Board of Directors on which he had also cc’d to me.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

in Judaism and Christianity and may have a lot to teach us about true openness of mind and ecumenicity, no one asks us to agree with him, we do well to listen carefully.”⁹⁵



Before my father had left Medina for New York and then on to California, he had first taken my mother across the border to Toronto so that she could fly to Vancouver and stay with us for some time. So from California, my father joined us in Vancouver and spent some time with us all.

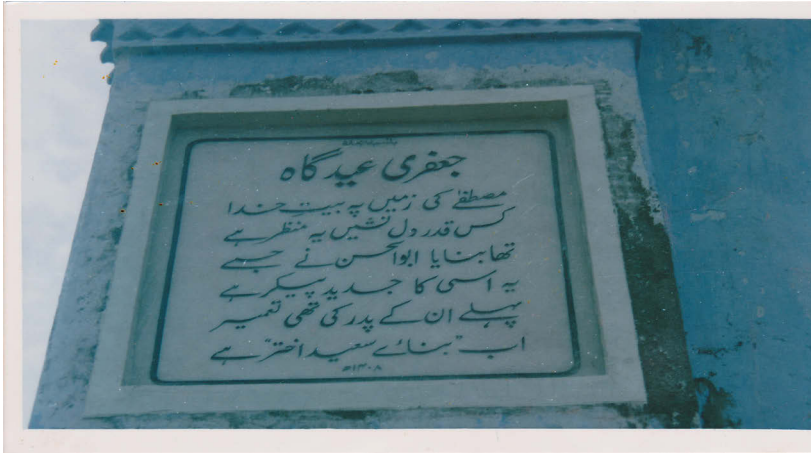
Back in India

During ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s stay in **Gopalpur**, India, he executed the reconstruction of the Eid-gāh (muṣalla for Eid). This was originally built by my grandfather but its walls had crumbled with the passage of time, and so my father rebuilt it in 1987/1408.

95 See the preface of *Four Californian Lectures* (Dar-es-Salaam: BMMT, 1989) p. ii-iii.



Eid-gāh 1408/1987

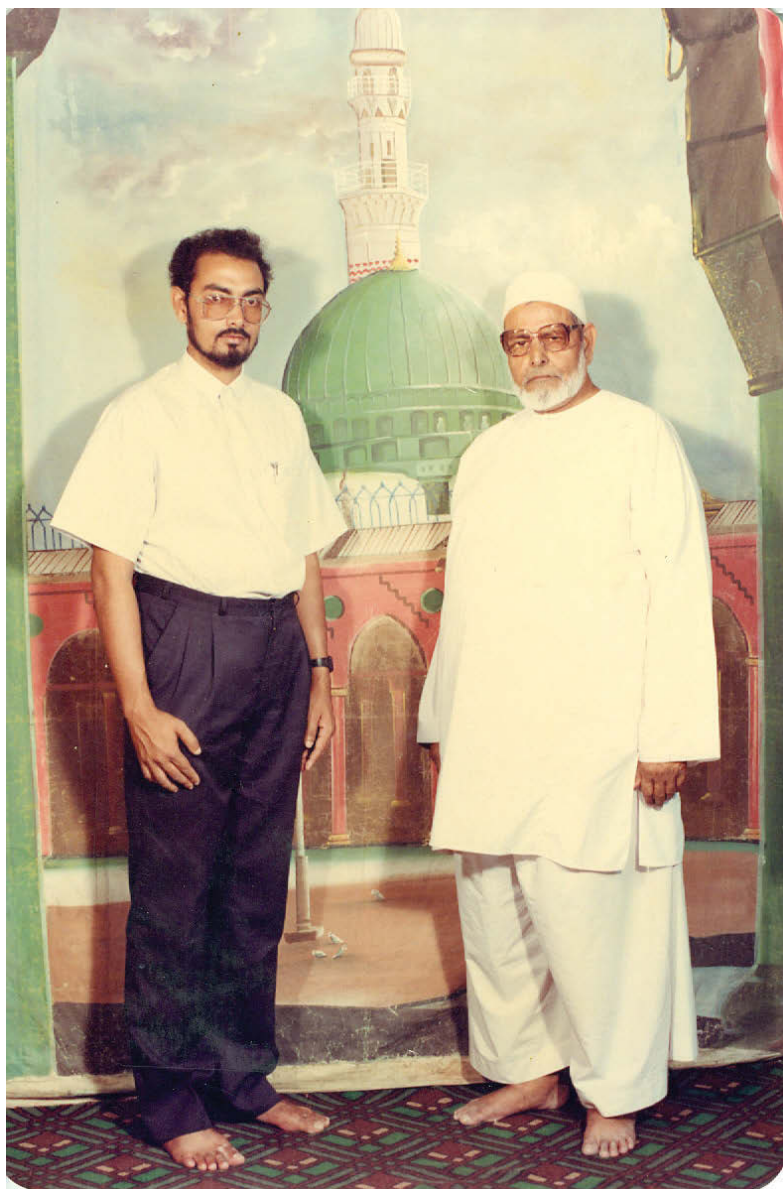


In **March / April 1989**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi went on a trip to ‘umrah and ziyārat with my brother Zaki Imam. After performing ‘umrah, they went to Syria and then Iran. From Iran, to Dubai and Karachi before landing in Bombay. From Bombay they travelled by train to reach their ancestral home in Gopalpur, in the province of Bihar.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



During the ‘umrah trip of 1989



During the 'umrah trip of 1989

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

During the train journey in April, ‘Allāmah Rizvi felt some irritation in his right eye, perhaps because of the dust. After Eidul Fiṭr, he could still feel the irritation. And so he decided to get it checked. First he went to Lucknow, where one of the top five eye specialists of India was located. Upon checking his eye, the specialist said that his retina has detached, and only 15% vision could be recovered – he recommended the operation be done immediately. However, ‘Allāmah Rizvi decided to go to London via Bombay for treatment. Upon reaching Bombay, Haj Roshan Nasser took him to Dr. Wakil who was also among the top five specialists. She checked the eye and said, “The chances of recovery have decreased even further, and we can do the same procedure which is done in London.” And so the surgery was done in Bombay. This was now late July.

The recovery, however, was phenomenal. Reading and writing was his life and so the ‘Allāmah was very concerned about losing his eye sight. He relates the success of his operation not only to the skills of the surgeon but also to the grace of the Prophet Muḥammad (s). He expressed his feeling in an Urdu poem composed on 5 August 1989 (2 Muḥarram 1410) while still recovering in Bombay. The poem is as follows, with my translation thereafter:

سناتا ہوں تمہیں اک داستان معجزہ آرائی
کہ کیسے احمد مرسل نے میری آنکھ پلٹائی
زمانہ ہو گیا تھا سر بسر تاریک آنکھوں میں
کہ بالکل چھپ گئی تھی دیدہ بینا کی بینائی
ادھر تو چشم چپ ہے موتیا سے جیسے ناکارہ
ادھر جو دیدہ روشن تھا اس پر یہ بلا آئی
جدا اپنی جگہ سے ہو گیا تھا آنکھ کا پردہ
یہ تھا اپریل کا قصہ اور اب آخر تھا جولائی

طبیبوں نے کہا تاخیر اتنی ہو چکی ہے اب
 کہ ہوگا معجزہ گر روشنی آجائے چوتھائی
 اندھیرا ہی اندھیرا ہر طرف تھا یاس و حرماں کا
 کہ اک روشن کرن امید کی دل کو نظر آئی
 خدا کے بعد محبوب خدا کا آسرا ڈھونڈا
 تصور میں شہ بطحا کے در پر کی جبیں سائی
 کہا اے نور اول اے سراج بزم امکانی
 کہ جس کے فیض سے شمس و قمر نے یہ ضیاء پائی
 تیرا ناچیز چاکر ہوں تیری خدمت میں رہتا ہوں
 تیرے دیں کے لئے کرتا رہا ہوں خامہ فرسائی
 یہ تیرا ہی عطیہ ہے بھلا ہستی میری کیا ہے
 کتابوں نے میری دنیا میں جو مقبولیت پائی
 مگر اب آپڑا پردہ ظلمت بصارت پر
 نوشت و خواند ناممکن ہے اے امی بطحائی
 ابھی جو زندگی باقی ہے وہ کیسے بسر ہوگی
 کرے گا تیری خدمت کس طرح محتاج بینائی
 میرے حساد کو موقع نہ دے مجھ پر شہادت کا
 میرا دل جس طرح زخمی ہے تو واقف ہے مولائی
 مجھے ہے ناز تیرے لطف پر تیری عنایت پر
 میرے مولا میں تجھ سے لوں گا اپنی کھوئی بینائی
 کھلی پٹی تو سارے ہی اطباء محو حیرت تھے
 کہ واپس آگئی تھی آنکھ میں پہلی سی بینائی
 بصارت میری پلٹائی ہے صد در صد محمد نے
 کہ جن کی خاک پا ہے سرمہ چشم مسیحائی

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

تمنا ہے کہ ان آنکھوں سے دیکھوں جلوہ مہدی
یہی ہے اے تپش اب زندگی کی علت غائی

I am narrating a story of a miraculous nature
How Aḥmad, the Messenger, gave back my vision

The world was turning dark in my eyes
As the vision of my eyes had been covered

Here my left eye was filtered with cataract
The working eye has now this infliction

Its retina has detached from its location
It happened in April, and this is July end

Doctors said that it has been too late
It will be miraculous if you ever see again

Darkness of hopelessness was all around
When a silver lining appeared in my heart

After Allāh, I sought the help of His beloved
Placed my forehead at his door in my mind

O the first *nūr*, O the lamp of the universe
The sun and moon gained their light from you

The Rotating Star

I am your humble servant, always in your service
I have been constantly struggling hard for your *din*

All this is your grace, otherwise who am I?
The way my books have gained global fame

But now darkness has descended on my eyes
Writing and reading is not more, O Ummi Prophet

How will I live the rest of my life?
How will I serve you without my vision?

Don't give a chance of rebuke to the jealous ones
You know better how my heart is broken

I trust in your grace, in your attention
I will take my vision from you, O my master

Doctors were surprised when the bandage opened
My eye regained the same vision as before

My vision for sure was restored by Muḥammad
The earth under whose feet is a healing kohl

I wish to see with vision the face of Mahdi
This is the only goal of my life, O Tapish

* * *

THE DECADE OF THE 1990s

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s return to Dar-es-Salaam in 1986 was with the purpose of strengthening and expanding the institution that he had founded. The top priority was given to revitalize the madrasah at the Temeke campus. For this, he established connections and agreements between Bilal Mission and similar organizations in Iran for their material support (in form of textbooks and library resources) as well as qualified teachers to elevate the standard of the ḥawzah at Temeke.

Whenever ‘Allāmah was in Dar-es-Salaam, he guided the activities of Bilal Muslim Mission without wanting to micro-manage, and his guidance was thorough and with a spirit of sincerity and sensitivity. He would:

- Be present at the office and attended the meetings of the managing committee.
- Teach select courses at the ḥawzah.
- Meet teachers and muballigin to discuss their work progress and to guide them on their plans.
- Supervise *The Light* and *Sauti ya Bilal* bi-monthly magazines and various publications of the Mission.
- Review the Swahili translations done by his students as well as works sent by Bilal of Kenya and other organizations for his review and comments.
- Attend several events, be it at Ikwiriri village or Kigomo region or the meetings of the Supreme Council.
- Hold classes at home for a few medical doctors and students. These were weekly classes depending on his health.⁹⁶

96 Regarding these weekly classes, see the report in the tribute section written by Dr. Kazim Dhalla upon my request.

According to his diaries, if his health did not allow him to go out, the meetings of the managing committee of Bilal Mission would be held at his home.

He also would undertake some trips within Tanzania and surrounding countries to strengthen the cause of tabligh.

Highlights of Activities in Tanzania & the Region

Visit to Zimbabwe & Botswana

Zimbabwe: My father was invited to **Harare**, Zimbabwe, for Muḥarram 1412 in **July 1991**, and so he travelled with my mother and they were guests of Turab Ali Husain Asaria. Agha-e Akhundi (the cultural attache of Iran in Zimbabwe) visited him to discuss Bilal Mission and suggested sending ten students from Zimbabwe to the Bilal ḥawzah in Dar-es-Salaam. My father agreed to help in this matter. Because of the multi-ethnic nature of the community, the main part of the majlis was in English but the *maṣā'ib* was in Urdu. Some nights, the entire majlis was in English.

During this journey, he also visited Imam Khomeini Islamic Community in Kadoma, 150 km from Harare.

On 19 July 1991, he attended Friday prayers at the Highland Masjid (a Sunni mosque), and delivered a speech on “visitation of the graves and the tragedy of Karbala.” The speech was translated into the local Shona language. On 27 July 1991, visited the Mboko Masjid (also Sunni) and gave a speech. Both these programs were organized by the Iranian brothers.

Some pictures from that trip were sent by a Zimbabwean student, courtesy of my nephew, Dr. Jafar Rizvi:

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah Rizvi with Mr. Muhammad Ali Akhundi in a tent masjid of Imam Khomeini Centre founded by Haj Jula





Students from Zimbabwe with Maulānā Sajjad Husain
at Bilal Ḥawzah at Dar-es-Salaam

Botswana: On 30 July 1991, my parents flew to Gaborone, Botswana, at the invitation of Riyaz Somji for three days. On 1 August 1991, a speech was organized at the University of Botswana by Mr. Shamshad, a moderate Sunni. Professors, priests and Sunnis and Shī'as were in attendance. After the lecture and dinner, the Q&A session continued for 40 minutes. Al-hamdu-lillah, the program was very successful.

The next day, a speech was organized at a Sunni masjid where 'Allāmah Rizvi spoke on Muslim unity. It impressed the audience so much that the preplanned anti-Shī'a questions circulated among the youths were not raised at all!

My parents flew back on 3 August 1991 arriving in Dar-es-Salaam at 2 pm.

* * *

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Back in Dar-es-Salaam: On 10 April 1993, ‘Allāmah attended the opening of the new Al-Muntazir Seminary building. Its new computer center was opened by him.

* * *

That same year, Hujjatul Islam S. **Jawād Gulpaygānī**, the respected son of the Grand Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Rizā Gulpaygānī, visited Africa. On his stop in Dar-es-Salaam, he also visited Bilal Muslim Mission.



With HI S. Jawād Gulpaygānī & HI Sajjād Ḥusain

The indigenous Shī‘as had gradually increased in number by then and these African Shī‘as felt that they should also form an autonomous organization which would cater to their various religious and social needs. As such the **Tanzania Shī‘a-‘Ashari Association** was formed and its first conference was held at the Bilal Centre. ‘Allāmah Rizvi, as the spiritual father of the African Shī‘as, was invited to deliver the main speech in its opening session.

* * *

On 9 December 1993, ‘Allāmah received news that the Grand Āyatullāh S. M. Rizā Gulpaygānī had passed away. He was buried the next day. ‘Allāmah Rizvi called Habib Mulji (President of Supreme Council) and the Jamaat officials to inform them about the sad news. There were constant phone calls from other people and cities about the issue of *baqā ‘ala ‘t-taqlidi ‘l-mayyit* (remaining in the *taqlid* of a deceased marja‘).

On 10 December 1993, a meeting with community elders was held in the Jamaat’s conference room to plan a memorial service for the Grand Āyatullāh. ‘Allāmah Rizvi was asked to write a circular about the issue of *baqā ‘ala ‘t-taqlidi ‘l-mayyit*, to recite a majlis the next night, and to write a profile article on the deceased Marja‘ for the national newspaper.

On 11 December 1993, a majlis was organized at the Imambara where my father recited on the issue of *taqlid* and the life of the late Marja‘. The crowd, in respect of the Grand Āyatullāh, was similar in size to those of Muḥarram days.

The 12 December 1993 edition of *Sunday News* carried a full-page article on Āyatullāh Gulpaygānī written by my father.⁹⁷

* * *

On 1 April 1994, ‘Allāmah Rizvi travelled to **Arusha** to attend the Supreme Council’s annual meeting. On 2 April, he visited the Arusha Shī‘a Centre. On 3 April, he attended the opening ceremony of Jaffery Primary School which was officially opened by the Chairman of the Supreme Council, Haj Habib Mulji, who requested the ‘Allāmah join him in the process. (See the photo on the next page.)

97 The 13 Dec 1993 entry in my father's dairy says, “Send a copy of my Arabic article ‘*Nadharatun Musta‘alah*’ and copy of *Sunday News*’ article to Sayyid Muhammad and also fax it to him.” I reprinted that article in the *Right Path* quarterly.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



16 May 1995: ‘Allāmah Rizvi visited Bilal’s Temeke Centre for distributing prizes to the students.



The person on the right in the image, holding a camera, is my late brother-in-law Husain Mehdi, and the two children sitting by him are ‘Allāmah’s grandsons.

Visit to Mozambique

‘Allāmah Rizvi went on a personal trip on 17 May 1995 with his son Zaki Imam to **Maputo (Mozambique)** where he visited Shaykh Manṣūri at Mu’assasa Ahlil Bayt al-Islamiyyah. He was apprised of the problems being created by Wahhabis in that area which was impacting the number of students.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

From Maputo, they travelled to **Nampula (Mozambique)**. There on 19 and 20 May, ‘Allāmah also met Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Seif (one of his first students) who had been active in tabligh in that area. On 21st and 22nd May, he recited majalis followed by Q&A sessions.

On 23 May, they travelled to Maputo and Manzini (Swaziland) and reached **Lusaka (Zambia)**. There they met some Shī‘a families and returned to Dar-es-Salaam on 27 May 1995.

25 July 1995: H.I. Sayyid Jawād Shahristāni came to Dar-es-Salaam with a delegation of 5 individuals. On the 26th, he and his delegation visited Bilal’s Temeke Centre. ‘Allāmah Rizvi met the delegation later in the day for lunch at Haj Haider Khaki’s home.

25 August 1995: Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat organized a Miladun Nabi (s) in which my father was the guest of honour. Many Africans were in attendance as well as some ambassadors.

Visit to Kigoma Region:

‘Allāmah Rizvi and a delegation consisting of Shk. Ramadhān Idris, Murtaza Kerbala, Amirbhai and Hasan Karim, embarked on a tablīghī tour of the Kigoma region on 18 September 1995. They landed at Kigoma airport and spent the evening visiting **Ujiji** and **Vamia**.

The next day, ‘Allāmah visited Simbo, Kamala and Nayantore returning to town at night. Over dinner at Bashir Mulla’s house, he met the resident ‘ālim and discussed issues of tabligh.

20 September 1995: ‘Allāmah Rizvi laid the foundation stone of a masjid in **Simbo**. Then he went to **Kelala** and placed the foundation stone of a madrasah.

21 September 1995: The **Ujiji** Tabligh Seminar took place. Like the one in 1976, this seminar was also very successful. The

day ended with a majlis at the Imambara in which ‘Allāmah also described the activities of Bilal Muslim Mission.

The delegation returned to Dar-es-Salaam next day.

* * *

29 September 1995: ‘Allāmah Rizvi went with my brother Murtaza to **Kibaha** for the opening ceremony of its masjid which was built by the Tanzanian President Ali Hassan Mwinyi. The reception was organized nearby at Njuweni Hotel. ‘Allāmah Rizvi and HI Sayyid Lawasani (the Iranian ambassador) were seated at the President’s table.

* * *

05 December 1995: ‘Allāmah Rizvi recited the mehfil of eve of 13 Rajab 1416 at the Imambara.

30 December 1995: ‘Allāmah Rizvi went to Bilal’s Temeke centre in the evening for the closing ceremony of the short course program and gave out the certificates.

* * *

2 January 1996: ‘Allāmah Rizvi finalized the constitution of **Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Tanzania**.

18 January 1996: He travelled to **Moshi** and **Arusha**. In the evening, he did the opening of Al-Zahra building.

19 January 1996: He went to the Arusha Centre to place the foundation stone of its masjid.

20 January 1996: He visited the Bilal centre and then returned to Dar-es-Salaam.

12 April 1996: The first meeting of the trustees of **Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Tanzania** was held, in which ‘Allāmah Rizvi was elected the chairman, Haj Fidahussain as the Secretary and Haj Pyarali Shivji as the Treasurer.

* * *

9 January 1997: ‘Allāmah Rizvi, with my brother Murtaza

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Rizvi, Shaykh Sulayman Juma and Haj Murtaza Karbala, visited the **Bagamoyo Prison** to deliver donations from Bilal Mission for Ramadhān. He met the Regional Commissioner and the Area Commissioner.



Pictures from visit to Bagamoyo Prison

The Rotating Star

20 January 1997: In the morning, he met with two **teachers** (sent by Sazmān-e Tablīghāt, Iran) to resolve salary issues. At night, committee members Haj Fida bhai and Haj Pyarali bhai came with Br. Gulām Rajani of **Songea**, to brief ‘Allāmah about Bilal’s tablīghi activities in the southern areas.

25 May 1997: ‘Allāmah Rizvi went to **Kibaha** with my brother, Masud.



First he gave a speech at the Education Centre. From there he went to see the **Regional Commissioner** and donated 700,000 shillings worth of medications on behalf of Bilal Muslim Mission. This was also publicized in the media.

* * *

31 May 1997: He went with Salim Bora to **Ukonga Prison** for a meeting.

1 June 1997: Reviewed the constitution of Bilal Mission and gave it to Haj Pyarali Shivji, the committee Chair.

3 June 1997: Sent an agreement proposal between Bilal Muslim Mission and Sāzmān-e Farhang-o-Irtibātāt Baynul Milali (which

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

replaced Sāzmān-e Tablīghāt).

14 June 1997: ‘Allāmah Rizvi went to Zanzibar with my brother Murtaza. Shaykh Musabbaḥ and others were already there for that evening’s Husayn Day program. My father notes in his dairy: “It was a good program even though the Khojas did not attend in good numbers because of their internal politics. Bohras, Sunni Africans and even Wahhabi Africans were present.”

Ahlul Bayt Assembly’s Regional Conference (July ’97)

Delegates from surrounding countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and Uganda arrived in Dar-es-Salaam in early July 1997. H.I. Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ali Taskhīri also came with a delegation from Iran, including Shk. Masīḥ Muhājiri. The conference was held on 6 July 1997.



‘Allāmah Rizvi, HI S. Murtaza Murtaza, Shaykh Taskhīri & his colleagues

The Rotating Star

7 July 1997: H.I. Shaykh Taskhīri, along with his brother Shaykh Jawād Taskhīri (the Cultural Attache of the Iranian Embassy) and his son-in-law Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīmī, visited for breakfast at ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s home; and they then visited the Bilal’s campus at Temeke. (See pictures below.)



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Shaykh Taskhīri was very impressed with Bilal’s ḥawzah. The remarks that he wrote in the visitor’s book states:

“Indeed this madrasa can become an important centre for training the muballighīn and teachers for utilization of their services in all regions of eastern, southern and central Africa. I recommend the cultural attache, the organization for reconstruction, the central body of the Ḥawzah ‘Ilmiyyah and Organization for Ḥawzah Outside Iran to use all their facilities to elevate the level of this madrasa academically and financially in order to propagate the madhhab of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).”⁹⁸

98 As quoted by my father in the Arabic report of Bilal activities in *al-Mawsem*, no. 45-46, p. 79-80.

The draft agreement written by ‘Allāmah Rizvi between Bilal Muslim Mission and Sāzmān-e Farhang was approved by both parties.

Trip to Kenya

20 April 1997: ‘Allāmah Rizvi travelled to **Mombasa** and stayed there for 3 days; he visited the Bilal office; he also recited a majlis in memory of Agha S. M. Mahdi Shushtari.

24 April: He arrived in **Nairobi**. He visited the new mosque, recited a short majlis, and paid a condolence visit to Maulānā Šābir Ḥusain’s family.

25 April: He recited the mehfil for the eve of Ghadīr.

26 April: He left for **Nakuru** with Hussain AM Jaffer. He recited a majlis and visited the school of Syed Muḥammad Ḥusain.

1 May: My father returned to Dar-es-Salaam.

* * *

The 1st Conference of Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Tanzania (21 March 1998)

The purpose of the ABATA was to bring all organizations involved in tabligh work under its umbrella. 18 such organizations in Tanzania were involved; 16 of them attended.

The conference was held under the chairmanship of ‘Allāmah Rizvi. Other dignitaries who spoke were H.I. S. Murtaza Murtaza (of Nairobi), Ambassador S. Ali Saqqāīyaan, and Shk. Jawād Taskhīri.

After discussions on the secretariat’s proposal to revamp the ABATA’s structure, the Chairman nominated four members to preparing the constitution: Haj Habib Mulji, Haj Fidahussein A. Hameer, Shaykh Shafir Saggaf, and Shaykh Musabbah Shaban.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ As reported by Haj. Fidahussein Hameer in *The Light*, (April 1998) p. 27-29.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Two group photos of the ABATA conference.



A group photo of the ABATA conference

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

30 November 1998: Mr. Muḥammad Sa‘īd Aṭ-Ṭurayḥhi, the editor of the Arabic quarterly, *Al-Mawsem*, decided to translate a section from the draft of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s book on Shī‘a history, and had asked him to write the history of Bilal Mission as well as his own short biography with pictures. My father prepared these materials and mailed them by 16 December.

العددان (٤٥-٤٦) (٢٠٠٠م-١٤٢١هـ)..... ١١

أكاديمية الكوفة

الشيعة في أفريقيا

تأليف
العلامة السيد سعيد خير الرضوي

تعريب
محمد سعيد الطريحي

(تنزانيا - زنجبار - الصومال - كينيا - تنجانيقا -
موزمبيق - ملاغاشي - أوغندا - رواندا - بروندي -
زائير - مدغشقر - موريشوس - ري يونين - السنغال -
سيراليون - ساحل العاج - نيجريا - غانا - جنوب أفريقيا)

KUFA ACADEMY

3 January 1999: ‘Allāmah Rizvi performed the opening of the **Tabata Masjid**.

16 May 1999: ‘Allāmah Rizvi visited an eye camp organized by Bilal Muslim Mission at the **Ukongu Prison** where 200 eyeglasses were prescribed and donated.

1 July 1999: The Shī‘a Shaykh from Kigali Centre in Rwanda came for a visit.

8 July 1999: Four teachers of Bilal centres in Kigoma visited.

12 July 1999: Despite his ill health, ‘Allāmah Rizvi visited Bilal’s **Temeke** campus to give a talk to the attendees of a seminar. The seminar ended on 20 July. In the closing **ceremony**, ‘Allāmah gave a speech and then the students recited a utenzi (poetry) in his praise. Finally, Shaykhs Badī‘ī and Ka‘bi-Nasab gave out certificates to the participants while ‘Allāmah gave awards to the first three positions of essay writers and Haj Pyarali Shivjee handed out participation prizes.



Murtaza Karbala, Shk. Ka‘bi-Nasab, ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Haji Pyarali Shivjee

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



The Rotating Star

- 23 July 1999: ‘Allāmah Rizvi participated the **opening of the masjid at Mbande**, and then laid the **foundation** stone for the madrasah. Then he went to visit Shaykh Mohammad Ali Ngongabure, to see his masjid and Thaḳalayn Seminary.
- 29 December 1999: Eve of 21 Ramadhān. ‘Allāmah rested the whole day as he had to recite the night-time shahādāt majlis. He stepped onto the mimbar at 11:30p.m. and recited for half-an-hour.

* * *

- 8 January 2000 / Eidul Fitr. At 8:30a.m. my father had a severe **heart attack** and was admitted in the nearby **Hindu Mandal Hospital** and stayed there for 10 days.
- 14 February 2000: Based on the doctor’s advice, arrangements were being made to travel to Birmingham for treatment. However, on the same day, H.I. Shaykh Muḥammadi Gulpaygānī, the director of the office of the Supreme Leader ([daftar-e rahbari], Tehran) visited, with some ‘ulamā’. He relayed a message from Āyatullāh S. ‘Ali Khamenai that he wanted the ‘Allāmah to come to Tehran for treatment. It was difficult to decline that offer so he accepted it. H.I. Muḥammadi Gulpaygānī asked the Ambassador, Mr. Saqqāiyān to make all the arrangements. It was decided that he would be accompanied by my mother and my brother, Murtaza.
- 16 February 2000: 40 days after the heart attack, the ‘Allāmah started proofreading the typeset pages of *Shajarah-e Ṭayyibah* sent by Imran Rasool from Bombay. He finished the proofreading by the next day.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



During the opening ceremony of the Shī‘a Centre in Mboga

24 September 2000: ‘Allāmah Rizvi went for the **opening of the Masjid Ahlul Bayt** and Madrasatul Imam Husain at **Mboga** which is between Dar-es-Salaam and Morogoro.



‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Writing & Publications in the 1990s

Besides all of the above activities, my father did not waste any opportunity to continue his scholarly work, whether it was writing, translating, or reviewing previous publications for their new editions.

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Arabic Works:

(a) His first extended article in Arabic was *Nazaratun Musta’jilah fi Mas’alati Tāhrīf ‘l-Qur’ān* (A Quick Look at the Issue of Interpolation of the Qur’ān). This extended article was written for a presentation at the Islamic Thought Conference in Tehran in January 1992.

This paper was published in *‘Ulūmu ‘l-Ḥadīth*, a bi-annual journal of the College of Ḥadīth Sciences (at Sharh-e Ray, Tehran) in its issue no. 12, in Rajab-Dhul Ḥijjah 1423. It was published as *“Al-Qur’ān al-Karīm wa Mushkilatu Akbāri ‘l-Āḥād.”*

(b) The second extended article is *Mas’alatu ‘l-Badā’* (The Problem of *Badā’*). *Badā’* is a complex theological issue about the newly discovered aspect of the information that God gives to His prophets.¹⁰⁰

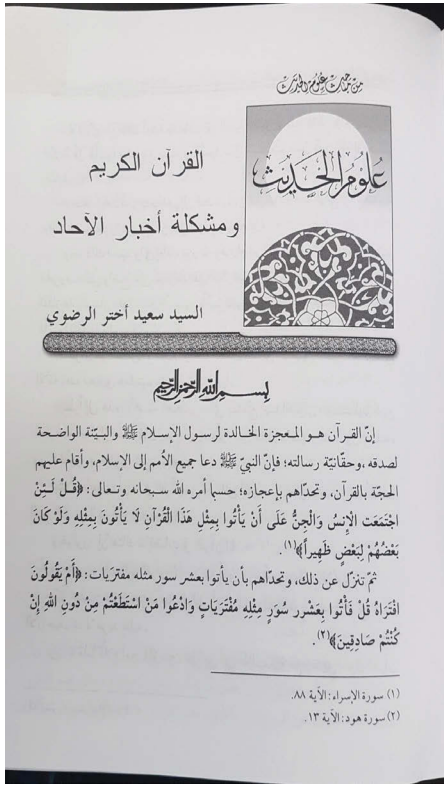
This paper was initially written for a presentation at the conference held on the centennial conference of Shaykh al-Mufid in Qum as *“Mas’alatu Badā’ fi Dhaw-e Ifādāti Mu‘allimu ‘l-Ummah ash-Shaykh al-Mufīd.”* (The Problem of *Badā’* in View of the Writings of the Teacher of the Ummah, Shaykh al-Mufīd.) It was published in a journal, *Risālatu ‘l-Taqrīb*, no. 6, 1415 AH.

100 See for details, ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s *Justice of God*.

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi

(c) The third extended article is *at-Taqiyyah fi 'l-Qur'ān wa 's-Sunnah* (Dissimulation in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah). He completed this paper during a weekend trip from Toronto to New Jersey, and finalized it in January 1995.

This paper was published as *at-Taqiyyah fi 'l-Qur'ān wa 's-Sunnah bayna 's-Sā'il wa 'l-Mujīb* in *'Ulūmu 'l-Ḥadīth*, no.14, 1996.



دراسات

سؤال البدء في ضوء إفتاد معلم الأمة الشيخ المفيد رحمه الله

السيد سعيد اختر الرضوي
مؤسس وعميد لجنة بلال الإسلاميتة للتبشير
دار السلام - تانزانيا

إن مسألة البدء من المسائل العويصة التي لم تنزل تتجاذبها الآراء بين علماء الإسلام، فأهل الجمهور يبيرون الشيعة بسببها ويشتون عليهم، وليس منشأ ذلك إلا بسبب سوء تفسير البدء، بأن الله - سبحانه وتعالى - يتحول من عزيم إلى عزيم بسبب حصول العلم بشيء أو مصلحة بعد مالم يكن حاصلًا من قبل، وغير خفي أن البدء بهذا المعنى مستحيل في حق الله سبحانه وتعالى، والشيعة ثراء من هذا الاعتقاد، ومن افتري ذلك عليهم فقد افتري كذبًا عظيمًا.

وإنما إذا أمكنا النظر لوجدنا أن الاختلاف ليس إلا نزاعًا لفظيًا فقط، لأن المؤمنين يثبتون أمرًا، والمكفرين يثبتون أمرًا آخر.

فإن البدء يستعمل في الأدب العربي لمعانٍ شتى، ولكن الأصل فيه من حيث الوضع اللغوي هو: الظهور، والظهور يمكن أن ينسب إلى الله سبحانه، أو إلى العباد. فكل من حمل البدء على ظهور حال الشيء لله تعالى بعدما كان خافيًا عليه، فقد أنكر هذا الاعتقاد، لأنه يستلزم القول بجهل الله - سبحانه وتعالى - وندمه - تعالى ربنا

These three extended papers were published collectively as *Rasā'il* by Anṣāriyān Publications in 1996.

The Persian journal, *Aiyeena-e Paoish* (vol. 40, p. 8), has this note about *Rasā'il* under the section of new publications: "This a collection of three discussions on Badā', Taqiyyah and the Qur'ān's

textual integrity which the writer has explained briefly. This is a short treatise but very precise and in a few pages, it deals with important issues of the topics discussed.”¹⁰¹



(d) In 1997, ‘Allāmah Rizvi himself translated his book on *Imāmate: the Vicegerency of the Prophet* into Arabic. This translation was started on 29 November and completed 19 December 1997. It was published as *Al-Imāmah* in Beirut in 1999 by Imam Hussain Foundation.

* * *

It is worth noting here, based on my survey of the Arabic publications, that in the generation of ‘Allāmah Rizvi, he was the only Shī‘a scholar from the Indian subcontinent whose Arabic works were published in the Middle East. There are other Arabic works which will be mentioned in later years.

* * *

101 مجموعه‌ای فراهم آمده از سه بحث، که عبارتند از «بدأ»، «تقیه» و «عدم تحریف قرآن» که مؤلف با نگاهی کوتاه بدان رسیدگی کرده است. کتاب مختصر است اما دقیق و در صفحات اندک به اهم مباحث این موضوع پرداخته است. مجله آیین بزهش، ج 40 ص 8 «معرفیهای گزارشی»

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Urdu Works:

(a) One of the contemporary Shī‘a scholars was the late ‘Allāmah Syed Murtaza Ḥusayn (famous as Fādhil) who wrote a biographical work in Urdu on the Shī‘a ‘ulamā’ of the sub-continent entitled, *Maṭla‘-e Anwār*.

Later on, ‘Allāmah Rizvi wrote a similar work concentrating on the Shī‘a ‘ulamā’ of the eastern and southern parts of India in order to fill the void that existed in the previous works on this biographical theme. As a by-product of this research work, ‘Allāmah wrote an addendum on the errors and omissions in Syed Murtaza Ḥusayn’s *Maṭla‘-e Anwār*. He finalized this work between 1993 and 1995.

This addendum to *Maṭla‘-e Anwār* was published as an appendix entitled, “Mustakrakāt” in its Persian translation by the department of Publications of Astan-e Quds Razawi in 1374 (solar) AH.

(b) During these year between 1991 and 1995, ‘Allāmah Rizvi also revised some of his Urdu works for new editions:

- *Mawt se Qiyāmat*, the Urdu translation of his Day of Judgement done by S. Ḥasan ‘Abbās Fiṭrat.
- *Islām kā Tasawwur-e Uluhiyyat*, the Urdu translation of his *God of Islam* done by Shaykh Raḥīmiyān and myself.

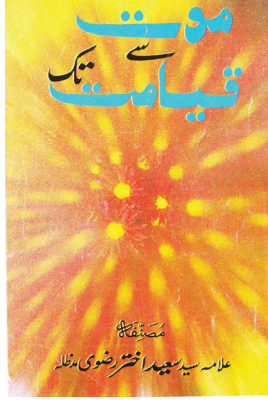
(c) Maulānā S. Shujā‘at Ḥusayn Rizvi, originally from Gopalpur and presently residing in Qum, is active in the field of translating classical works of Shī‘a ‘ulamā’ in Urdu. He is like a family member to us and has always been helpful to us, especially to my parents, whenever they travelled to Iran.

Maulānā S. Shujā‘at Ḥusayn had asked my father to write an introduction to the Urdu translation that he had done of *‘Abaqātu ‘l-Anwār* of the great scholar, ‘Allāmah Ḥāmid Ḥusayn Mūsawi of Lucknow.

My father gladly wrote an extensive introduction in August 2000,

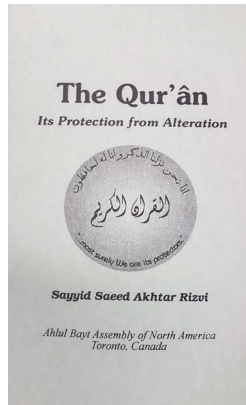
outlining the importance of the book. This introduction was later published in the collection of his Urdu articles, *Deed-o-Daryāft*.

(d) ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s book, *Day of Judgement*, was translated into Urdu by his student Maulānā S. Ḥasan ‘Abbās Fitrat as *Mawt Se Qiyāmat Tak*. This was published in 1998 in Lucknow, India.



‘Allāmah Rizvi’s English Works:

(a) The Arabic paper on textual integrity of the Qur’ān, written for the Islamic Thought Conference in 1992 was later translated by my father and published in 1994 in Toronto as *The Qur’ān: Its Protection from Alteration* by the Ahlul Bayt Assembly of North America.



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

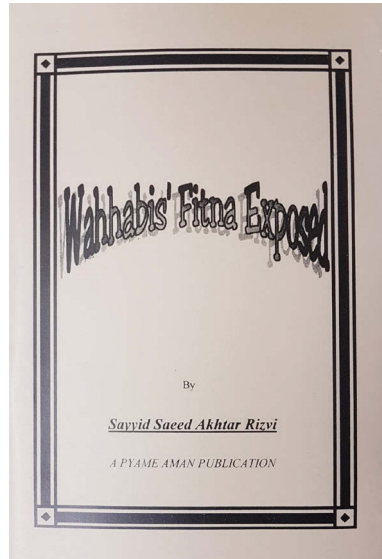
(b) *Wahhabis Fitna Exposed*: In early nineties, ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s attention was drawn to a booklet, “*What is Shi’aism?*” published in Nairobi and widely circulated within East Africa. The aim of this booklet was to sow seeds of disunity among the Muslims in East Africa. Initially it was thought to ignore this booklet but then fearing that silence may be interpreted as weakness, a brief response was in order.

After a lengthy introduction about the origin and fundamental beliefs of the Shi’a Ithnā-‘Ashariyya, ‘Allāmah has responded to the booklet on the following issues:

1. Infallibility of the Imams.
2. Tahṛīf of the Qur’ān.
3. Ḥadīth.
4. Badā’.
5. Ṣaḥābah.
6. Taqiyyah.
7. Epilogue.

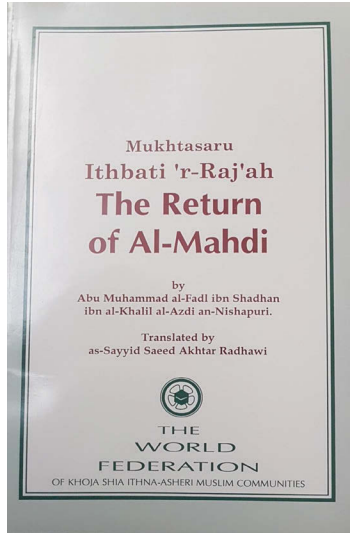
After refuting the Wahhābi writer’s claim that reviling (*la’n*) of the khulafā’ and ṣaḥābah is a sign of *kufīr*; the ‘Allāmah quotes Ibn Taymiyyah from *As-Sārim*

al-Maslūl, as follows: “Merely abusing someone other than the Prophets does not necessarily make the abuser a kāfir; because some of those who were in the time of the Prophet (i.e., the companions) used to abuse one another and none of them was declared kāfir because of this (practice). Moreover, it is not wājib (compulsory) to have faith particularly in any of the companions. Therefore, abusing any of them does not detract from the faith in Allāh, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day.”



Then he also quotes Mulla ‘Ali al-Qāri from *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, as follows: “To abuse Abu Bakr and ‘Umar is not kufr... because certainly abusing a Muslim is *fiṣq* (sinful)...and also if we suppose that someone murdered the shaykhayn...even then according to Ahlu ’s-Sunnah wa ’l-Jamā‘ah, he will not go out of Islam (i.e., does not become kāfir); and we know that abusing is less serious than murder...”

(c) ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s friend ‘Allāmah S. ‘Abdul ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī had gifted him an edited version of *Mukhtaṣar Ithbāti ’r-Raj’ah* of Al-Faḍl bin Shādhān (d. 260 AH). When my father received news of his friend’s death, he decided to translate the above-mentioned book in his memory. He finished its preface in June 1996 in Toronto. The book, *The Return of al-Mahdi*, was published with Arabic text in London by the World Federation.



(d) & (e) During the period 1996 to 2000, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was able to complete the English translation of Volumes 9 and 10 of *Al-Mizān*.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

(f) ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s book on the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (s) entitled, *The Holy Prophet* was first published in 1971. In the mid-nineties, he thoroughly revised it and prepared a new edition that was published by the World Federation in the year 1999.

* * *

Two interesting items about the book 'A History of the Shī‘a People':

A report in *The Light*, February 1994, p. 4, says:

“We are publishing in this issue, an article on the ‘Muslims of Central Asia.’ It is a chapter from Ḥujjatul Islam Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi’s book, ‘Shī‘a in the Present World.’

“This work covers the history and present condition of the Shī‘a community throughout the world. It is in its final stages, and the author hopes to complete it this year, inshAllāh, when he goes to Toronto to stay with his son, Ḥujjatul Islam Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi, for some months.

“We pray to Allāh ta‘ala to give Maulānā strength and *tawfīq* to finalize this monumental work as soon as possible.”

At the end of 1996’s diary, my father wrote the following about his writing work for the year: “Completed five chapters of the book on Shī‘a history. One chapter had already been done before. Sayyid Muḥammad has done a lot in this trip [to Toronto] and has properly set the chapters.”

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Travels in the 1990s for Tabligh

Trips to India in the 1990s

September 1991: My parents and youngest brother, Murtaza, flew to **Karachi** on 21 September 1991. Then on 25 September 1991, my father and Murtaza flew to **Delhi** and reached **Gopalpur** (Bihar) in a couple of days. My father spent about ten days at home. Besides other activities, he worked on editing and completing *Shajarah-e Tayyibah*, a book on his ancestors.

On the way back to Delhi, ‘Allāmah spent a day in **Patna** with his madrasa colleague, Maulānā Nāṣir Zaidi. Then my father and brother flew from Patna to Delhi and then to **Karachi**. In Karachi, they joined my mother and stayed for two weeks for the marriage of my cousin. They all then returned to **Dar-es-Salaam** on 26 October 1991.

* * *

January - March 1993: Sometime in 1992, my parents went to India. ‘Allāmah Rizvi started working on the compendium of *Maṭla‘-e Anwār*.

He travelled to Lucknow on **16 January 1993** with his brother, Hameed Asghar, for his eye check-up. They stayed at Tanzīmūl Makātib. The doctor strongly recommended an eye operation which took place on 20 January 1993; he stayed in the hospital for two nights.

Even this medical trip was not without its own blessings:

Dr. Payām A‘zami came with the manuscript of his book on “*Ijtihād aur Taqlīd*” for the ‘Allāmah to review: he reviewed it and suggested necessary modifications.

He also prepared the bylaws for Maulānā Haider Mehdi’s

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

“Markaz-e-Dīn-o-Dānish” and also “Zahra Welfare Society.”

He gave a copy of “*Islām ka Nizām-e Khānawādigi*” (the Urdu version of *Family Life in Islam*) to Chawdhari Syed Sibte Muhammad saheb for publishing its Hindi translation in the *Tawhīd Mail* weekly newspaper.

On 25 January 1993, my father and uncle left for Siwan.

* * *

Reconstruction of the Imāmbārgāh: The imāmbārgāh in our neighbourhood in Gopalpur (Bihar), known as Mashriqi Imāmbārgāh, needed serious renovations. My father talked with the managing trustees and after approval of the general body, took over the full responsibility of rebuilding the structure.

The demolition work of the old building started on 6 December 1992 and construction of a new building started in **February 1993** / 1413. It was completed on 6 September 1994 / 29 Rabi I 1415.



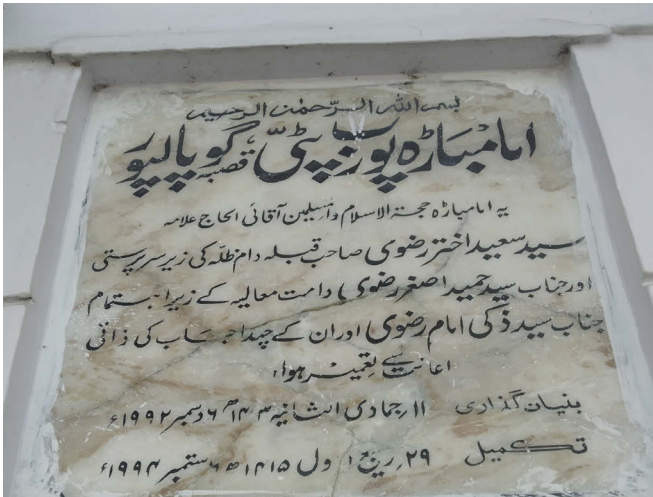
‘Allāmah Rizvi at the courtyard of the Imāmbārgāh
at the time of its demolition on 6 December 1992

This work was done with the financial support of my brother Zaki Imam and his friends in Dar-es-Salaam. The overall supervision of the reconstruction was done by my uncle S. Hameed Asghar.

When ‘Allāmah Rizvi visited the newly constructed Imambara, he was pleased with the work. The diary entry of 28 April 1994 states: “Hameed Asghar has indeed worked hard.”



The new building of the Imambargha in Gopalpur



The marble plaque on the Imāmbārgāh says:

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

“This Imāmbārgāh was built under the patronage of Hujjatul Islam S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi under the supervision of S. Hameed Akhtar Rizvi with the support of S. Zaki Imam Rizvi and his friends. Foundation laid on 11 Jumadi II 1413 / 6 December 1995 and completed on 29 Rabi I 1415 / 6 September 1994.

* * *

A Personal Trip: On 26 October 1995, after travelling to Iran and Dubai, my parents flew to Delhi where they were received by my uncle, S. Hameed Asghar. 27 October 1995: They had lunch with Mr. Ahmad Doosa; and then in the evening, left by train for Siwan, eventually reaching Gopalpur at 3 pm the next day.

My parents stayed in Gopalpur for three weeks, mostly for catching up with the relatives who came from different cities to meet them.

19 November 1995: They left from the Siwan train station arriving in Delhi the next morning.

20 November 1995: They left Delhi and after a change of flight in Addis Ababa, arrived in Dar-es-Salaam at 6pm.

* * *

16 Feb. - 18 Mar. 1997 (Aligarh, Lucknow, Gopalpur)

‘Allāmah Rizvi travelled with my youngest brother, Murtaza, to **Delhi** on 16 February. Their first destination was **Aligarh**, on 18 February: They were met by two staff members of Madinatul ‘Ulum as well as Prof. Sultan Akhtar (my mother’s cousin) and his son.

19 February: With Maulānā Dr. Ali Muḥammad Naqvi, they went to visit the building of Madinatul ‘Ulum under construction, and then to its existing location. They toured the building and then met the students and teachers.

After lunch, he went to visit the headquarters of Anjuman-e Wazifa-e Sadaat-o-Muslimeen.

20 February: He went with Maulānā Muḥammad ‘Ali Naqvi to visit Maulānā Azad Library and photocopied some sections from *Jāmi ‘u ‘l-Tawārīkh*, *al-Fakhri* and *Anwāru ‘l-Huda*.

In the evening, they left by train for their second destination, **Lucknow**, and stayed at the Gulbarg Hotel.

On 21 February 1997, Maulānā Kalbe Ṣādiq came to take my father and my brother to visit Tanzeemul Makatib, Madrasatul Wā'izeen, Sultānul Madāris, Jāmi'ut Tabligh, Jāmi'atuz Zahrā' and finally Madrasah Nāzimiyyah.

22 February: Maulānā Kalbe Ṣādiq took them to visit the Unity School run by Tawḥīdul Muslimeen Trust, then TMT's office and finally to Eras Medical College.

23 February to 9 March 1997, my father spent his time at home in **Gopalpur**. The purpose of his stay was to gather information from the books in our ancestral library for his forth-coming book on Shī'a 'ulamā' (which was published as *Khūrshīd-e Khāwar*). A note in my father's diary for 25 February says: "Murtaza, Imam Haider and Zaigham 'Abbas (son of my late brother 'Ali Imam) got busy with gathering books while I sat in the library to make notes." A note on 7 March says: "Imam Haider and Murtaza are busy in the library."

As a one-day side trip, my father travelled with his brother, Hameed Asghar, to **Mau** (UP). Maulānā Karrār Ḥusain and Maulānā Nāzim 'Ali Khayābādī came to visit and with them he went to visit Jāmi'a Haidaria. He also visited the private library of Mr. Naqqād.

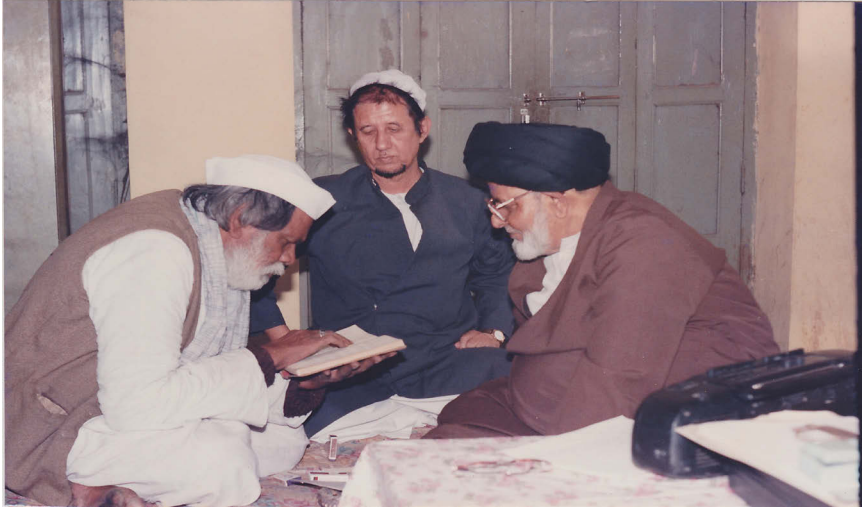
11 March: My father, brother and uncle arrived in **Lucknow**. They visited Maulānā Zāhid Aḥmad's Madrasa Amirul Mu'mineen.

12 March: Maulānā Kalbe Ṣādiq took them to visit Madrasa Nāzimiyya where they met Maulānā S. Ḥamīdul Ḥasan. Then they went to visit *Tawḥīd Mail* and met with its editor, Chawdhari Syed Sibṭe Muḥammad Naqvi who then interviewed my father regarding his life and work.

The remarks of Chawdhari Sāheb upon the demise of my father is worth noting here: "Now I don't have hesitation in disclosing the

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

secret that the weekly *Tawhīd Mail* was initiated by the financial gift from ‘Allāmah Rizvi, his late wife and a son.”¹⁰²



Chawdhari S. Sibte Muhammad, Maulānā S. Kalbe Šādiq with ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Maulānā S. Zāhid Aḥmad, S. Sibte Muhammad with ‘Allāmah

102 *Tawhīd Mail*, 5 July 2002, p. 8.



Maulānā S. Kalbe Sadiq , ‘Allāmah Rizvi, my brother Murtaza holding his hand and briefcase. A scene from his trip to Lucknow.



Another view from that trip

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

13 March 1997: In the afternoon, my father and brother travelled by plane to **Bombay**. At night, Roshan Daud Nasser, his son Muhibb bhai and Shaykh Sha‘bāni came to visit in the hotel. The next day, after Friday prayers, my father attended the weekly meeting of the trustees of Imaan Foundation.

16 March: Roshan Daud Nasser came to visit my father and they had a 3-hour discussion on the history of Khojas of Bombay. This was important for my father’s book on Shī‘a history. Then he went to World Islamic Network’s television studio to record a speech on Wahhabism.

17 March: Visited the ḥawzah of Najafi House and gave a speech to the students and teachers. My close friend, Maulānā Aḥmad ‘Ali Abidi is the principal of the ḥawzah.

18 March: ‘Allāmah Rizvi and my brother returned to **Dar-es-Salaam** in the afternoon.

* * *

According to the notes in his diary, during this trip to **India**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi was able to donate total of 140,500 Indian rupees to the following institutions: of India:

Madinatul ‘Ulum (Aligarh)	Tanzeemul Makatib (Lucknow)
Jāmi‘atuz Zahra (Lucknow)	Sulṭānul Madāris (Lucknow)
Jāmi‘atut Tablīgh (Lucknow)	Madrassa Nāzimiya (Lucknow)
Madrassa-e Amirul Mu‘mineen (Lucknow)	
Unity College (Lucknow)	Madrassa Jawādiya (Banaras)
Madrassa-e Imaniya (Banaras)	Wathiqah College (Faizabad)
Madrassa-e Nāshirya (Jaunpur)	Madrassa Haideria (Khayabad)
Madrassa-e Sulaimania (Patna).	

Most of them received 10,000 to 15,000 rupees each. He wasn’t able to visit some of these places himself but he sent the donation either by individuals or money order.

A Personal Trip to India in 1997:

This was a personal visit to India in which my parents travelled with my brother Murtaza and his family to **India**. Their first stop was **Bombay** where ‘Allāmah Rizvi attended the trustees’ meeting of Imaan Foundation and also recorded a speech for the WIN television channel.

On the way to Bihar, they stayed for a day in **Lucknow**, reaching **Gopalpur** on 14 August 1997.

On 22 August they travelled to **Gorakhpur** for the wedding of my cousin, and returned to Gopalpur on the 24th. He left Gopalpur on 10 Sept and reached Dar-es-Salaam on the 17th.

Trips to Iran and the region in the 1990s

‘Umrah, Syria & Iran in 1993

‘Allāmah Rizvi and his wife went for ‘umrah with Haj Fidahussein Hameer, his wife and son, Hasanain, on **11 October 1993**. They were received in **Jeddah** by my maternal uncle, the late ‘Abbās Mehdi Naqvi.¹⁰³ They travelled to **Mecca** the next morning, where they stayed for four days.

On 16 October, my parents flew from Jeddah to **Medina**. Again they were received there by my uncle ‘Abbās Mehdi. From Medina, they flew on 23 October to **Damascus**. My brother, Masud Akhtar joined them in Damascus after two days.

On 28 October they all flew from Damascus to **Tehran** where they stayed for 6 days in **Qum** at the residence of Agha M. Taqi Anṣāriyān. Besides doing ziyārat, my father met various scholars. He especially met with ‘Allāmah Sayyid ‘Abdul ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, the foremost authority in the Shī‘a bibliographical field and who

103 Syed ‘Abbās Mehdi Naqvi, my mother’s younger brother, worked as an accountant in Yanbu‘ (between Mecca and Medina) for many years. He was indeed a good man who maintained close ties with his relatives.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

had asked my father to work with him in a critical review of Agha Buzurgh Tehrāni’s *adh-Dharī‘ah*.

Then my parents and brother, Masud, went to **Mashhad** for three nights.

On **12 November 1993**, my parents and brother travelled from Tehran to **Dubai**. My brother continued his journey back to Dar-es-Salaam from there, but my parents stayed on in Dubai for 11 nights. They were received at the airport by Br. Hassan Nathani, an old fan and admirer of my father when he was in Dar-es-Salaam.

- The activities of ‘Allāmah Rizvi in Dubai were as follows:
 - Medical check-up: he was diagnosed as having diabetes. He preferred to try controlling it with a strict diet rather than medication first.
 - 15 November: He visited Maulānā S. Šādiq ‘Ali Shāh, and Maulānā S. Bāqir Naqvi, then visited the office of Awqāf Ja‘fariyyah to meet Dr. Khalīl Ṭabāṭabā’ī.
 - 16 November 1993/1st Jumadi II 1414: He recited the Fāṭimiyyah majlis at Satwa mosque for two nights.
 - 19 November 1993: He recited a third majlis at the Bahraini matam organized by the Pakistani community, where he spoke on the topic of Fadak.



On 24 November 1993, my parents returned to Dar-es-Salaam.

* * *

Ahlul Bayt World Assembly Conference (Tehran 1994)

On **19 January 1994**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi planned his journey to Iran to attend the conference of the Ahlul Bayt World Assembly.

He first travelled to **Karachi**. Besides visiting relatives (including his younger daughter, Zainab), he also visited:

Bilal Trust of Pakistan and Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust (P.E.T.).

During this trip, he gave the Urdu translation of *God of Islam* for publication to Haj Ahmad A.M. Jaffer.

* * *

He left for **Tehran** on **26 January 1994**. At Karachi airport, ‘Allāmah met many other delegates who had come from various African countries for the same conference. I also had travelled from Canada for the same conference and reached Tehran on 27 January.

Besides attending the programs, ‘Allāmah Rizvi met delegates from various countries, especially at lunch and dinner. Many dignitaries from various countries came to visit him in his room.



In ‘Allāmah’s hotel room: Left to right: S. Shamim-ul-Hasan (India), ‘Allāmah Rizvi, S. Shamshad Husain (Norway), Br. Razi Jafri (Norway) and myself.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Two scenes from a meeting of ‘Allāmah Rizvi with the late ‘Allāmah Ibn Hasan Najafī (of Karachi), Tehran 1994

‘Allāmah also had a private meeting with the delegation from South Africa headed by Maulānā S. Aftab Haider Rizvi.

Unfortunately on the opening day of the conference, Friday the 28 January 1994, ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s health deteriorated, and he could not attend the program. The medical staff at the clinic gave him medication and asked him to rest. This state of health continued for three days in which he also had to go to the hospital where they changed the medications and he was provided with an I.V. drip. He was only able to attend the conference on 31 January for a midday session.

1 February 1994: My father went to Qum and stayed with Mr. Anṣāriyān. Meanwhile, I went with the other delegates for a two day visit to Mashhad.

2 February: He met ‘Allāmah ‘Abdul ‘Aziz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’i.

3 February: He attended the conference at Dā’iratul Ma‘ārif Fiqhi.

4 February 1994: The ‘Allāmah, Mr. Anṣāriyān, Shujā‘at Ḥusain Rizvi, and I went for a condolence visit to the home of Āyatullāh Gulpaygānī. Then we went to ‘Allāmah S. ‘Abdul ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’i’s home.

That night, Mr. Anṣāriyān had organized a dinner in my father’s honour that was attended by about 25 dignitaries, including: Dr. Samāwi Tijāni - the famous Tunisian author of *Then I Was Guided*; Skh. ‘Ali Kurāni - a pioneer in digitizing Shī‘i classical works under the patronage of the Grand Āyatullāh Gulpaygānī in the mid-nineties, as well as an author and a TV show host; Skh. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ansari - a research scholar, known for his annotated work on *Kitāb Sulaym bin Qays*; S. Ḥasan Ibrāhīmi - of Majma‘-e Jahani, in charge of foreign students; S. Muhammad Ibnur Riza - director of the Madrasah Wali Al-‘Aṣr in Khuwānsār; Āyatullāh Ja‘far Subḥāni - the leading authority in theology and rijāl; Āyatullāh Ibrāhīm Jannāti - an examiner of ijtihād level.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Shaykh ‘Ali Kurāni, ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Dr. Samāwi Tijāni, myself & Syed Shujā‘at Husain Rizvi at the house of Agha-e Anṣāriyān.



Shaykh ‘Ali Kurani & Dr. Samawi Tijani with the ‘Allamah

On the early morning on 5 February 1994, ‘Allāmah Rizvi went to Tehran for a meeting of the representatives of ABWA. The meeting was prolonged and the one-to-one meeting of the representatives with the officials was postponed to the next day.

On 6 February, ‘Allamah visited HI Syed Murtaza Nūri at WOFIS where he also met Shaykh Muḥammad Rizā Ja‘fari. He had lunch with them and then returned to the hotel for an interview. In the evening, he went for a meeting at ABWA with Mr. Khudā-dādiyān and Shaykh Muḥammad Ibrāhīmi.

On 7 February 1994, my father departed from Tehran for Dubai. Since there was a 24 hour layover, Ḥasan Nathāni came to receive my father. They went to visit Maulānā S. Šādiq ‘Ali Shāh. After ‘Allāmah rested at his hotel, Ḥasan Nathāni took him to the airport.

‘Allāmah reached Dar-es-Salaam on 8 February 1994.

Another Trip to Iran in 1994

‘Allāmah Rizvi left Dar-es-Salaam for **Tehran on 13 April 1994** with his youngest son, Murtaza, and nephew Nazre Abbas. On 14 April, they took a taxi from Tehran airport to Qum and reached Agha-e Anṣāriyān’s house at 4 pm.

The next morning ‘Allāmah S. ‘Abdul ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī and HI S. Jawād Shahrīstāni came for a visit: they discussed the progress on the project of reviewing and updating *adh-Dharī‘ah*. ‘Allāmah discussed with HI Shahrīstāni about a foundation fund for Bilal Muslim Mission.

My father, brother, cousin, and S. Shujā‘at Ḥusain were invited for lunch by my close friend and former classmate in Qum, Hujjatul Islam Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Raḥīmiyān. (We had attended many lectures together, including those of the Grand Āyatullāh Waḥīd Khurāsānī, and used to meet daily for our after class discussion of the lectures.)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Syed Shujā‘at Ḥusain, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Raḥīmīyān, ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Shaykh Iftikhāri, Syed Murtaza Rizvi

On 16 April 1994, ‘Allāmah Rizvi visited the library of Āyatullāh Mar‘ashi Najafi for some references, especially for his book in response to the anti-Shī‘a booklet of Nairobi. After visiting Mu‘assasah Turāth Āl al-Bayt for some books, he was invited for lunch with ‘Allāmah S. ‘Abdul ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī who had also invited some ‘ulamā’ for meeting my father.

Mu‘assasah Turāth Āl al-Bayt (Centre for Reviving the Scholarly Legacy of the Ahlul Bayt) is an institution established in the early nineties by HI S. Jawād Shahrīstāni to research and produce classical literature of Shī‘a Islam by locating and studying the earliest manuscripts of these works and producing a thoroughly annotated version. Their output is indeed a great service to Shī‘ism which can be appreciated only by scholars and academia.



With H.I. S. Jawād Shahrstāni at the Mu'assasah Turāth Āl al-Bayt.
Nazre Abbas & Syed Shujā'at Ḥusain are on the sides.

The next day, 'Allāmah Rizvi visited Āyatullāh Luṭfullāh Ṣāfi, and Sayyid Jawād Gulpaygānī. He also presented Āyatullāh Ṣāfi with the Arabic report of the activities of Bilal Mission which he read with interest. He also met Shaykh 'Ali Kūrāni there.



With Āyatullāh Luṭfullāh Ṣāfi & S. Jawād Gulpaygānī

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

After a two-day visit to Mashhad, they stayed in Tehran with Muḥammad Razā Shūshtari where his father Āgha S. Muḥammad Mahdi Shūshtari warmly welcomed them. Āgha S. Mahdi had closely worked with my father during the early years of Bilal as the editor of *Sauti ya Bilal* and a teacher at the Temeke madrasah.



‘Allāmah with Āgha S. Mahdi Shūshtari & his son, S. M Raza Shūshtari



Syed Shujā‘at Ḥusayn, Syed Murtaza Rizvi & Syed Nazre Abbas
in this picture with ‘Allāmah Rizvi and Āgha Mahdi Shūshtari.

The Rotating Star

They returned to Qum on 21 April 1994 after visiting the shrine of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz in Shahr Ray (south of Tehran). See the picture below.



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

The next day, my father visited the Grand Āyatullāh Fāzil Lankarāni who welcomed him warmly and also gifted his books to him. ‘Allāmah then had dinner at the home of Syed Mitham Zaidi, the son of his colleague, Maulānā Nāṣir Zaidi.



My father with my very dear friend Agha-e Muhammad Taqī Anṣāriyān

On 23 April 1994 ‘Allāmah left for Tehran. He visited HI S. Murtaza Nūrī of WOFIS, and met HI Shaykh M. ‘Ali Taskhīri of the Ahlul Bayt World Assembly the next day.

My father, brother and cousin left Tehran on 25 April 1994 for Bombay and reached Gopalpur in two days. They stayed in Gopalpur for a week before leaving for Bombay for their return journey to Dar-es-Salaam reaching there on **7 May 1994**.

* * *

Yet Another Trip to Iran in 1995

My parents left **Dar-es-Salaam** on 4 October 1995 via Addis Ababa for **Dubai** for a series of Fāṭimiyyah majālis at Shah Saheb's Imambara.

From 5 to 12 October 1995 (10-16 Jumadi I 1416), 'Allāmah Rizvi recited 8 majālis on various topics regarding Bibi Fāṭima (a).

13 October 1995: He had dinner at Dr. Qambar Asadi's home where other dignitaries had also been invited.

14 October 1995: HI Syed Murtaza Kashmiri came for a visit.

* * *

At night, my parents took a flight to **Tehran** and were received by Br. 'Abbās Musawi who took them to his home. The next day, HI Syed Murtaza Nūrī came to visit him.

16 October 1995: Br. 'Abbās Musawi and his wife took them to **Qum** to Mr. Ansariyan's home.

17 October 1995: He visited 'Allāmah S. 'Abdul 'Azīz at-Ṭabāṭabā'ī. HI S. Muhammad Musawi and HI S. Aḥmad Ḥusaini Ishkawari were waiting there to meet him. Then he went to visit HI S. Jawād Shahrīstāni.

19 October 1995: My parents went with Shujā'at Ḥusayn to Tehran airport for a flight to Mashhad where they stayed for two days.

21 October 1995: They returned to Tehran and were guests of Br. 'Abbās Musawi. The next day, my father went to visit HI Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali Taskhīri and his colleagues at ABWA's headquarters.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

23 October 1995: He travelled to Qum to see Mr. Ansariyan to retrieve his remaining luggage. After lunch at Syed Shujā‘at Ḥusayn’s home, he went to Tehran for dinner with Mr. Tavakkoli (the former ambassador of Iran to Tanzania) who brought him back to Mr. Musawi’s home.

24 October 1995: Visited HI S. Murtaza Nūrī and HI Shaykh Muhammad Raza Ja‘fari. Some friends came to visit in the evening.

25 October 1995: My parents departed for **Dubai** and due to a long transit, they were given a hotel. My father phoned HI S. Murtaza Kashmiri who invited him for dinner at the Iranian Club. Others were also present there. Dr. Khalīl Ṭabāṭabā’i brought a copy of *The Qur’ān and Ḥadīth* which was printed by Imam Hussain Foundation in Beirut.

* * *

Ahlul Bayt World Assembly Conference in 1998

30 January 1998: ‘Allāmah Rizvi left Dar-es-Salaam with my brother Murtaza via Nairobi to **Tehran**. I also flew over from Toronto for this conference.

2 February 1998: All delegates were taken to the grave-site of Imam Khumayni, and then the shrine of Hazrat Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīm followed by Dārul Ḥadīth.

3 February 1998: The conference opened with the speech of Iranian President Dr. S.M. Khatami. Then the delegates were taken to visit the Supreme Leader. ‘Allāmah Rizvi was placed among the senior ‘ulamā’ close to the Leader.

5 February 1998: The conference concluded with a speech by the former President, Shaykh Hāshimī Rafsanjānī.

6-7 February 1998: Went to **Qum** and visited some friends.

9 February 1998: ‘Allāmah Rizvi participated in the conference of the Organization of the Ḥawzahs of Foreign Countries. H.I. Shaykh Nūrullāhiyān, head of the Organization, welcomed him and

insisted that he be seated on the podium with the other dignitaries. (See the picture in the next page.)



‘Allāmah Rizvi at a meeting of African delegates with officials of ABWA

Later on that day, he went to the Āyatullāh Mar‘ashi Najafi Library for some references from *‘Aqā’id* of an-Nasafi. Then he visited H.I. Sayyid Riyāḍ al-Ḥakīm, the grandson of the late Grand Āyatullāh al-Ḥakīm and upcoming senior teacher in the Ḥawzah of Qum.

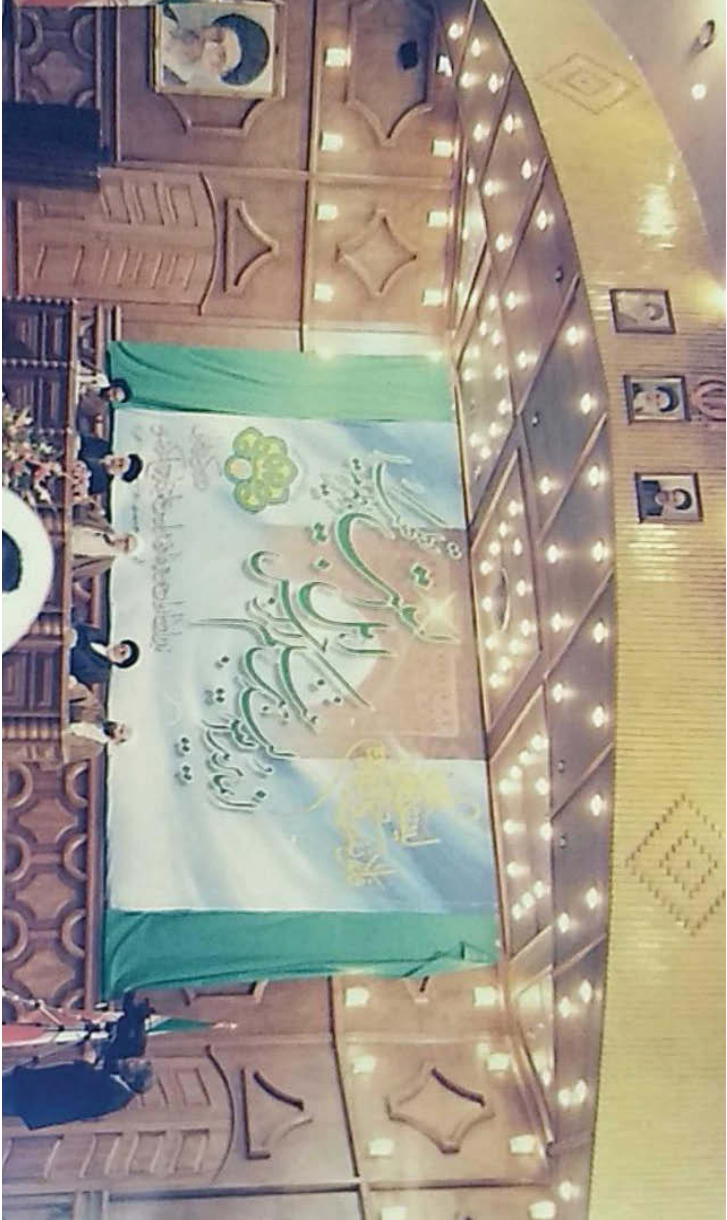
9 February 1998: H.I. Sayyid Jawād Shahrīstānī invited my father for lunch at Mujtama‘ Agha-e Sistānī, a large housing complex building for married ḥawzah students. Agha-e Anṣāriyān and I accompanied my father to the lunch.

10 February 1998: At night, some ‘ulamā’, including Āyatullāh Ibrāhīm Jannāti, came to visit my father.

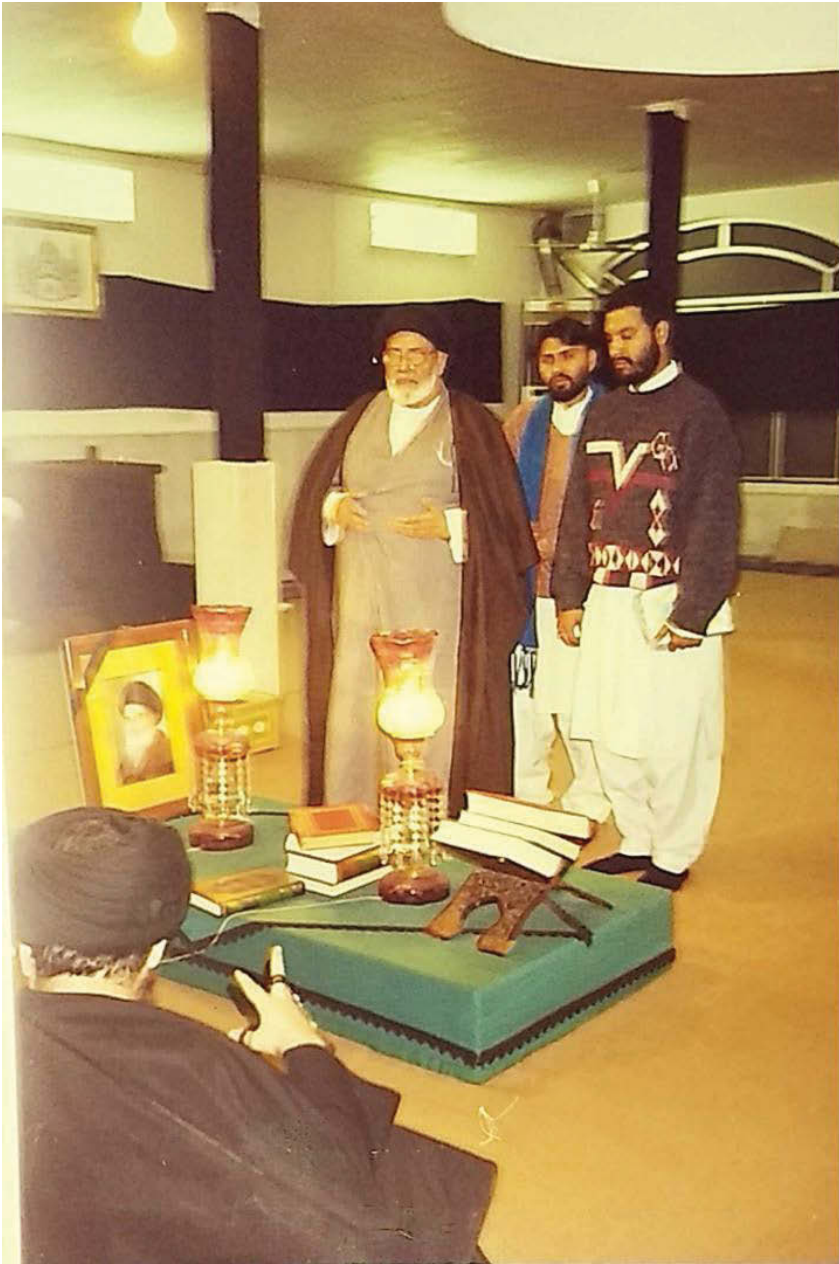
12 February 1998: My father and brother left Tehran and reached Dar-es-Salaam at 9 pm.

* * *

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



On the stage, you can see (from right): Shaykh Nūrullāhiyān, ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Ayatullah Shaykh Ibrāhīm Amīnī, S Jawād Gulpaygānī & Shaykh Rabbānī.



‘Allāmah Rizvi at the grave of Āyatullāh S. M. Rūhāni with Shujā‘at Ḥusain Rizvi and Imām Ḥaider Zaidi (who is married to my cousin)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

A Trip to Iran for Medical Treatment (February - July 2000)

On 8 January 2000 (Eidul Fitr) my father suffered a severe **heart attack** and was admitted in the nearby Hindu Mandal Hospital and stayed there for 10 days. On 14 February 2000, based on the doctor’s advice, arrangements were being made to travel to Birmingham for treatment. However, on the same day, H.I. Shaykh Muḥammadi Gulpaygānī, the director of office of the Supreme Leader [daftar-e rahbari], Tehran came with some ‘ulamā’ for a visit. He gave a message of Āyatullāh S. ‘Ali Khamenai that he wants the ‘Allāmah to come to Tehran for treatment. It was difficult to decline that offer so he accepted it. H.I. Muḥammadi Gulpaygānī asked the Ambassador, Mr. Saqqāiyān to make all the arrangements. It was decided that he will be accompanied by my mother and my brother, Murtaza.

‘Allāmah Rizvi and his family departed on 27 February 2000, from Dar-es-Salaam and after spending the night in Dubai, they arrived in Tehran the next morning at 10:30 a.m. They were received by the officials of the Ahlul Bayt World Assembly and were taken to the guesthouse of the Foreign Ministry.

29 February 2000: ‘Allāmah Rizvi went to Shahīd Rajā’i Heart Hospital. They did routine tests such as an ECG, X-rays and echo cardiogram. They wanted to perform an angioplasty but asked him to return after reducing his weight before they could do the procedure.

Although my father’s angioplasty did not take place on this trip, my mother was treated for her respiratory difficulties by lung specialists and was asked to continue using her inhaler and an additional medicine at night.

9 March 2000: Since no procedure could be done at this time, my father decided to move to Qum. Our friend Agha-e Anṣāriyān had arranged for a spacious well-furnished house.

‘Allāmah stayed in Qum until 3 July 2000. During this time,

many scholars and dignitaries came to visit him; and he continued whatever he could as far as his writing work was concerned. I also visited my parents in Qum after reciting a Muḥarram ‘ashara in London; my sister, Zainab, also came with her husband and a few of their children from Karachi; my brother Masud visited from Tanzania. My uncle, Hameed Asghar, also came from India.

My parents and brother left Tehran on 4 July 2000 and arrived in Dar-es-Salaam the next day at 4pm.

Trips to the UK in the 1990s

On the way to Toronto in 1994

My parents left Dar-es-Salaam on **30 May 1994** for **London**, reaching there next day. They stayed with Dr. Nizar Merali.

1 June 1994: ‘Allāmah Rizvi visited Maulānā Zafar ‘Abbās and then Mulla Asghar.

2 June 1994: He visited WABIL’s office, met HI S.Muḥammad Musawi and then went with him to Al-Khoei Centre. That evening, Maulānā Shamim-us-Sibtain came for dinner and they then went together to Mehfil-e Ali for a majlis.

My parents left for New York on 5 June 1994, spent one night there and took the morning flight to **Toronto**.

* * *

On the way to Toronto in 1996

26 April 1996: My parents left Dar-es-Salaam for **London** and were received by Dr. Nizar Merali.

28 April 1996: ‘Allāmah went to Hujjat Centre for Eidul Adhaa and met many people including a number of old friends.

29 April 1996: He spent the day at the Oriental & India Office Library.

7 May 1996: My parents arrived in **Toronto**.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

A Trip to the UK for a medical checkup in 1998:

25 June 1998: ‘Allāmah Rizvi and my mother left Dar-es-Salaam and reached **London** the next day, going straight to **Birmingham** for a medical check up.

1 July 1998: My parents went to **Cambridge** for a check up with another doctor.

My father suffered a **mild heart attack** and as soon as I got the news, I travelled to London to be with my parents.

26 August 1998: On my return trip from Iraq to see the Grand Āyatullāh Sistānī in Najaf (with Dr. Abdul Aziz Sachedina), I stopped in London and went straight to Birmingham to see my parents.¹⁰⁴

14 to 22 September 1998: My parents went to **London**. Even though this was a medical trip, my father still found time to visit Darut Tabligh to visit the madrasa of Shaykh Zafar ‘Abbās and also the office of the World Federation. On 17 September, he went to the British Library, and on 20 September he visited the madrasah of Mehfil-e ‘Ali. It is worth noting that even after returning to Dar-es-Salaam, he wrote a letter to his host to correct a mistake that he noticed in a lesson during his madrasah visit.

28 September 1998: After further treatment, my parents returned to Dar-es-Salaam.

* * *

Trips to Canada & USA in the 1990s

June 1994 to February 1995

My parents left Dar-es-Salaam on 30 May 1994 for London and after a 4 day stay, they travelled to **Toronto** on 5 June 1994.

Based on the arrangement made through me for a bilingual speaker for the Islamic Educational Centre of Houston, my father left for **Houston** on 10 June 1994, the eve of 1 Muḥarram 1415.

After the 12 days, he flew to **New Jersey** and stayed with Dr.

104 For my report, visit <https://al-m.ca/sachedina-meeting-with-ay-sistani>

Manzoor Rizvi. On 26 June 1994, the host arranged a dinner in ‘Allāmah’s honour which was attended by local dignitaries and visiting scholars.

On 27 June 1994, he returned to **Toronto**.

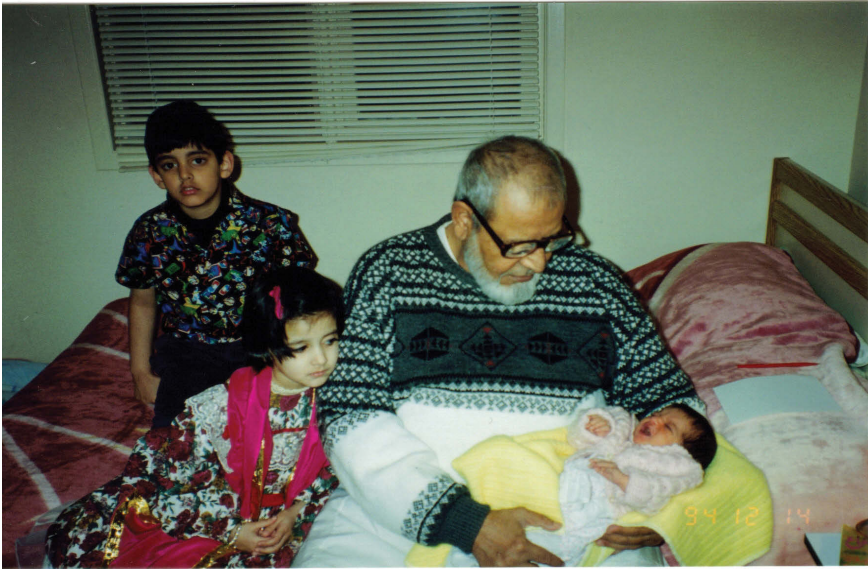
* * *

Some **highlights** of ‘Allāmah’s stay in **Toronto (1994)**:

- 3 June 1994: He attended the dinner by NASIMCO in honour of Maulānā Syed Murtaza Kashmiri.
- 8-10 July 1994: He recited 3 majālis for Bani Hashim Society.
- 22-24 July 1994: He recited 3 majālis in Chicago.
- 31 July 1994: Br. Latif Ali of Guyana came with Ashik Kermalli to visit at home.
- 6-7 August 1994: He travelled to **New York** for a weekend program of Bilal Muslim Mission of America.
- 24 Aug 1994: Maulānā Zishan Haider Jawadi came for a visit.
- 4 September 1994: He attended the opening of the 9000 Bathurst property done by Mulla Asghar.
- 5 September 1994: Mulla Asghar came over for a visit.
- 7 September 1994: He travelled to **London** to attend the WABIL conference from 10th to 11th September.
- 14 September 1994: He went with Maulānā S. Shamimus-Sibtain to visit his office. He then took my father to the airport for his return flight to **Toronto**, which landed that evening.
- 8 October 1994: He attended the Ahlul Bayt Assembly of North America conference in Toronto and met H.I. Agha-e ‘Ali Asghar Awḥādī, H.I. Agha-e Syed Abul Ḥasan Navvāb (presently the Chancellor of Dānishgah-e Adyān wa Mazāhib [University of Religions and Denominations] at Qum) and others at the function. The next day he gave the closing speech at the assembly.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

- 4 November 1994: He travelled to **New Jersey** to give the keynote speech at the next day’s fundraising program for Muslim Foundation Inc. Returned to **Toronto** on the 7th.
- 26 November 1994: He visited **New Jersey** again for the mehfil of Bibi Fāṭima (a) at Astana Zahra Centre and gave a speech in English. He visited its Sunday school the next day.
- 3 December 1994: Agha S. M. Mahdi Shushtari came to **Toronto** so he went to visit him; and the next day, Agha Mahdi came to visit him at our home.



My father holding my youngest daughter, Najiya, born in December 1994
Her older siblings, Nabila and Mahdi, can also be seen in this picture.

- 14 January 1995: He presided over the *muqāshidah* held by Bani Hashim Society at Bazmi saheb’s residence for the birth anniversary of the 12th Imam (a.s.). My father was delighted to see the talent of Urdu poetry alive in the Urdu-speaking community. At the end he recited a *qaṣīdah* which he had composed in early 1950s.

- 18-19 January 1995: Dr. Noel King came for a visit from California to discuss the progress on the book of Shī‘a history.
- 21 January 1995: He travelled to **New Jersey** and was received by Dr. Rizvi. He presided over the *muqāṣṣidah* hosted by Dr. Rizvi at Mehfil-e Shah-e Khurasan.
- 22 January 1995: He visited Bayt Wali al-‘Aṣr and gave a speech in English on “The Duties of Shī‘as in Ghaybat” which was followed by Q&A for 20 minutes. He spent the night at Maulānā S. Tilmiz Hasnain Rizvi’s residence and left the next day departing for Toronto, landing at 5:30pm.
- 18 - 22 February 1995: He travelled to **Montreal** for the special nights of Ramadhān.

My parents left Toronto on 27 February 1995 with a connecting flight in London, they reached Dar-es-Salaam early on the 29th.

* * *

May 1996 to October 1996

My parents left Dar-es-Salaam on 26 April 1996 for London and stayed with Dr. Nizar Merali for ten days. On 7 May 1996, they reached **Toronto**.

17 May 1996: As arranged earlier, my father left for **Dallas**, Texas, for the Muḥarrām majālis at MOMIN Centre.

30 May 1996: ‘Allāmah Rizvi travelled to **Austin** at the invitation of Br. Alihussein Janmohamed; also met his brother Raza Janmohamed. As mentioned earlier, their father, Haj Mohammadali Janmohamed and his sons were strong supporters of my father’s tablighi activities. Alihussein Janmohamed also became a committee member on the Bilal board.

1 June 1996: He travelled to **San Jose**, California, to meet Professor Dr. King and stayed with him for two days.

3 June 1996: He travelled to **Chicago** where he was received by Dr. Syed Saeed Pervez Bokhari (who was to eventually become

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

related to us after the marriage of our eldest children).

5 June 1996: He visited H.I. Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Jalāli, and then left for the airport, reaching **Toronto** in the afternoon.

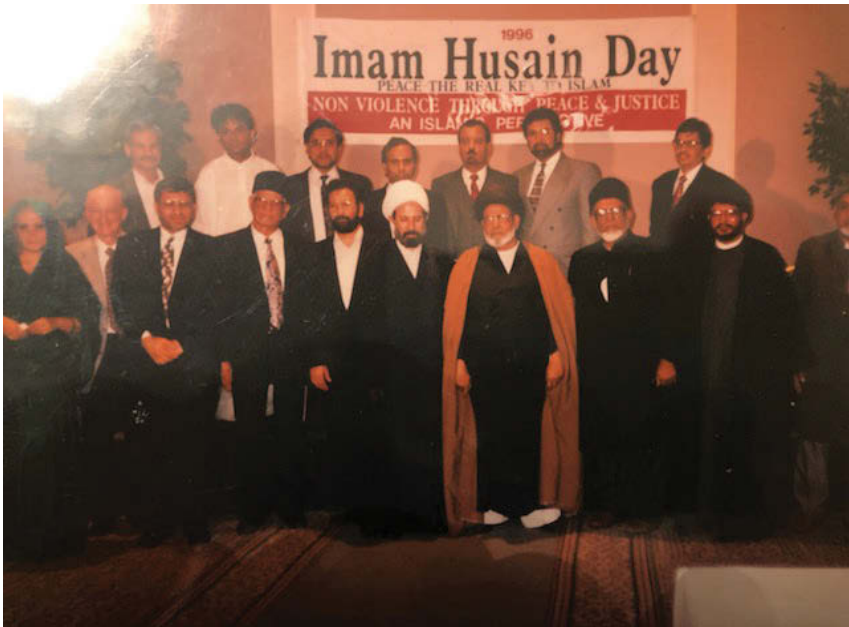
13 June 1996: He completed the preface of *Mukhtaṣar Ithbāti ‘r-Raj‘ah*.

22 June 1996: Both my parents went to **New Jersey** for a week for medical checkups as well as for a Husain Day program arranged by the NY and NJ communities.

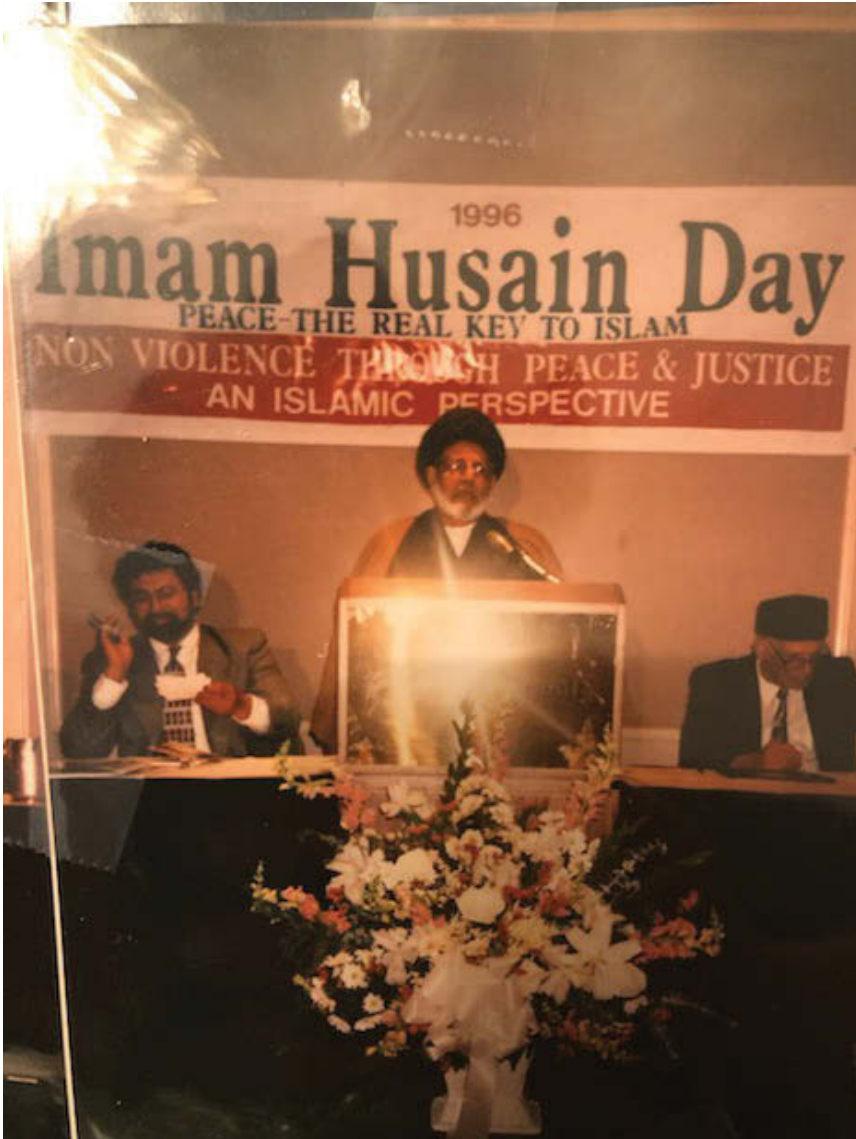
23 June 1996: He participated in **Husain Day Program** at Al-Khoei Centre. (See the two pictures below.)

28 June 1996: He returned to **Toronto**.

22 October 1996: My parents left Toronto for London where they stayed for four days before flying to Dar-es-Salaam, reaching there on 28 October.



H.I. Shaykh Fādhil Sahlani (the Imam of Al-Khoei Centre in NY), ‘Allāmah Rizvi, Mulla Asgharali MM Jaffer, Maulānā S. Haider ‘Ali ‘Ābidi and other speakers and dignitaries, including Dr. Manzoor Rizvi.



Speaking at the Imam Husain Day, New York, 23 June 1996
(Thanks to Dr. Manzoor Rizvi of NJ for sending these photos.)

* * *

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

At the end of his 1996’s diary, my father wrote the following about his writing work for the year: “Completed five chapters of the book on Shī‘a history. One chapter had already been done before. Sayyid Muḥammad has done a lot on this trip (to Toronto) and has properly set the chapters.”

* * *

Last Trip to Canada: 2000-2001

The last major trip of my parents was in late October 2000 to the UK and Canada. They left from Dar-es-Salaam on 29 October 2000 with my brother Masud Akhtar who accompanied them to London. After spending three weeks in London, my parents arrived in Toronto on 26 November 2000. Thanks to the Almighty Allāh that we once again got the opportunity to serve my parents during their four months stay with us.

A History of the Shī‘a People:

It was during this trip that my father brought with him the semi-final draft of the Shī‘a history book and said, “I am now tired; you do whatever is to be done to finalize this book.” This was the third draft of his work on this history volume. This draft started with the fall of Baghdad which marked the end of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate in the seventh century of the Islamic era. So I looked at the previous drafts that he had discarded and some of his writings from the 1960s, and I was able to put together a brief history from Saqīfah to the beginning of the Occultation, and also the era that followed from aṣ-Ṣadūq to aṭ-Ṭūsi, connecting to the fall of Baghdad. This was reviewed and approved by the author himself. This became the first 100 pages of the history book.

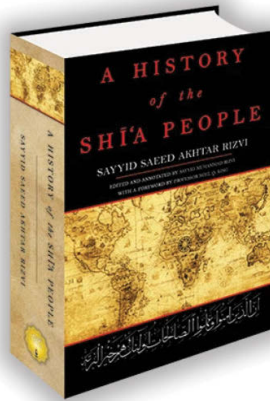
Overall, this book, entitled *A History of the Shī‘a People*, deals with the history of the Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari Muslim community from

The Rotating Star

the early days of Islam up to the present day. Starting with a brief note on the origin of the Shī‘a faith, the book describes the early days of its followers’ history from the 7th-11th centuries. From there, it focuses on regions; beginning with the history of the Shī‘as of Iran, Iraq & Afghanistan, reviewed together due to the multiple layers of mutual influences among them on socio-religious and political levels. Then it moves on to the Arab Middle-East & Turkey; followed by the east, to the Indian Sub-Continent; and then to Sub-Saharan Africa; followed by a review of Shī‘a communities in South-East Asia, Australia, and the Commonwealth of Independent States of the former USSR. The book ends with a brief look at the emerging Shī‘a communities in Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

It is worth mentioning that the section on Shī‘a communities in Africa, particularly East Africa, is a seminal work in which my father was not only a spectator observing the events and reporting them; rather he played a pivotal role in furthering the cause of the Shī‘ī faith in that region, especially among the indigenous African people.

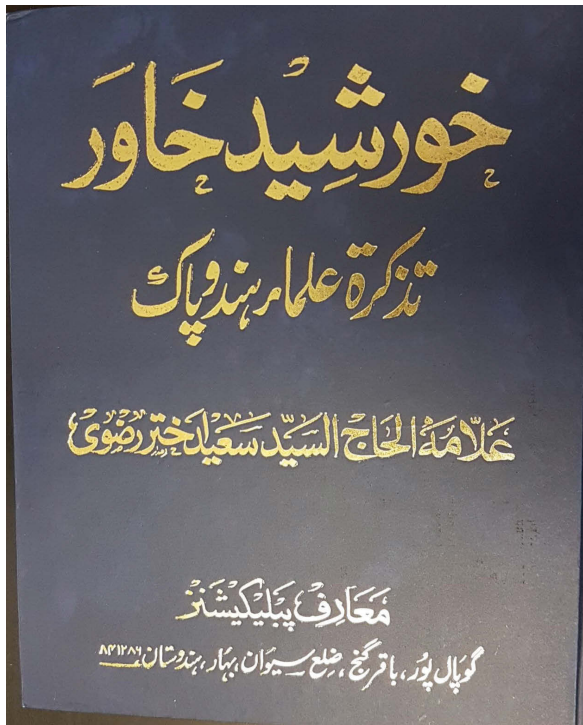
My only regret is that I was not able to finalize this book until 13 years after the passing away of my father. As the saying goes, everything is destined for its own time. May the soul of my father be pleased with the final rendering of his work.



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Khūrshīd-e Khāwar (in Urdu):

In studying the biographical works on Shī‘a ‘ulamā’ of Indian sub-continent, ‘Allāmah Rizvi had noticed that the scholars from the eastern part of Utter Pradesh and Bihar had not been adequately covered. When he discussed this with H.I. Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ali Taskhīri (who was then the head of the Ahlul Bayt World Assembly in 1997), the latter insisted that he should fill that void. With this encouragement, my father travelled to India and spent four months in Gopalpur to work in his library alongside two young students who were employed to travel to other cities such as Patna, Banaras, Faizabad, Jawnpur and other locations to gather information on the ‘ulamā’ of those areas. In some cases, he corresponded with relevant persons to gather the required information.



By the end of his efforts, he was able to gather information on about 400 ‘ulamā’ out of which 310 had not been mentioned anywhere before. The remaining 90 had been mentioned in Maulānā Syed Murtaza Ḥusayn’s *Maṭla‘-e Anwār*; but there were either errors or omissions about them that needed to be corrected.

The book was typeset in Bombay through Br. Imran Rasool and my father proofread it while he was in Toronto between October 2000 and May 2001. It was finally printed just two days before he passed away. He was informed by Br. Imran Rasool of WIN by phone on Wednesday and he was pleased to receive this news. Unfortunately, he could not see its print version.

Research on *Adh-Dharī‘ah* (in Arabic):

‘Allāmah Rizvi also worked with the late ‘Allāmah Sayyid ‘Abdu ‘l-‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’i of Qum in revising and updating *adh-Dharī‘ah ila Taṣānīfi ‘sh-Shī‘a*, the great bibliographical encyclopedia of the late Agha Buzurg at-Tehrāni in more than twenty volumes. ‘Allāmah Rizvi went through the entire set of *adh-Dharī‘ah* and wrote an addendum in Arabic for that book: 1000 notes and 1000 new titles provided by him were added by aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’i in his *Azwā‘ ‘ala ‘dh-Dharī‘ah* with acknowledgment: “...as noted by ‘Allāmah S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.” ‘Allāmah S. M. Rizā al-Jalālī published ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s *Takmilatu ‘dh-Dharī‘ah* (An Addendum to the *adh-Dharī‘ah*) in the journal *Nushk-e Pazhuhi* (no. 3, year 1427) and also his *at-Ta‘līqah ‘ala ‘dh-Dharī‘ah* (Review of *adh-Dharī‘ah*) in subsequent issue of that journal.

H.I. Sayyid Muḥammad Rizā al-Jalālī, in an article “Rescuing *Adh-Dharī‘ah* from the errors and mistakes,” names the scholars who had worked to redress its errors and omissions. He first mentions Allāmah Sayyid ‘Abdu ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī as a pioneer in reviving his teacher’s work. And then he lists the name of my father:

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

“2. Al-‘Allāmah al-Mujāhid the late as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Razawī al-Hindī (1345-1423 AH) embarked on two tasks concerning *adh-Dharī‘ah*:

(a) *Takmilatu ‘dh-Dharī‘ah* as an addendum to the *adh-Dharī‘ah* in which he has listed the names and details of the works of Shī‘a scholars after 1377 AH, in particular the scholars of the Indian sub-continent....

(b) *At-Ta‘līqāt ‘ala ‘dh-Dharī‘ah* as a review to correct the errors and redress the omissions in the existing entries of names of authors and titles of the books...

He sent both these works to as-Sayyid aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī to include that in his project on *adh-Dharī‘ah*...”¹⁰⁵



‘Allāmah Rizvi with ‘Allāmah ‘Abdul ‘Aziz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī in 1994, Qum

105 S.M. Riza al-Jalālī, *Turāthunā*, no. 93-94 (Muḥarram-Jumādi II 1429), p. 102.

السيد سعيد اختر الرضوي

التعليقات على الذريعة إلى تصانيف الشيعة

اعداد: السيد محمّد رضا الحسيني الجليلي

چکیده

مرحوم آية الله سيد سعيد اختر رضوي (۱۳۴۵ - ۱۴۲۳ هـ)، عالمي مجاهد بود که آثار مجاهدات او در خطه هند و آفريقا نمودار است. آن عالم فقيده، مواردی تحت عنوان «تكملة الذريعة» نگاشت که متن آن همراه با زندگي نامه و فهرست آثار او در دفتر دوم نسخه پڑوي، ص ۵۳۷ - ۵۹۴ درج شد. علاوه بر آن، تعليقاتی بر کتاب جاودانه الذريعة الي تصانيف الشيعة شيخ آقا بزرگ تهراني نگاشت، که در اين گفتار، آمده است. ۵۶۳ نکهه نوشته در اين تعليقات، عمدتاً در جهت تکميل و تصحيح توضيحات علامه تهراني و بيشتر ناظر به عالمان شيعة شبه قاره هند است، که با توجه به آشنایي مرحوم رضوي با آن منطقه، ارزش زيادی دارد. بايد دانست که ايشان، تعليقات خود را به درخواست محقق فقيده سيد عبدالعزيز طباطبائي نگاشته است.

کلیدواژه‌ها: رضوي، سيد سعيد اختر (۱۳۴۵ - ۱۴۲۳ هـ) / تهراني، آقا بزرگ (د: ۱۳۸۹ هـ) / الذريعة الي تصانيف الشيعة / کتابشناسی شيعی امامی / علمای شيعی امامی / علمای شيعة شبه قاره هند.

تقديم المعداد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام على سيد الأنبياء والمرسلين محمّد الصادق الأمين، وعلى آله الطيبين الطاهرين، وعلى أتباعهم الأخيار الأبرار ما بقي الليل والنهار.

و بعد، فهذا القسم الثاني من عمل السيد العلامة المجاهد الحجة السيد سعيد أخت الرضوي حول كتاب «الذريعة إلى تصانيف الشيعة» لشيخنا آقا بزرگ الطهراني، تقدّمه إلى أرباب العلم والفضيلة.

وقد قدّمنا للقسم الأول المسّمى «تكملة الذريعة» ترجمة ذاتية للمؤلف رحمه الله، ولقدّم هنا حديثاً عن منهج عمل المؤلف، مما ذكره أثناء الكتاب وبمناسبات مختلفة:

السيد سعيد اختر الرضوي الهندي
(١٣٢٥هـ-١٤٢٣هـ)

تكملة الذريعة

أعدّه السيد محمد رضا الحسيني الجلالي^١

مقدمة المعدّ:

الحمد لله كما هو أهله، و الصلاة على سيد رسله و آله، و بعد:

فقد ترمّقت على السيد المؤلف لفترةٍ وجيزةٍ قبل وفاته، و نحنُ في ضيافة تلميذي الخطيب البارع الشيخ ظهير أحمد افتخاري اللكهنوي، في قم المقدّسة، فوجدتُ فيه العالم المتواضع الخبير الواسع المعرفة، و كان قد قرأ لي بعض ما نُشر، و تحدّث عن مواضعها بما نَمَّ عن عمي و ذوي، و ضبط و حفظ، و اطلع و اضطلع، فأكبرتُ فيه تلك الروح العلميّة، و بعد وفاته أطلعتني فضيلة الأخ الجليل العلامة المفهرس السيد أحمد الحسيني دام فضله على بعض أعمال المؤلف و رسائله المتبادلة بينهما، و ما دار بين المؤلف و بين العلامة المحقّق المرحوم السيد عبدالعزيز الطباطبائي من رسائل.

و يبدو أنّ الطباطبائي هو الذي بعثه على هذا التأليف و وعده أن يودعه في كتابه الذي استدرك به على الذريعة. و قد ذكر المؤلف هذا في ترجمته الذاتية التي أثبتناها هنا، فانظر الرقم (٢٢) من قائمة مؤلّفاته. و رأيتُ بين أعماله مقالاً حول أكذوبة «التحريف» و آخر حول التقيّة، و عملان مهمّان: أحدهما التعليقات على الذريعة و الآخر تكملة الذريعة.

و بعد مدّة زارني أحد أولاد المؤلف فطلبني منه صوراً ممّا كتبه والده حول الذريعة من التكملة و الاستدراك، فبعث إليّ بهما، مع ترجمة ذاتيّة كتبها المرحوم لنفسه بقلمه. و لقد رأيتُ من الواجب القيام بتكريم هذا العالم المجاهد بنشر بعض آثاره الخالدة فقمّتُ بإعداد المقالين و نشرتهما في مجلّة علوم الحديث، الطهرانيّة، في العدد ١٢ عام ١٤٢٣ بعنوان «القرآن الكريم و مشكلة أخبار الأحاد» و في العدد ١٤ عام ١٤٢٤ بعنوان «التقيّة في القرآن و السنّة بين السائل و المجيب». و تقدّم اليوم هذا العمل المستدرك على الذريعة على أمل أن نوفّق لتقديم التعليقات على الذريعة في الوقت المناسب.

١. مصحح برجسته حوزة متون حديثي، قم.

‘Allāmah S. ‘Abdul ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was the foremost expert in Shī‘a bibliographical works and the major point of reference for scholars who worked in manuscripts. Through H.I. S. Jawād Shahristāni, they were introduced to one another, and that led to their friendship and cooperation in reviewing *adh-Dharī‘ah*. In the *ijāzah* that ‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī had written for this present author, he describes my father also:

“The intelligent young man, the righteous erudite, the well refined character who has combined by his hard work between the old and the new, the ancient and the modern studies of the *ḥawzah* and the academic research, namely, as-Sayyid Muḥammad ar-Radhawī; and it is no wonder because he is the son of the great scholar, the noble researcher, an adornment of the erudite ones, the pride of his contemporaries, an example for the learned researchers, the pillar of the prominent ‘ulamā’, the author of many works and famous books, the honour for the Shī‘as, and the promoter of the sharī‘ah, as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Radhawī, a well-known personality and a guard of the castles [of faith], may Allāh prolong his life and bless us with his presence; and so the ‘cub’ is from that ‘lion’, who has followed his right direction, and through him Allāh has made his father’s eye delightful, and has made him the legacy for the community and a pride for the faith...”¹⁰⁶

* * *

Return to Dar-es-Salaam in May 2001

Because of my parents health condition, I had to excuse myself from my Arba‘īn commitment with a centre in Los Angeles in order to be at the service of my parents during their return journey from

106 This *ijāzah* was written on 22 Sha‘bān 1415.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Toronto to London and then on to Dar-es-Salaam. My wife was instrumental and supportive in this decision that my parents should not travel alone on such a long journey.

At departure time at the Toronto airport, my youngest daughter, Najiya (then aged 6), sobbed loudly when she hugged my mother in her wheelchair. Looking back now, it seems that she must have had a premonition that this was the last time she would be seeing her.

After a stop in London for a few days, we continued our journey and reached Dar-es-Salaam on 7 May 2001 / 12 Safar 1422. I stayed with my parents until after Arba‘īn and then returned to Toronto.

The Sad Demise of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Wife

In mid October 2001, my mother’s health deteriorated and she was hospitalized. I travelled to Dar-es-Salaam, reaching on 17 October just before midnight. I went straight from the airport to Hindu Mandal Hospital. My mother was almost unconscious. When I entered the room, she opened her eyes, looked at me, and smiled. My long journey of almost 20 hours was worth that motherly smile.

After five days, my mother’s situation rapidly deteriorated. By Thursday, **25 October 2001 / 8 Sha‘bān 1422**, the doctors had given up any hope of recovery. That night I had asked my father to get ready to visit my mother at the hospital, which was near our home. My mother passed away at 11:30 p.m that night. I ran back home and found my father already outside, ready to visit my mother, when I had the somber task of informing him that she was no more.

My mother’s funeral was held at 11 a.m. the next day (Friday); the funeral prayer was led by my father. The Khoja and African communities participated in large numbers. At 11:30 a.m. she was buried in the Shī‘a cemetery. At the time of burial, my brothers Zaki

Imam and Masud, my cousin, Nazre ‘Abbas, and I, laid her body inside the grave. We sadly missed our youngest brother, Murtaza, who had gone to India for kidney treatment.

* * *

My mother, Sayyida Fatema Zahra Naqvi, was a strong pillar of support for my father in his work. She ran the fortress of our home so that my father could concentrate on his writing endeavours and tablīghi activities. Once the children became adults and were married, my mother would accompany my father on the majority of his travels, whether to Africa, the Middle East or the West.

She was a lady with an extremely well disposed nature, good character, and loyalty. Always charitable towards others, especially relatives, and willing to sacrifice for the sake of others. May Allāh elevate her status and raise her with Prophet Muḥammad and his Ahlul Bayt (upon whom all be Allāh’s blessings).

When I came home from the hospital to give the sad news of my mother’s passing away, after a while, my father turned to me and said that he wanted the book on Shī‘a History to be dedicated to her, and that is what I have dutifully done. Insha Allāh, she will be rewarded for the success in tabligh achieved by my father.

A few days after my mother’s funeral, when I was about to depart from Dar-es-Salaam, I went to my father’s room where he was sitting at his desk. I informed him that it was now time for me to go to the airport. My father stood up and hugged me tightly and said, “After you leave, I will feel all alone,” and then he cried out loudly. This was the first time that he cried aloud after my mother’s demise. When he regained his composure, I said to him that I could postpone my return but he said: “No, go back to your wife and children, they have been alone in their grief. Send a letter for a visa, insha Allāh I will come to you soon.” I didn’t know that this was the last time that I would be hugging my father.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Chapter Seven

The Setting Star

The Demise of ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Condolence Messages

Selections from Condolence Messages

Tributes

قال الكاظم ء
إِذَا مَاتَ الْمُؤْمِنُ بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
وَ بَقَاعُ الْأَرْضِ الَّتِي كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهَا وَ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ الَّتِي
كَانَ يُصْعَدُ فِيهَا بِأَعْمَالِهِ
وَ تُلَمَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ ثَلَمَةٌ لَا يَسُدُّهَا شَيْءٌ لِأَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْفُقَهَاءَ
حُصُونُ الْإِسْلَامِ كَحِصْنِ سُوْرِ الْمَدِينَةِ لَهَا.

Imam al-Kāzim (a) said:

“When a believer [scholar] dies, the angels cry on him
as do the parts of the earth upon which he used to worship
Allāh and the gates of heaven through which his deeds would
pass;
and a gap in [the body of] Islam opens that cannot be filled up
by anything because the believing jurists are castles of Islam
like the boundary-wall is for a city.”

Setting of the Star:
Demise, Funeral, & Sayyum Majlis

On Thursday morning, **8 Rabī‘ ath-Thāni 1423/20 June 2002**, ‘Allāmah Rizvi started his day as usual and set about his writing work. At 7:45 a.m., he had a massive stroke; and after maghrib time, he passed away peacefully at 7:40 p.m.

As soon as I got the call about his stroke, I booked the fastest route to Dar-es-Salaam, which at that time was a KLM flight with a short stay at the Amsterdam airport. Unfortunately, I was still in Toronto, when I received another call, that my father had passed away.

I arrived in Dar-es-Salaam late Friday night. I went to the mosque to see his body. The ghusl had already been given; his face looked very much at peace. An Iranian fan of my father in Dar-es-Salaam made an interesting remark when he came to meet me for condolences. He said that, “it seemed the Sayyid was able to determine his timing of death and he held on until the eve of Friday occurred, and then he passed away!”

Various media outlets reported the final journey of my father. One such report states:

“The funeral was held on Saturday. For many Dar-es-Salaam city centre residents, the day dawned on Saturday to the sound of Surah Yasin being recited from the adhan mic of the Shī‘a mosque. It was an immediate feeling of doom, like you feel when you wake up on Ashura morning only to realize what a heavy day it is and no sign of joy should appear on your face.

“And it indeed was a grave day. The death of an ‘*ālim*, a scholar, is the death of an ‘*ālam*, the world. And a loss to the world it certainly was. It was a day we laid to rest the most prominent and knowledgeable personality of our community, Sayyid Saeed Akhtar

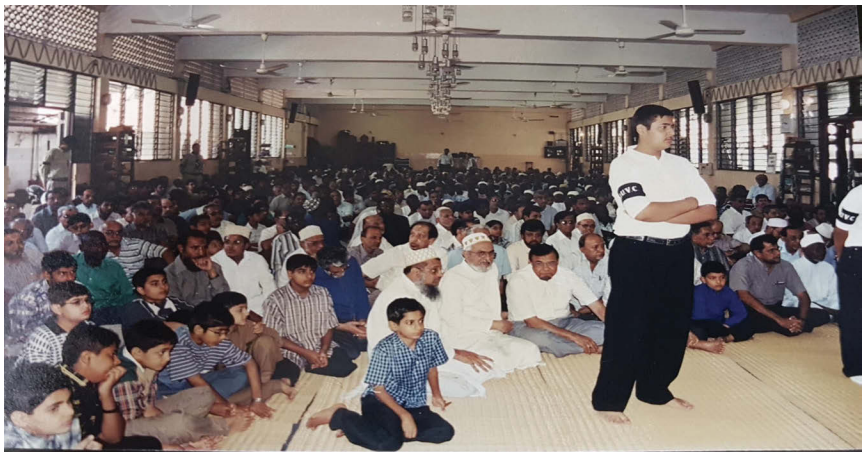
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Rizvi.

“Everyone seemed to try and remember and connect the sadness they felt in their hearts automatically through a meeting, a discussion or a moment they had shared with the Sayyid. As some ladies could not help sobbing after having done the viewing of the deceased, paying their last respects, one lady was overcome and all she could think about, she said, was: he was the one who had recited her nikāh.



The ‘ulamā’ waiting with me before the funeral prayer.



The attendees inside, waiting for the funeral prayer.

“The janaza prayer was led by his son, Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi with a very large attendance that included the officials of the Africa Federation, the Ambassador and embassy officials of Iran, representatives of various Jamaats of East Africa, representatives of Bilal Muslim Mission of Zanzibar and Kenya, and 15 Shi‘a ‘ulamā’: Syed Murtaza Murtaza Amili (Nairobi), Shaykh Darrul Hasan (Arusha), Shaykh Zahid Iftikhari (Tanga), Syed Shamsul Hasan Zaidi and Shaykh Dr. Ahmed Khatib (Zanzibar), Syed Sajjad Husain, Shaykh Ka‘bi-Nasab, Syed Muhsin Ṭabāṭabā’i, Syed Ghalib, Shaykh Sulaiman Jum‘a, Shaykh ‘Ali Mayunga, Shaykh Ishaq Pingili, Shaykh Ramadhān Kwezi, Shaykh Sherif Saqaf Ahmad, Shaykh Salim Hilal (all of Dar-es-Salaam). Also ‘ālims and leaders of other Muslim communities (Bohri, Isma‘ili, and Sunnis and the Ibadhis) were in attendance.



Janāzah prayer of ‘Allāmah Rizvi led by the present author as the eldest son.

“Then the resident ‘ālim, Shaykh Musi Raza recited a short majlis in which he summed up everyone’s thoughts that day as he

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

declared himself devoid of strength and words with which to offer condolences to the Sayyid’s children and the community at large at this time of “musībat-e ‘azīm”. He said that only the world of knowledge could gauge the loss that has been created and that could never be filled. No heart was untouched when he addressed the Sayyid telling him the huge and diverse crowd, consisting of people of all races, communities, age and status that had gathered at the mosque that morning were there to bid farewell to him.



After the janāzah, people listening to the eulogy by Maulānā Musī Raza.

“The funeral procession began with the ‘ulamā’ lifting the coffin, and then mu’mineen took the tabūt over their shoulders to the graveyard. Normally, coffins are taken by a special van to the cemetery. A Shī‘a scout, flanked by two scouts holding two large black flags, led the funeral procession with the large framed picture of the ‘Allāmah. The traffic police stopped the busy Saturday morning traffic to make way for the cortege. Many non-Muslims were seen joining the funeral procession on the way to the cemetery.

“The presence of the huge African Shī‘a crowd at the funeral as one entered the mosque was evidence of the ‘ālim’s great achievements. From zero, he had turned thousands of indigenous people in Africa into the followers of Ahlul Bayt. And their sobbing was so heart wrenching as ‘lā ilāhi illal lah’ was recited signaling the journey towards the cemetery that no one in the gathering could control tears pouring down their eyes.



“As the funeral procession left the mosque on to its way to the cemetery, the huge sober crowd immediately attracted the attention of the passerby and people along the streets stopped working to observe the funeral, instinctively knowing in their hearts that this was no ordinary funeral. Many Shī‘as paid tribute to this great personality by keeping shut their shops and businesses and joining in the funeral.

“Finally, the cortege reached the grave site and the brightest star of tabligh of the Shī‘a world was put to rest in a grave just at the entrance of the mosque inside the cemetery.”

Talking about the women’s reaction, Sakina Dato, reports: “Despite the sober crowd of black clad women, most people

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

interviewed by the Samachar revealed that it was difficult to digest that such a household name shrouded in piety had truly departed from our community leaving us without the benefit of the huge ‘ilm he possessed. Many sisters recalled his masā’il classes for ladies some years back and how they had complete faith in few except Akhtar Rizvi. His word was taken with full confidence.

“As the procession moved towards the grave, women stayed behind to pay tribute of their own. Zakeerah Fatim Dewji had the crowd in tears within minutes preaching on what an aalim means and what this loss meant. ‘Aalim is like a shelter for the community,’ she quoted the Masumeen’s saying. The shelter had been uprooted and the fort against enemy destroyed, leaving us exposed, she said. She informed the ladies about how the Syed’s books were read even in prisons in America, because of which many non-Muslims had turned Muslims...

“Well known Hamida bai Manji (Malimia) informed the Samachar about how people all across the globe from Iran, Iraq to India and USA asked about the ‘Allāmah on her trips abroad. ‘The whole Shī‘a world knew him and were concerned about him,’ she said.”



‘Allāmah being laid in his final resting place.
Myself, Murtaza, Jafar, Zaki Imam, Baqir, Nazre Abbas & Masud Akhtar

“A *sayyum* majlis was held the next day in which various dignitaries paid tribute to the late ‘Allāmah: Haj Zulfikar Khimji, the Chairman of the Africa Federation, Haj Abbas Nasser, the Chairman of Bilal Mission of Kenya, Shaykh Ramadhāni Kwezi of Bilal Mission of Tanzania spoke on behalf of the African community, Haj Pyarali Shivji, the Chairman of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania and Haj Mohamed Dhirani, the past Chairman of the Africa Federation.”¹⁰⁷

At the end, I stood up on behalf of my family to thank the Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat and its various committees (funeral, volunteers and scouts) for smoothly facilitating the funeral ceremony of my father. I also especially thanked the community at large (Khoja, African, and others) who truly shared in our loss and grief.

* * *

On a personal level, I not only became an orphan, rather my pen was also orphaned -- my father had been my guide and mentor, and a point of reference in difficult situations. For example, when I had completed the final draft of my book, *Shī‘ism: Imāmate & Wilāyat*, I sent its electronic copy to my father for review. He went through it minutely and besides the typographical errors, he made five suggestions. His fax ended with a note:

My dear Sayyid Muhammad,

Salamun Alaykum and may Allāh bless you.

I have gone minutely through the whole book, and especially the last article [on ‘Knowledge of the Ahlul Bayt’]. Well done.

The style is very mature and beyond criticism. I am very glad. Du’as and salaams from all of us to you and the family.... Yours, lovingly,..

107 Report of funeral and *sayyum* majlis has been adapted from Sakina Zainul Dattoo’s article with addition from Munir Daya, both of *Federation Samachar* (June 2002) with further information from *The Light*, June 2002.

Funeral video can be viewed at https://youtu.be/uguu_t8IkL8

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

His words of support and encouragement for my various writings and activities, and his own example in life, always boosted my morale to move forwards.

* * *

O Allāh, shower Your mercy and grace upon him, elevate his status and include him among the servants of the Present Imam (a) for he worked hard and sincerely to raise the banner of Islam and uphold the cause of Shi‘ism in different parts of the world. Amin, ya Rabbal ‘Ālamīn.

Condolences Messages

The Shi‘a world was forthcoming in expressing its grief on the loss of its great leader in the field of tabligh. Messages of condolence and tributes were sent by leaders and organizations as well as by those who had been impacted by his work and writings.

Marāji‘ Taqlid & Various Organizations:

1. Grand Āyatullāh Sistānī - Qum & London offices.
2. Grand Āyatullāh Khamenai
3. Grand Āyatullāh SM Sa‘īd aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī
4. Grand Āyatullāh Makārim Shīrāzi
5. H.I. Syed Murtaza Nūrī (WOFIS)
6. Ahlul Bayt World Assembly
7. Majma‘ Jahāni Taqrīb bayn Madhāhib Islāmi
8. Sazmān-e Madāris wa Ḥawzahaye Khārij az Kishwar
9. KSI World Federation, President
10. KSI World Federation, Secretary General
11. KSI Africa Federation
12. KSI Jamaat of Dar-es-Salaam
13. KSI Hujjat Jamaat, London
14. ISIJ, Toronto

15. Muslim Foundation Inc., NJ
16. NASIMCO
17. Ahlul Bait Foundation of South Africa.
18. Shī‘ane Haidery Islamic Association, Montreal, Canada
19. Imam Al-Khoei Islamic Center, NY
20. Pioneer Shī‘a Muslim Association of Guyana.
21. ISI Jamaat of Ottawa, Canada
22. KUFA Center, Virginia. (See shianews.com)
23. Imam-e Zamana Mission, Hyderabad, India
24. Al-Hussain Foundation, Toronto.
25. Majlis Ulama-e-Shī‘a (Europe) / S. Raza Husain Shah
26. Indian Islamic Students’ Union, Qum
27. Panjtan Society of Victoria Inc, Melbourne / Masood
28. Hujjatul Islam Jamat, Zanzibar
29. Tauheed Islamic Centre, Oslo, Norway
30. KSI Jamaat of Lindi, Tanzania.
31. Ithna-Asheri Union Volunteer Corps, Dar-es-Salaam
32. BAKWATA, Dar-es-Salaam
33. WIPAHS, Kibaha, Tanzania
34. Deaf Muslim Community, Dar-es-Salaam
35. IEB, World Federation, London
36. KSI Jamaat of Arusha, Tanzania
37. Bilal Mission, Moshi Branch.
38. KSI Jamaat of Kampala, Uganda
39. SI Jamaat of Aden, Yemen
40. Bilal Muslim Mission, Nairobi
41. Tanzania Ithanasheri Community, Arusha Branch
42. Hezb-ul-Baqer Community, Johannesburg, S. Africa

‘Ulamā’, Personalities & Friends:

43. Maulānā Javed Akber, Allāhabad, India

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

44. Maulānā Saiyid Baqir Naqavi, Dubai
45. Maulānā Syed Tilmiz-ul-Hasanain Rizvi, NJ, USA
46. Maulānā S. Shamshad Husain Rizvi, Oslo
47. Shaykh Hasan Ikhwan Roshandil, Sweden
48. Maulānā Zul Qadr Rizvi, London
49. Maulānā Muhammad Hasan Ma‘rufi, London
50. Āyatullāh S. Sadiq Shirazi, Qum
51. Professor Dr. Noel Q. King, CA, USA
52. Dr. S.M. Ali Musawi, Iranian Ambassador in Canada.
53. Br. Ahmad Kanani, Iranian Ambassador in Tanzania.
54. Abdullah Semiz of Bosnian Desk, IEB, London
55. Maulānā S.M Zaki Baqri, Toronto
56. Sr. Kulsoom A. Mohammadi, Winnipeg, Canada
57. Br. Bashier Rahim, Cape Town, S Africa
58. Maulānā Shabihul Hasan, Bradford, UK
59. Br. Safder Jaffer, Milton Keynes, UK
60. Br. Mushin Jaffer, London
61. Dr. Muhammad Sa‘d at-Turayhi, Netherlands.
62. Br. Muhammad Taqi Ansariyan, Qum
63. Maulānā S. Husain Mehdi Husaini, Mumbai.
64. Br. Alihussein M. Janmohamed, Austin, TX
65. Br. Amiraly MH Dato, Bukoba
66. Br. Imran Abdul Rasool & WIN, Mumbai.
67. Br. Fidahussein & Zehra Gulamhussein, Toronto
68. Maulānā Jafar Ali of Arusha Jamaat.
69. Sr. Zainab Allie, Cape Town
70. Br. Habib Mulla Hassanali, Moshi
71. Dr. Shiraz Dato, Toronto
72. Br. Nazir Gulamhusein, Toronto
73. Br. Raza Devji, Vancouver
74. Br. Gulamabbas Manji, Toronto

75. Br. Wasif Raza Rizvi, Delhi
76. Br. S. Ghulam Murtuza Rizvi, Noida, India
77. Br. Ali Muhtaram, Toronto
78. Maulānā Shuja Ali Mirza, Qum
79. Br. Mohamed Moledina, Dallas, TX
80. Br. Aunali Khalfan, NY
81. Dr. Kazim Dhalla, Dar-es-Salaam
82. Dr. Mohamedraza & Tahera H Bhimani, Chicago
83. Br. Muslim Remtulla, Arusha
84. Br. Yasin B. Rahim, Portsmouth, UK
85. Br. Aliasghar Jaffer Dewjee & family
86. Dr. Rafiq Bhimani, Toronto
87. Br. Mohsin Manji Haji, NY
88. Br. Husein Aliasghar Rashid
89. Br. Hussein Sheriff Khalfan, Toronto
90. Br. Pirbhai family, Mauritius
91. Br. Baqir Alloo, Toronto
92. Br. Habib Virani
93. Shk. Mohammad Ali Mesbah, Virginia, USA
on behalf of his father Agha-e Shaykh Mesbahzadeh.
94. Br. Amirali Kermalli, CA
95. Br. Mohammedali Bhayani, Muscat, Oman
96. S. Mohsen Razavi Nejad, ABWA, Tehran
97. Skh. Majaliwa-Yusuf, Rwanda
98. Br. Shamir Schloss, Pretoria, South Africa
99. Mulla Muhammad A. Kassamali, Peterborough
100. Sr. Masooma Beatty, USA
101. Br. Ahmed Tejani, Arusha
102. Br. Ebrahim HAM Jaffer, NY
103. Br. Haider Jaffer, Toronto
104. Br. Mohamedali Bhojani & family

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Newspapers & magazines that reported ‘Allāmah’s demise:

1. Africa Federation *Circular* no. JMT/90/02, 22 June 2002
2. *Ittila‘at*, Tehran, 22 June 2002.
3. *Kayhan*, Tehran, 22 June 2002
4. *Qaumi Tanzeem*, Patna, India, 22 June 2002
5. *Intikhab*, Tehran, 23 June 2002
6. *Jamhuri Islami*, Tehran, 23 June 2002
7. *Jawan*, Tehran, 24 June 2002
8. *Risalat*, Tehran, 24 June 2002
9. *Daily Jung*, London, 24 June 2002
10. *IRNA News Agency*, Tehran, 25 June 2002
11. *Shianews.com* 25 June 2002
12. *The Express*, Dar-es-Salaam, 27 June 2002
13. *As-Sadiq Reporter*, Thornhill, Canada, 27 June 2002
14. *The Pakistan Post*, London, 28 June 2002
15. *Tawhīd Mail*, Lucknow, India, June 2002
16. *Hamari Tawhīd* (Hindi), Lucknow, 1 July 2002
17. *Sadaqat*, Lucknow, India, 14 July 2002
18. *Federation Samachar*, June 2002
19. *Al-Haqq Newsletter*, July 2002
20. *Al-Moballigh*, London, July 2002.
21. *Isna-Ashari* (Gujarati), India, July 2002
22. *Rah-e Najat* (Gujarati), India, July 2002
23. *Tanzeemul Makatib*, August 2002
24. *Insight* (WF newsletter), London, August 2002
25. *MFI Newsletter*, NJ, USA, August 2002
26. *Al-Hujjat*, Cape Town, S. Africa, August 2002
27. *Tawhīd Mail*, Lucknow, October 2002
28. *Shajartun Muntazirah* Newsletter, Philippines
29. *Message of Thaqaalayn*, Autumn & Winter 2002

A Selection of Condolence Messages

1. Office of Hazrat Āyatullāh al-Uzma Ḥaj Āqa-e Ḥāj Syed ‘Ali Ḥusayni Sīstāni

15 Rabi II 1423 / Ref. No. 13

In the name of Allāh, the Kind, the Merciful
Respected Ḥujjatul Islām Āqa-e Ḥāj Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi (may
his honour continue).

The sad news of the demise of your honourable father, the late
blessed Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimeen, Ḥāj Sayyid Saeed Akhtar
Rizvi (may his soul be blessed) has deeply grieved us.

We pray to the Almighty that He may shower upon him His grace
and forgiveness, and that He may bestow upon you, the respected
Rizvi family, and all the Muslims, especially the Shī‘as (especially
the mu’min brethren of Tanzania) patience and mighty reward [on
forbearance upon this great loss].

Your late father was a unique example and a role model who
by his unwavering steadfastness, without any pretense [to fame
or glory] and with true concern for the theological school of [the
Imams of] infallibility and purity, walked on the path of attaining the
high goals of Islam.

By writing and translating, by clear speech, in various languages,
he offered exemplary services to Islam from which the people
worldwide have benefited for years and, inshā Allāh, will continue
to benefit.

**The sincerity of his work, the piety of his pen, the dignity and
respect of his speech and action was acknowledged by all. The
loss of this dear soul truly exemplifies the noble words of Imam**

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Ja’far Ṣādiq (a.s.), “When a believer faqih (jurist) passes away, a void is created in Islam which cannot be filled by anything.”

With conveyance of our greetings and condolences to the mu’mineen in that region, please advise them to further close their ranks with unity of action and purpose, and work more diligently in the path of spreading the teachings and the examples of the Infallible Ones (a.s.) with the reassurance that “if you help Allāh, He will help you.”

Was-salaam alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

Jawād Shahrīstānī

[Special Representative of Āyatullāh Sistānī]

* * *

2. Office of Office of Ḥazrat Āyatullāh al-‘Uzma Haj

Syed ‘Ali Khāmanae, the Leader of Islamic Republic of Iran

13/4/1381 No. 7/3478

In the name of the Almighty

Ḥazrat Ḥujjatul Islām wal-Muslimeen, Respected Aqa-e Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi,

Salāmūn ‘alaykum.

With grief and sorrow, we were informed that your honourable father, highly respected scholar, the late Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimeen, Aqa-e Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi left the perishing world and joined the meeting of Allāh.

On behalf of the Supreme Leader, Ḥazrat Āyatullāh al-Uzma Khāmanae (may his presence continue), we extend the condolences to yourself, the respected family, and also the respected ‘ulamā’ and Muslims of Africa, and we pray to the Almighty God for encompassing mercy for the departed soul and for patience and good reward [on patience] for yourself and others whom he has left

behind.

No doubt, the passing away of this very hardworking and active scholar is a loss for the oppressed Muslim ummah of Africa, in particular for the Shī‘a people. His sincere services in promoting the culture and teachings of the Pure and Infallible Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) will be rewarded in the presence of the Almighty.

Office of the Supreme Leader
Muhammad Hasan Akhtari
Advisor [to the Leader] on International Relations

* * *

**3. Office of Ḥazrat Āyatullāh al-‘Uzma Haj
Syed Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ṭabāṭabā’ī Ḥakīm**
14 Rabi II 1423

Respected Ḥujjatul Islām Āqa-e Syed Muḥammad Rizvi (may your honour continue),

With salām, we received the sad news of the passing away of the pure soul of your honourable father, Ḥazrat Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimeen, Āqa-e Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may his pure soul be blessed). He played a great role in spreading Islam and the madh-hab of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in various countries and provided valuable services to the believers.

With deep sadness, we extend our condolences on his demise to you, your respected brothers, the family-members, and all the mu’mineen.

Seal of the Office of
Ḥazrat Āyatullāh al-‘Uzma S. M. Sa‘īd Ṭabāṭabā’ī Ḥakīm.

* * *

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

4. Office of Āyatullāh al-Uzma Makārim Shirāzi

Ḥawza-e ‘Ilmiyya, Qum

13 Rabi II 1423 / Ref. No. 64179

In the name of the Almighty

The sad loss and untimely demise of Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimeen, Ḥāj Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi has grieved the hearts of all those who love Islam and the school of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) because this graceful soul spent his fruitful life in the deprived land of Africa to spread the madh-hab of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), to preach the teachings of Islam, to train the religious students, and to establish Islamic seminaries. He did not only fulfill his duty through the chair of teaching and preaching, he also provided great services by his able pen and familiarity with five live languages of this world.

On the demise of this great scholar, we express our condolences to the ḥawza-e ilmiyyas, to the Shi‘as of Africa, and to his family, and in particular, to his respected son, Ḥujjatul Islam, Haj Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi. And we hope that with the zeal of the Shi‘as of that region, the place of the deceased in that sensitive area is not left unattended.

He lived with gracefully (*sa‘īd*) and he died with gracefully (*sa‘īd*).

Nāsir Makārim Shirāzi

* * *

5. The World Ahlul Bayt^(as) Assembly, Tehran:

In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful

“We verily belong to Allāh and verily to Him is our return.”

With deep sorrow and grief, we received the news of the demise of the translator of the great *tafsir al-Mizān*, Ḥujjatul Islam wal

Muslimeen, ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, the great Shī‘a scholar in East Africa, a prominent member of the General Assembly, and the Chairman of Ahlul Bayt Assembly of Tanzania.

This mujāhid scholar, and spiritual leader left this world and entered into the Divine mercy after decades of continuous efforts and unreserved struggles to spread the exalted teachings of the pure and infallible Ahlul Bayt^(as) in East Africa. He spent more than forty years of his life in Tanzania to promote the madh-hab of Ahlul Bayt^(as).

In following the example of the Prophet (a.s.) and in selecting the way of migration and propagation during his entire fruitful life, this noble soul migrated to Africa and with unparalleled patience and steadfastness, started praiseworthy efforts to revive the original Islam of Muhammad (a.s.), to spread of Shī‘ism, to glorify the name of Islam, and to promote the teachings of wilāyat.

By providing the academic and scholarly nourishment to those thirsting for the teachings of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), he started watering that dry lands from the stream of the ‘Alawi knowledge.

His unforgettable endeavours in writing and translating Shī‘a books, in preaching the sharia laws from mosque to mosque, in organizing the affairs of the followers of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), and his great struggle to rid the dust of poverty and deprivation from faces of the East African Shī‘as - all these are signs of the great courage of this respected Sayyid, and such endeavours (as perpetual charity) will continue to please his soul forever.

The World Ahlul Bayt Assembly extends its condolences on passing away of this selfless scholar to the holy presence of the Present Imam (may our lives be sacrificed for him), to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, to the Grand Marāji’, to the ḥawza-ilmiyyas, to all his friends and admirers, and also to the respected family, in particular his honourable son, Janab Hujjatul Islam Āqa-e Rizvi. We also pray to the Gracious God for elevation of the status

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

of the graceful departed soul, and for patience for those whom he has left behind.

* * *

6. HIWM Shaykh Muḥammad Razā Nūrullāhiyān (Chairman, Sāzmān-e Madāris wa Ḥawzahāye Khārij az Kishwar / Organization for Ḥawzahs Outside Iran¹⁰⁸)

“Those who believe, migrate and struggle in Allāh’s way with their property and their lives, they have a great rank with Allāh, and they are the successful ones; their Lord gives them good news of the mercy and acceptance from Him, and of gardens in which they should a permanent bless.”

Last night the shining star of the world of knowledge and migration in Allāh’s way unbelievably set. A great man bade farewell to this world who, in the deprived Africa during the unknown era of Shī‘ism and Islam, raised the flag of helping Ḥusayn bin ‘Ali (a.s.) all alone. For forty years, with holy love, he lived among those people and left a rich legacy of hundreds of young religious scholars, tens of mosques, centers, ḥawzas, ḥusainiyyas, ḥāfiz and reciters of Qur’ān, and followers of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

The late blessed soul, Āyatullāh Haj Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (quddusu sirruh), interpreter and translator of the holy Qur’ān, a noble and refined scholar, a faqih (jurist) who travelled to the land of Africa for guiding his people, migrated to Dar-es-Salaam, the capital of Tanzania. By training Shī‘a religious students, he paid his due to the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.).

This great muhājir scholar who was the leader of Muslim missionaries and Shī‘a guides, demonstrated such manly determination, unique courage, and also unparalleled sincerity, for

108 This organization along with Markaz-e Jehāhi was merged later on to form the present Jāmi‘atul Muṣṭafa al-‘Ālamiyyah, the Al-Muṣṭafa International University.

guiding the people that he has become a shining role model and example for all ḥawza ‘ilmiyyas.

‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhtar, was a pride of the ḥawza ‘ilmiyyas of Najaf, Qum, and India; and like all the good leaders of the past and as a student who appreciated the school of Imam Ja‘far bin Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.), he loved and respected the ḥawza ‘ilmiyya and the task of training the capable persons as missionaries (du‘āt) of Allāh’s way.

Being one of the humble admirers of this great teacher, I wished to organize a day of appreciation for this respected Sayyid in Africa during his own lifetime. But, alas, today I sit to mourn and have been grieved by his irreparable loss.¹⁰⁹

I pray to Almighty Allāh to raise this descendent of the pure family of Razavi with the leader of the oppressed Hazrat Abi Abdullāh al-Ḥusayn (a.s.). And to grant patience to all those whom he leaves behind from his sons and relatives, in particular his scholar son, Āqa-e Ḥaj Syed Muḥammad Akhtar Rizvi.

O Allāh, help the Shī‘as of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, and East Africa who are mourning the loss of their leader who was flag bearer of religious virtues in way of spiritual guidance.

Muḥammad Razā Nūrullāhiyān

Friday, 9 Rabi II 1423 / 31/3/1381 [presently in holy Mashhad]

109 Later on Al-Muṣṭafa International University (Qum) and its affiliate in Dar-es-Salaam organized such a program on the tenth anniversary of my father’s demise. A report on the Qum seminar can be seen in the next chapter.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

7. HIWM Syed Murtaza Nūrī, Director of World Organization for Islamic Services, Tehran

*“...those who are afflicted with a suffering,
they say: We belong to Allāh and to Him we shall return.”*

Dear brother respected Ḥujjatul Islam Agha-e Ḥaj Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi

I do not know with what thoughts and words do I express condolences to yourself, your respected brothers and all members of the honourable Rizvi family on the unbearable grief of your respected father, the great scholar and mujāhid Hazrat Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimeen Agha-e Ḥaj Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may Allāh sanctify his soul and elevate his status).

The loss that you, your respected brothers and your family have suffered is not only yours, rather it engulfs all those who knew the deceased and were informed of his services and endeavors in upholding the word of truth and the school of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.), rather it is a loss for the world of Islam, especially the Shī‘ī world.

I have known the deceased for more than 30 years, and am fully aware of his hard work and struggles in the path of propagating the faith of Islam, especially the school of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.). As far as I know, his life, especially the last 30 years, was dedicated to serve the school of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) through lectures, articles, writings and translation of useful Islamic books in English, Swahili, Arabic, etc. Your great father spent a lifetime with his words and pen for the cause of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.).

The deceased was an example of the holy ḥadīth, “When a jurist believer dies, a void is created in Islam which cannot be filled with anything.” The deceased was an object of the boundless Divine mercy. May God elevate his status and raise him with his

pure ancestors, and grant you, your brothers and family members the enduring patience and immanence reward, and may He help and support you who followed and is following the step foots of your honourable father.

It is appropriate that a biography on the blessed life of the deceased be written. If it is possible for you, in spite of the burden of responsibilities that you shoulder, then it is the best; otherwise, assign it to someone who is informed and capable for such a task and you can work with him so that it reaches to fruition. Such a biography will be an example for those who serve the blessed faith and madh-hab.

Was-salaam ‘alaykum wa rahma...

Syed Murtaza Nūrī

* * *

8. President of KSI World Federation

‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi:

A name synonymous with Tabligh

Inna lillahi wainna ilyahi rajeoon.

The world-renowned venerable scholar, ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhter Rizvi will be remembered as an outstanding muballigh, whose towering personality has had the most profound impact upon the Shī‘a Community in East Africa. With his trailblazing missionary activities, into the then unknown interior regions of East Africa, as the Chief Missionary of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, ‘Allāmah Rizvi became a legend in his own lifetime. His name has become synonymous with the word *tabligh* amongst the indigenous people of East Africa.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

To date, he remains one of the very few ‘Alims who took the trouble to master the Kiswahili language, to share the teachings of Ahlul Bait (as) amongst the people of East Africa, resulting in many thousands accepting the faith. Even today the Islamic Correspondence Course written by him under the aegis of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, almost three decades ago, continues to be avidly followed, not just in Africa, but as diverse places as Guyana and Philippines and many other countries around the globe.

A *faqih* and a *muḥaddith* in his own right, he had the ability to deliver a clear message cutting through the fog of confusion, in matter relating to almost all facets of Islam. A multi-talented communicator he was equally at home discussing the finer points of Usule-fiqh with his peers, or points of theology at Berkely University as he was explaining simple masāel of ṣalaat to a new convert in a village in Africa. A prolific writer with scores of titles to his credit, his erudition extended from the English translation of the profound *Tafsir Al-Mizān* of Āyatullāh Tabatabai to the basic madressa primer ‘*Elements of Islamic Studies*’, which has become a standard text for madaris all over the world.

A poet and a linguist, he was fluent in Urdu, English, Arabic, Farsi and Kiswahili. As a historian, his last mammoth work, on the History of The Shī‘a Communities, is in the process of being published. On a personal note, the very first monograph I ever read on the History of the Khoja Shī‘a Ithnaasharis was authored by none other than ‘Allāmah Rizvi in conjunction with Prof. Noel King of Makerere University almost quarter of a century ago.

The passing away of an ‘Aalim of such caliber is a great loss to the entire Muslim World and in particular the Shī‘a Community at large amongst whom he commanded the highest level of respect for his integrity, erudition and wise counsel. His loss so soon after the passing away of Marhum Mulla Asgharali M M Jaffer, means that

the Khoja Shī‘a Ithnaasheri Community the world over will feel his loss even more. Both these erudite personalities had worked closely together on many occasions, especially when the KSI community needed guidance in religious and social issues.

In this hour of grief, our hearts go out to his family. On behalf of the World Federation of Khoja Shī‘a Ithnasheri Muslim Communities, I extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to his eldest son Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi and through him, to Marhum’s entire family. May Allāh give Sabre Adhim to his near and dear ones to bear this loss.

May Allāh bless his soul with maghfirat and elevate him to a chosen place in the proximity of the Masoomen (AS) that he so dearly loved and served.

We also express our condolences to our Marja Āyatullāh Seestani (May Allāh keep him) on this sad loss to the entire Shī‘a world.

Hasnain Walji

President

World Federation of KSI Muslim Communities

8th Rabi‘ ath-Thani / 20th June 2002

* * *

9. Secretary General of KSI World Federation

To the Chairman, Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, Dar-es-Salaam, Murrabi Pyaralibhai and Murrabi Fidahuseinbhai [Hameer],
Salamunalalkum,

Again, with unexpected suddenness, death has come among us. ‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi has silently departed for the life hereafter. There is no doubt that those with whom he had daily contact with are visibly and profoundly feeling the shock of his death.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

A scholar with a passion for writing engagingly from historical evidence is a recognisable trait of his character but in the sixties, in East Africa, his character gave a different impression. Then, he was simply an ‘alim of a humble demeanour, an impression perhaps carved out from his unassuming delivery of the subject during his majalises. But the subject content was a different matter. It had the depth and clarity that gave a hint of his many capabilities, recognised by only a few from our community though. But it was these very few individuals who understood the potential within him and together, they embarked upon a mission, aptly named the Bilal Muslim Mission, that today, after nearly 40 years, reverberates the rich spirituality of the message of the Ahlulbayt (a.s) within Africans of Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and elsewhere in Africa. Together with ‘Allāmah Sayed Akhtar Rizvi, were personalities like Haji Ahmad Husain Sheriff Dewji, Haji Ali Mohammadjaffer Sheriff, Mulla Asgherall MM Jaffer, Haji Hussein Nasser Walji and Mohammedrafik G. Somji and indeed many others.

As I write this letter to you, I am reflecting on those momentous and far-sighted decisions made by the Supreme Council of the Africa Federation in 1964 to create the Bilal Muslim Mission with the support of ‘Allāmah Syed Akhtar Rizvi and others who have remained committed to this substantial task during their lifetime and who have nurtured this young sapling into what it is today. Bilal Tanzania and many similar institutions under Africa Federation has achieved much in the last four decades of its existence and much is expected as African Shi‘as get organised into a community. They are now part of the Shi‘a Ithna Asheri community worldwide.

In coming years, in this propagation work, Bilal Muslim Missions will require a great deal of support. Today, our community see this work as a goal and a target towards which to advance and make their existence in East Africa meaningful. History will record

the work of Bilal as a legacy from our community to the Indigenous people of Africa.

But there is no doubt that the towering intellectual strength and unflinching commitment of ‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi provided the necessary foundation to the Bilal Muslim Mission to grow and today, this remains his hallmark. Our foremost thought at this moment is that the passing away of such a great champion of Tabligh will be felt not only throughout our community but also within the nation of Shi‘a Islam.

All of us at the World Federation Secretariat feel a keen sense of loss in his passing away. Please convey our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to his eldest son Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi and through him, to Marhum’s entire family.

I extend to you and Fidahusseinhai my deepest sympathy and may Allāh swt give you all at Bilal Muslim Mission Tawfiqat to carry on this work for His sake.

Inna lillahi wainna ilyahl rajeoon

Sibtain Panjwani

Secretary General

The World Federation of KSI Muslim Communities

* * *

10. Circular by Haj Zulfikar Khimji,

Chairman of Africa Federation issued on 21 June 2002

The Africa Federation regrets to notify with great sorrow of the sad and sudden demise of ‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhter Rizvi, which occurred in Dar-es-Salaam yesterday Thursday 20th June 2002 (8th Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1423). The funeral will inshAllāh take place on Saturday 22nd June 2002 (10th Rabi-ul-Aakhar 1423) at 10.00 a.m. in Dar-es-Salaam.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I wish to express our condolences and deep sympathies to the family of ‘Allāmah Rizvi and the Shi‘a Community at large on the bereavement, which has fallen upon us.

My colleagues and myself shall inshAllāh travel to Dar-es-Salaam to attend the funeral...

It is our prayers that Allāh (s.w.t.) will grant Marhum maghferat and place his soul in the proximity of Chaharda Masumeen (a.s.) and grant us solace to sustain this loss. Amen.

* * *

11. Haj Fidahussein A. Hameer

(A founding member of Bilal and a close associate of ‘Allāmah)

Tower of Strength is Gone

In the 35 years of its history, the Bilal Muslim Mission has gone through a lot of crises during which ‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (a.m.) stood like a pillar. “This Bilal is Imam-e Zamana’s mission and Allāh will take care of it,” he used to tell us. He quoted the question Abraha asked Hazrat ‘Abdul Muttalib (a.s.), “You are asking for your animals, what about Khana-e Kaaba?” to which Hazrat ‘Abdul Muttalib replied, “Kaaba is Allāh’s property. He will take care of it.” Marhum told us, “Similarly Allāh will take care of Bilal, you don’t have to worry.”

Over the years the deaths of prominent people involved with the Mission have been received with profound shock but at all times ‘Allāmah Rizvi was a pillar of strength always reassuring that things would continue as planned. Among those who passed away were Haji Rafiq Somji, the first Hon. Secretary of the Mission, then Haji Ahmed Sheriff, the founder member and first Chairman, then Haji Ali Mohamed Jaffer who was also a founder member followed by Bwana Ali Sheriff, Chairman of the Bilal Muslim Mission Arusha

Branch. Immediately thereafter Alhaj Mulla Asgherali M.M. Jaffer, who had the Mission's welfare at heart and was an ardent supporter, also passed away.

‘Allāmah was a pillar of strength and always reassuring. “Personalities will come and go. It is the institution that matters,” he used to tell us.

And alas that pillar of strength is now gone. ‘Allāmah's departure from this world is a real loss for us. ‘Allāmah was a faqih, a muhaddith, a historian and a real treasure of knowledge. There is no replacement in the whole world, the tower of strength and reassurance on which we leaned, is gone.

We pray to Almighty Allāh (s.w.t.) to reward ‘Allāmah Saheb for his services to mazhabe Ahlul Bayt A.S. and place him in Jawarehe-Maasumeen (a.s.) and give us all the strength and fortitude to carry on the heavy burden he left behind.

* * *

12. Haj Habib J. Mulji

(Chairman of Africa Federation for two terms and an associate of ‘Allāmah)

The “Cool Shadow” is no Longer

The sad demise of ‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi has created a vacuum in the religious leadership and guidance that had enriched the entire Shī‘a world for decades. Only Allāh (s.w.t.) can help us to fill this vacuum.

A tree can only be objectively measured when fallen. How many people sitting under the cool shadow of this tree have benefited from its fruits? By way of spiritual upliftment, higher religious education, economic or other problems, all looked upon this tree to achieve their goal.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

The Bilal Muslim Mission would not have come into existence without Marhum’s wisdom of leadership and guidance. It was his enthusiasm and devotion which prompted the Africa Federation to establish it much sooner than would perhaps have been the case.

In Marhum was a fountain of knowledge. He always had time for all, rich and poor. His life assumed additional purpose because he found meaning in the lives of others. He devoted his whole life to serve Islam and Ahlul-Bait (a.s.). It was due to his books, teaching and propagation that more than one hundred thousand indigenous people of Africa and other parts of the world embraced the faith of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.).

‘Allāmah’s life was so rich and loving, so generous and kind, so amiable and understanding, so honest and truthful, that he has left behind an enviable legacy of memories. In his passing away, we have lost a man who was sought after by those beyond the perimeter of his immediate family. He will be missed by people throughout the world and will be remembered for his enthusiasm, sacrifice and devotion.

It is Allāh (s.w.t.) who can reward Marhum in abundance and whose call ‘Allāmah had heeded in the mission of tablīgh. May He in His mercy and grace rest Marhum’s soul in the proximity of Masumeen (a.s.). Amen.

* * *

13. Dr. S. Manzoor Naqi Rizvi, MD, President of Muslim Foundation Inc., NJ, USA

Dear Rizvi Brothers, Friends and Family of HI. S. Saeed Akhtar Rizvi Sahib Marhoom:

Salamun Alaikum.

I have no words to express my grief, pain and distressed feeling at the passing away of your beloved father and my dearest and

esteemed friend. I still cannot believe it that ‘Allāmah is no longer amongst us, enlightening and guiding us. It is much too difficult to write too much at this most difficult and depressing time.

I along with my family are extremely grieved sitting thousands of miles away, so I can imagine how all of you must be feeling and what you are going through right now.

‘Allāmah was not a mere individual but instead he literally was an entire anjuman, a mission, a hope, a spirit of Islam and the soul of the Community.

He was a leader, an inspiration for all, a writer, a scholar, a lecturer, a walking dictionary and an Islamic encyclopedia. He was indeed a complete person and a living legend, with a great personality. He without a doubt was unmatched and unparalleled ‘Alim of our contemporary time.

He was the best that the last century could produce within the Shi‘ite Community. In my lifetime, I have so far seen many of the best and the worst. Maulānā Sahab undeniably, was the best among the best, in all sense. This has all been my personal experience and an honor and privilege to have known him and to have been his friend

* * *

14. KSI Jamaat of Dar-es-Salaam

Hujjatul Islam Syed Mohamed Saeed Akhter Rizvi,
Dear Syed Mohamed Saheb,

INNA LILAH I WA INNA ILA.HI RAJEUN.

The Jamaat has recorded with deep sorrow and shock the very sad demise of your beloved father Hujjatul Islam ‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhter Rizvi.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

The loss of a Scholar and Aalim of such a high caliber is tremendous and is felt not only by African Jamaats but, in view of Marhum’s internationally known services in the fields of Tabligh of Deen-e-Haq and his highly knowledgeable articles and publishing of books of high intellectual value in different languages which are playing a very important role in spreading the message of Ahlul Bayt A.S. this irreparable loss is mourned throughout the world, and Marhum will be remembered and cherished for unlimited time ahead.

At this moment of deep grief which is equally shared by members of my Jamaat at large, we extend to you and all members of bereaved family our heartfelt condolences. May Allāh (s.w.t.) give you solace and strength to bear this unbearable loss and rest the soul of Marhum in the proximity of Chaharda Masumin A.S. Ameen.

Yours in Grief.

Asgher Bharwani, President

* * *

15. Br. Imran Rasool of WIN, Bombay

We the committee members of World Islamic Network deeply mourn the sad demise of the Janab ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may Allāh exalt his status in the hereafter) who left us on the 22nd of June 2002.

We still have the fond memories of the respected Maulānā whom we first met around 15 years ago when he had come to Bombay. **It was through his inspiration that we established WIN. When we asked him what was the best way to do Tableegh, he said it was through publication and distribution of literature.** We started with the books of the Maulānā himself and the first book that we

published was Imamate. Later World Islamic Network published most of the English titles of the late Maulānā including:

God (An Islamic Perspective);

Imāmate; Justice of God;

Family Life of Islam; Sects of Islam;

Prophecies about the Holy Prophet of Islam;

The Qur'ān: Its Protection from Alternation;

The Return of Al-Mahdi.

Whenever he came to Bombay, he made it a point to pay us a visit and render his invaluable advice; and whenever we intended to go for reprints of his books, he would go out of his way to revise them specially for us.

Even at his advanced age he was very active in his field and his passing away has left such a vacuum that it would be almost impossible to fill. The respected Maulānā not only gave us the permission to publish his books, he took a keen interest in our activities and guided us on many issues. Recently we had sent some questions pertaining to new converts whose spouses had not yet converted to Islam. The late Maulānā promised to provide detailed replies but alas providence had intended something else.

We all pray that the Almighty bestow him with the best of bounties in the neighborhood of Ahle Bayt (a.s.) whose path he had preached and popularized across the world. We also beseech Allāh to give us the tawfeeq to continue the mission that the late Maulānā had shown us.

For World Islamic Network
Imran Abdul Rasool

* * *

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

16. HI Maulānā Sayed Aftab Haider Rizvi of Ahlul Bait (as) Foundation of South Africa

Monday, 24 June 2002

Hujjat ul Islam wal Muslimeen Sayed Mohammad Rizvi

Salamun Alaikum

Our condolences to Our Imam Al Mahdi (as), Leadership of The Islamic Revolution, Marāji‘ al-‘Izām, his respected family & all the lovers of Ahlul Bait (as) on the sad & heartbreaking demise of ‘Allāmah Sayed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (ra).

The sudden, untimely passing away of the great ‘Allāmah has shocked us all in South Africa, especially the followers of the Ahlul-Bait (as), and has left us deeply saddened. The ‘Allāmah’s death is a great loss for the propagation of Islam and specifically the School of Ahlul-Bait (as) as he was the pioneer of the propagation activities in Sub-Saharan Africa. His love for spreading the message of Ahlul-Bait (as) influenced him to initially study Kiswahili, being the language of the indigenous people, which then assisted him in successfully presenting this Holy School to the indigenous people and converting tens of thousands to Shi‘ism. His influence amazingly reached the Southern most tip of Africa, including the prisons in South Africa through his writings.

The Sayed will also be remembered for his academic excellence and the heritage of literature that he has left behind. Of the many books he has written, his translation of *Tafsir al-Mizān* by ‘Allāmah Ṭabā’ṭabā’i has ensured that this momentous, contemporary Tafsir is accessible to the keen, English speaking student who is not familiar with the Arabic language. He also wrote on many topics, which were contemporary, including “*Slavery and Islam*”, which we in South Africa proudly republished in August 2001 and presented to the world at the Conference on Racism held in Durban, South Africa

in September 2001.

Besides his many achievements, which one cannot completely record on paper, the ‘Allāmah’s personality was also unique. He was extremely humble at all times and made you feel as if he was meant to serve you. He expressed genuine concern for the well-being of the followers of Ahlul-Bait (as) in South Africa and always played the role of a fatherly figure to us all, being ever available to provide guidance and advice.

The Ummah and Africa in particular is indeed poorer with the loss of such a towering presence from its midst. We pray that the Almighty grant him ease and comfort in his eternal abode, in the company of the Holy Household (as), which he so fervently served unto his last breath. We also pray that your respected self continue the great legacy of your father marhoom ‘Allāmah (may Allāh shower him with His mercy).

With sincere duas,
Sayeed Aftab Haider

* * *

17. Maulānā Syed Kalbe Şādiq, Lucknow, India

In the Name of Allāh, the all-Compassionate, the Merciful Respected Maulānā Syed Rizvi Sahab Qibla, son of (Late) Allamah Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi Sahab

Salaamun Alaikum. Pray to Allāh for your well being and prosperity.

We are deeply grieved by the sudden and sad demise of ‘Allāmah Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi Sahab (a‘alal Allāhu maqāmahu) on 20 June 2002. May Allāh rest his soul in peace in the eternal, heavenly abode.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

It is difficult to find words in our vocabulary to express the shock we all have suffered and the suffering that his passing away will cause to the Shī‘a community worldwide. **He wasn’t simply a personality—indeed a great and rare one—but more than that an institution in himself.** The message that he spread and the divine services that he rendered in the way of Islam and Muslim peoples will survive him as a unique example in themselves.

Being a humble person in front of him, even after his departure to the other world, I can just say that it would not be not only impossible, nay inconceivable, to fill the vacuum created by him in the higher echelons of our community. And I can only pray to Allāh Almighty to bless this Ummah of ours with more such personalities as possessed by (Late) Allamah Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi Sahab Qibla.

It is mentioned in a hadith: “The death of an ‘Ālim is (equivalent to) the death of the whole world.”

May Allāh grant you all the patience and forbearance to bear this irreparable loss.

Wassalam

Yours truly, Syed Kalbe Sadiq

* * *

18. Dr. Asgharali Moledina, Mozambique

We are indeed saddened to hear of the passing away of ‘Allāmah Syed Akhtar Rizvi. The Late Syed Akhtar Rizvi was the anchor and pillar of tabligh work in East Africa, specifically so in Tanzania. His various publications both in English and Kiswahili are of immense benefit to the people of East Africa and will remain so for the future. Passing away of a great scholar of his calibre is indeed a loss to the Muslim community at large. Bilal Muslim Mission in East Africa

and far and wide will be now without the light and guide which the late Allamah provided. However, we are confident that following the footsteps of this great scholar and inspired by his teachings and guidance BMM will continue to provide tabligh services with the same zeal, enthusiasm and efficiency.

Please accept heartfelt condolences on behalf of the Shī‘a Community of Mozambique and South Africa and from our Resident Alim Syed Akhtar Hassan Rizvi. We pray to Allāh ta‘ala subhānahu to give us all the courage to bear this sad loss with patience. May Allāh give the family of the late Syed Akhtar Rizvi Sabre Jameel and grant the late Syed Akhtar Rizvi a place within the proximity of our Fourteen Masumins. Amen!! Please convey our condolences to Syed Mohammed Akhtar Rizvi and the entire family of late Allamah.

May the work started by late Allamah Syed Akhtar Rizvi continue with the same zeal and efficiency if not greater. Amen!!!

We shall inshallah organise a Fateha Khwani tonight and Namaaze wahshat after the burial on Saturday.

We join in reciting Sura-e-Fateha for the Isale sawaab of Marhum Allamah Syed Akhtar Rizvi.

With salaams and duas.
Dr. Asgharali Moledina

* * *

19. Dr. Muhsin Alidina, New York

Salamun Alaikum

The hand trembles, the mind goes blank and words fail. Only one thought dominates; the thought of such a great star disappearing from the firmament of knowledge and erudition that spread far and wide. From the prisons of USA to the homes of West Indies, from

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

the Universities of Britain to the Hauzas of Iran, to the halaqas of Indonesia and Thailand to the remote corners of Africa, the name of ‘Allāmah Seyyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi was familiar through his writings.

The three decades that I personally was acquainted with the ‘Allāmah is but one individual’s experience. Multiply that thousands of times and ‘Allāmah is seen to have brought the LIGHT of Erudition of Ahlul Bayt where there was darkness and guided onto The Right Path those who were wayward. ‘Allāmah has achieved the status of a martyr who strove and spent his lifetime in the cause of the Almighty SWT. He has gone to the Heavenly abode where he will be greeted by The Prophet SAWW and Aimmah AS.

We have lost him and will miss him always. My heartfelt condolences to his family, to Bilal Mission and to his students the world over. ‘Allāmah’s spirit will be with us as we try and carry on his legacy.

Muhsin Alidina
New York

Dr. Muhsin Alidina was also in charge of the “question-answer” section of the website of Al-Khoei Islamic Center, NY. On the day when my father’s demise was announced, he wrote the following: Salamun Alaikum

By the time this e-mail was received, news had come that ‘Allāmah passed away. It is not easy to come to terms with this reality for Mawlana has been a beacon of light of erudition in the cause of Ahlul Bayt AS for four decades. Those of us who saw him, heard and learnt from his majalis, his classes, his books, his answers to questions cannot express our debt of gratitude. The magnitude of Mawlana’s impact can be gauged by the fact that in Guyana Shi‘ism

was accepted by those whose only contact was Seyyid's books, in the prisons of USA, inmates became Muslims and then Shī'as because of Mawlana's books. Indeed, his passing away leaves a yawning gap for the Shī'a and Muslim world.

The will of the Almighty SWT cannot be resisted. He has decided to take back His servant and we can only pray for the Marhoom who paved his way to Jannah in the proximity of Aimmah AS.

Indeed the passing away of an 'ālim creates such darkness upon earth that nothing can mitigate it.

Al-Imam Al-Khoei Islamic Center tonight, Thursday, Rabiul Thani 8, 1423, June 20, 2002, we shall remember the Marhum with Surat Yaasin and Fatiha and a special majlis Fatiha will be held on Thursday July 4, 2002 where Sheikh Fadhel Al-Sahlanī, Mawlana Anwer Ali and other 'ulamā' and scholars will pay tribute to Mawlana.

Please convey my heartfelt condolences to Seyyid Muhammad Rizvi who is headed to Dar-es-Salaam for the funeral. I would appreciate Mawlana Seyyid Muhammad Rizvi's e-mail also.

Muhsin Alidina
New York

* * *

20. Haj Hassan AM Jaffer, Mombasa

To: Maulānā Syed Muhammad Rizvi and the Family of Maulānā Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

From: The family of Ali Mohamed Jaffer Sheriff.

Dear Maulānā Saheb,

It is with considerable heavy heart that I get round to pen this letter to convey our sense of grief and sorrow at the passing away of

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Maulānā Saheb. Here we feel a personal loss since Maulānā Saheb enjoyed special relationship with my late father and interestingly, that relationship extended to three generations. In his demise, we feel a personal loss of our own family member, for such were the bonds.

Towards the end of April, this year, I was in Dar-es-Salaam when I called upon him to pay my respects. He was in such a relaxed and cheerful mood and in the presence of my Mama Haji Fidahuseinbhai and your brothers, we talked for an hour or so.

As I was proceeding for Ziyārat, Maulana Saheb handed me copy of the Bilal report and a letter for hand delivery to Āyatullāh Seestani in Najaf. As I recall, Āyatullāh Seestani personally opened the envelope, looked at the report and the letter and then smiled with a comment, “I shall reply to him”.

What is now left are all memories that takes me back to 1963 when I met him for the first time in Arusha and all that has transpired since. It is hard to reconcile to the fact that Maulānā Saheb is no more with us. Such is the Will of Allāh, to which we all have to submit.

My mother has specifically requested me to convey to you and through you to all members of the family her heartfelt sympathy and condolences.

We share in your loss and in your grief. We shall always remember Maulānā Saheb as we remember our late father and we pray for Marhum Maulānā Saheb. On behalf all family members, young and old, please accept our condolences.

The mission that he started has to continue and we all have to work together to keep the banner aloft. That is the best tribute we could pay to marhum

With heartfelt sympathies, salaams and dua,

Hassan Ali M. Jaffer, Mombasa.

21. Dr. Kazim Dhalla, Dar-es-Salaam

Dear Mawlana Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, Sayyid Zaki Imam, Sayyid Masood, Sayyid Murtaza and family.

Salaamun alaykum.

INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILA YHI RAJEEOON.

The profoundly sad news of Allama's demise left the entire Muslim Umma in a state of loss. Only Allāh knows how can we cope with his absence.

His passing away has made not only you and your family orphans but all who had the privilege of knowing him closely feel this pinch. To me, Marhum Sayyid wasn't only a teacher I was proud of being his student but also a fatherly figure.

I will always cherish the memories of those Saturday night classes and of being able to meet him whenever I came to Dar. There's so much I want to say but I just can't find the words and where to start.

I register my condolences with Imamul Asri wa Zamaan (atf) for having lost one of his highly learned, pious and fearless soldiers. Kindly accept our condolences and pass the same to your family.

We join hands with you in praying to Allāh (SWT) to accept our beloved Mawlana with His encompassing Mercy and to grant him place near the Ahlul Bayt (AS) for whom he dedicated his entire life. Ameen.

May the Almighty grant you and your family and all of us SABR to pass through this difficult phase of having to bear his absence and to protect us from His enemies, against whom Marhum Sayyid fought tooth and nail, by words and deeds. Ameen.

It will be an honor and privilege for me to be of any help to you and your family at this hour of grief. Please let me know if there is

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

anything I can do.

Salaams and duas to you and your family. Iltimase dua.
Kazim.

* * *

22. NABA Organization, Iran

INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAYHI RAJEUN

We express our deepest condolence on the passing away of a divine scholar and a theologian who passed his useful life in the spreading and propagation of the Qur’ānic educations and the missions of the Ahlul Bait (a.s.).

We express condolences on this great demise to our master, Imam Zaman (a.s.) and to his nearest relatives. We beg from the Almighty to grant the deceased loftiness and elevation in his grade and rank.

The members of the Naba Organization, in a gathering, recited Surah Fatehat-ul- Kitab for the deceased.

Naba Organization

* * *

23. Dr. S. Mohsen Razavi-Nejad, Ahlul Bayt World Assembly, Department of Africa, Tehran

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful
Surely, we are Allāh’s and to Him we shall return. (Holy Qur’an)

His Excellency Mr. S. Muḥammad Akhtar Rizvi
Salamun alaykum

The news of the demise of honorable professor (‘Allāmah) Mr. Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may Allāh bless his soul) was a really

saddening event for me and all world of Islam, especially Shī‘a world, who spent with patience almost one century to serve Islam and Ahl ul Bayt (as).

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to your Excellency, and pray to Allāh, the most Exalted, for promotion of his soul to a celestial rank, and fortitude for the members of his esteemed family.

Dr. Sayyed Mohsen Razavi Nejad,
Director for Department of Africa,
The Ahlul Bait (A.S) World Assembly

* * *

**24. Br. Jaffer Dalal,
Bilal Muslim Mission, Tanga Branch**

Now Maulānā is not amid us:

Bereft, he left us all;
We still needed him,
His going away makes an irreparable loss.
Inflicting irremediable wounds!

We but still needed him,
But Allāh wished otherwise,
He went, leaving behind a colossal gap,
A gap very hard to fill!

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

But then he was not an ordinary aalim;
A stature high he possessed
That of a pole-star,
Showing direction to the misdirected!

To the stranded he was a guide,
And many a friend he made,
Leading all to the straight path,
The path of Ahlulbait a.s.

Physically he is no more with us,
We still miss him ever so,
But in letters he still remains alive
Through the innumerable books he wrote.

Farewell Maulānā Farewell,
Panjatan may be eager to meet you so soon,
To welcome you for the heavenly abode!

**‘Allāmah Rizvi in the views of those
who met him or worked with him**

1. HI Syed Shamsḥād Husain Rizvi, Oslo, Norway

Maulānā S. Shamsḥād Ḥusain Rizvi, presently of Norway, narrates that when he went to Songea (Tanzania) for Ramadhān programs, he used to prepare the lessons in Urdu as well as English. After Ramadhān, he went to Dar-es-Salaam and met my father and showed his lessons to him. My father became very pleased with them and proposed that he would be useful for Bilal Muslim Mission. When Maulānā Shamsḥād hesitated that he might not reach up to his expectations, my father said:

“Once you embark on a task, the work itself teaches you how to do it properly.” Then he gave him own example: “When I first came to Africa, after the nights of destiny (of Ramadhān), I wrote a one page Eidu ’l-fiṭr community program in English for the benefit of the audience. By the time eid day came (i.e., after a week), I wrote and rewrote it six or seven times; and on that day of Eid, I just read from the paper. And look at me now: I just keep *al-Mizān*, which is replete with technical and philosophical discussion, in front of myself, read it once and translate it in English.”

Although Maulānā Shamsḥād’s appointment for Bilal Muslim Mission did not materialize and he ended up going to Norway, this advice and encouragement that he received from my father

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

motivates him even now.

Years later Maulānā Shamsihād met my father in Qum at the home of Mr. Anṣāriyān. After inquiring about his activities in Norway, my father said,

“When I received your magazine, *Safīna-e Norway*, my first impression was that this must be a dream. Such a well-designed magazine with a beautiful cover in three languages (Urdu, English and Norwegian) and good articles published from northern Europe – this can’t be less than a miracle! And then when I saw your name as its editor, I prayed for you and I indeed expected such tasks from you that is why I wanted to keep you in Dar-es-Salaam.”¹¹⁰

* * *

2. Dr. Mohamedraza Dungersi, NY

His tribute states:

My Teacher and Mentor

There are those moments in life when one looks back down the memory lane to evaluate and determine, those most singular events spent with personalities, who have had a major impact on one’s intellectual and spiritual growth and progress. When I do so, I recall most vividly those rare moments, way back then, that I had the fortune of being under the influence of none other than, Marhum Maulānā Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.

Maulānā Sayyid Saeed Rizvi impacted my life from two different perspectives: at an implicit level, as an eminent preacher and a skillful speaker, and at an explicit front, as a spiritual guide and one of the most prominent teachers I have ever come in contact

110 Personal email of Maulānā Shamsihād Ḥusayn to this author.

with. I will explain.

I had my first impression vis-a-vis Maulānā's position as a superb preacher in the years when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in the 60's. Maulānā then was the resident Aalim at the Khoja Shī'a ithnasheri Mosque, Dar-es-Salaam. During the events of the birth celebrations and martyrdom commemorations anniversary of the Imams (a.s), a few of us from the University would make a point to attend these majalises. It was then that we had a rare opportunity of listening to his most impressive talks, especially on the lives of Masumeens. This is not to underestimate other preachers whom I had the opportunity to listen to in my days in Zanzibar. My point is: the analytical approach, coupled with simplicity of language and the gracious style of presentation, under-girded with logic that he adopted, were to us significantly unheard of before. My interest in Islamic History got a boost that was to have a lasting effect; I gradually became a regular contributor to the Bilal Muslim magazine: *The Light*, founded and nurtured by none other than Maulānā himself.

That was then. But there was a relatively more exquisite experience under the tutelage of this great personality was about to occur. In early 80's, when I had just returned to Dar-es-Salaam from USA, on completion of my graduate studies, a valuable gift ended up at my doors! The then Chairman of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, the late Haji Fida Hussein Hameer, accompanied by Maulānā Rizvi came to me with an offer, to accept the position of the General Secretary of Bilal Muslim Mission, Tanzania. Prior to this, I had served in several community positions, like secretary to the Tablighi sub-committee, Dar es salaam Jamaat, but I felt nervous to be under the services of this great personality, Maulānā Rizvi. Why so? Maulānā had a pleasant personality but also known to be a strict disciplinarian. He was of quiet disposition but would take no

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

nonsense from anyone. This was to become even more apparent in the years that I worked with him at very close contact. My concern was: Did I really have that competence to serve under such a giant of a scholar? Nonetheless, I accepted the offer. I never ever regretted for taking that step. For the apparent fears that I had, were proved to be of no merit in the course of those years that I were to work under the – what I was to discover – a benign scholar, who had a heart of gold, ever ready to educate whosoever the person was.

This second encounter with Maulānā Rizvi was brief but fully eventful. For now, I was to work with him very closely. As the Chief Missionary of Bilal Muslim Mission, Tanzania, he was actively involved in the day to day affairs of the Mission. What was outstanding about his work ethics was that he would guide without wanting to micro-manage, and his guidance was through and with spirit of humility and sensitivity. He would make his stand known, suggest changes to be made, but do so with professional skill that would make me feel educated and truly put on the right track. I will give an illustration.

As the General Secretary, I had prepared a comprehensive annual report of the Mission’s activities, to be submitted at the Annual General Meeting of the Africa Federation, to be held in Mombasa, Kenya. Prior to the said meeting, Maulānā invited me to his office in his residence. He went all over the report. He complemented me but also suggested several corrections: major and minor. His thoroughness in looking at this report is illustrated by his questioning me on even the use of the word “brand-new” and why not just “new”!

Despite his busy work schedule, his age and his delicate health, Maulānā would be physically in attendance at several events, be it at Ikwiriri village or at meetings in Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa, Kenya. At the course of these meetings, I came to discover the diversity

of his knowledge in the fields of Islamic history, theology, jurisprudence, to mention but a few areas of his expertise. Needless to say, I was among those to benefit enormously from him. I will give one example.

We were on board a flight, flying back to Dar-es-Salaam from Mombasa. There were certain traditions pertaining to our Infallible Imams that I had heard from various scholars but which I could not comprehend and determine their authenticity. I took this opportunity and opened my doubtful mind to his attention, with due humility, of course. I feared reproach; instead, I had from Maulānā a very logic and well substantiated explanation that not only ended the doubts that I had in my mind, but fully enlightened me to my best conviction. Many more instances of this nature, I could have related, had it not been for the limited scope of this write up.

One advice that he gave me during our several discourses was that in matters of dialogues with potential reverts and converts, you need not impose upon them that they were wrong in their understanding of certain of their core beliefs. His advice was: give them the appropriate sources to go through, for them to discover the truth of the matter. Give them the opportunity to discover truth on their own effort up to when they come to you on their own, to submit to reality, through their conviction. As a matter of fact, whenever I had an opportunity to be in his company when he was having conversation with such individuals, it was this same approach that he used and that brought about so many reverts to the Madhab of Ahlul Bayt.

On a lighter note, Maulānā also had his own sense of humor. On one occasion, Bilal Muslim Mission had a tough time getting through a budget proposal for the mission. In nutshell, there was to be a financial crisis if our proposed budget was not approved. Indeed,

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

there was every possibility that this threat would become the reality. The Chairman of the Mission, Marhum Fida Hussein Hameer and myself, accompanied by the Treasurer, Marhum Muslim Habib, had to present our case to avert this apparent disaster. The task of getting this done fell on my shoulders. The encounter that followed was, to say the least, very tense. We had to fight tooth and nail to get our way through. Finally, we did find our way. The climax of this encounter was yet to come. As we came out of the meeting still in the state of tense mood. Maulānā, most unexpectedly, said: “Let us go and have ice-cream.” For a split of a second we were all speechless! We had always underestimated the compassionate and the jovial aspect of the character of this great personality. We were all put to ease. I don’t quite remember who commented jokingly: “Maulānās do not ever treat; they are always treated!” Maulānā burst into a laughter. I’ll always treasure that rare and memorable event. After all, we had our ice-cream from a nearby ice-cream parlor, bill fully paid by Maulānā.

Change is part of human life. I had never imagined that there would come a time that I would migrate to the USA for good. However, that happened in the year 1989. I had to give up those happy and spiritually elevating times at Bilal Mission. However, I still maintained a virtual connection with the Mission and Maulānā. I continued contributing articles regularly to *The Light* magazine. It was at that time that Maulānā proposed that I compose course material for Bilal Muslim Mission Correspondence School, on the lives of our 14 Masumeen for the converts and those interested in such a study. I felt honored to have received a letter from him, asking me to be a part of this course. In his letter, which I still treasure in my possession, as usual his advice and guidance was there. He specified the style, the scope and the structure of the course, making it very clear that this course was, to use his words “for youths not for

scholars.”

This course was to be in separate units: 14 in all, the first unit, on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his pure progeny), he had compiled himself. My assignment was to produce 13 Units. I submitted the draft of the first Unit to Bilal, expecting for massive corrections, but Maulānā approved it as it was. That was in October 1992. With his support and encouragement, I continued with this project, producing Unit after Unit, one at a time. Unfortunately, before I could complete all Units, Maulānā passed away. In honor of his memory, I continued with this task and completed the assignment. Recently, under the permission of Bilal Comprehensive School, the Da-es-Salaam Madressa put the 14 Units together and published a book titled *History of Fourteen Infillibles* (By Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi & M.M. Dungersi Ph.D.)

The last time I had the luck of meeting Maulānā was in the year when he was in Toronto, Canada and I happened to be there for an assignment. I was given to understand that he was not keeping well and maybe he would not be able to welcome visitors. Fortunately, I managed to get an appointment to visit him at Sayyid Muhammad’s residence. Physically, he was rather weak, but mentally as sharp as ever; as usual, full of enthusiasm to teach and guide. Sometimes during earlier stages of his work on *A History Of the Shī‘a People*, he had given Marhum Muhsin Alidina and myself, parts of the manuscript of the said book for our input. I took an opportunity to ask him about the fate of that work. His reply was it was ready for publication, with Sayyid Muhammad. That was that. I didn’t realize at that moment that that was to be my last meeting with this great man of Allāh.

Tragic was that day, the 20th of June 2002, for the Muslim community in general and the Shī‘as in particular. Maulānā Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi left this world to meet his Creator. Gone is

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

he physically, but his everlasting legacy, reflected through his innumerable and monumental writings and teachings, will overcome the limitations of both time and space. May Allāh award Maulānā Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi an everlasting peace and abode in the vicinity of our 14 Masumeens. Ameen

Mohamed Raza Dungersi Ph. D
4th Rajab1442 / 2nd February 2021¹¹¹

3. Haj Mohamed G.M. Dhirani

Haj Dhirani served as the Chairman of the Federation of KSI Jamaats of Africa (1983-1989 and 1995-2001). Towards the end of his term in 1989, he wrote this letter to my father when he was in India.

Dear Respected Maulānā Saheb,
Salamun Alaykum,

I pray and hope that this letter will reach you in your best of health and that of the members of your family with the grace of Allāh Subhanahu Wa Taala.

Now that my term as the Chairman of this Federation is due to end shortly, I am writing this letter to express my sincere gratitude to you for your cooperation extended to me.

When I reflect on the past, I remember vividly that I had come to the customs to receive you when you first arrived in Dar-es-Salaam in 1960s and since then our relationship has always remained very brotherly with respect to each other. You were always kind enough to help me in connection with my duties during the last so many years culminating in my present duties as Chairman of the Federation.

111 I am indeed grateful to Dr. Dungersi for writing this tribute upon my request for this book.

And during this period you were always ready to advise and guide me in many matters, specially religious, and your guidance were always perfect.

Yours is a dignified and respectable personality having fame internationally and I am indeed gratified that I had the privilege of working with you in the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. Your presence in the Mission brought honour and dignity to its image.

For all the cooperation, assistance and guidance that you personally extended to me, I express my gratitude with sincerity. In return, I can only pray to Allāh Subhanahu Wa Taala to reward you amply here and hereafter.

During our dealings, we had created a bond of brotherhood between ourselves and I will cherish this bond and will always remember you in my prayers for your good health, prosperity and success.

With Salaams and Iltimase Duas.

Yours brotherly,
Mohamed G.M. Dhirani

4. HI Maulānā Syed Muhammad Askari Zaidi, New Delhi

HI Maulānā Syed Muhammad Askari is a graduate of Ḥawza ‘Ilmiyya of Qum and, presently, the Principal of Jāmi‘a-e Ahlul Bait, New Delhi, wrote the following tribute:

“One of the good qualities of the late ‘Allāmah that I felt in him was that he would express constructive criticism to the person himself unlike the common trend of criticizing others in their absence. This happened to myself. During my tenure in Qum as the editor of *Tawḥīd Journal* [Urdu], I had started a series of article on aḥādith common between the Shí‘as and the Sunnis. In one of the

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

articles, I had translated a ḥadīth in a wrong way. The ḥadīth stated that Imam Ḥasan (a.s.) went for ḥajj by walking (from Medina to Mecca) ‘*wa ma’ahu an-najā’ib*’ – I had translated it as ‘even though honourable men were with him.’ I had taken the word ‘*najā’ib*’ as plural of ‘*najāb*’ in the meaning of noble or honourable men.

“About two or three years after the publication of that article, I met the Great Missionary in Qum at the office of *Tawḥīd Journal*. In that meeting, he pointed out my mistake and said that whenever the word ‘*najāb*’ occurs in the meaning of honourable men, its plural is not ‘*najā’ib*’, it is ‘*nujabā*’; and whenever ‘*najāb*’ occurs in the meaning of camels, then its plural is ‘*najā’ib*’. So the ḥadīth would mean that Imam Ḥasan (a.s.) went for ḥajj by walking ‘even though camels were with him’ – the whole purpose of walking to Mecca was not for lack of means of transportation but for the sake of love of Allāh.

“He was the first, and probably the last, elderly scholar who directly pointed out my mistake to me.”¹¹²

* * *

5. Dr. S. Manzoor Naqi Rizvi, New Jersey, USA

Some Events & Statements

Regarding the practicing ‘ālim, a genius, ‘Allāmah Rizvi

It was in August 1978 when in the USA, everyone was talking about Iran and Khumayni. All of sudden, at the New York Kennedy Airport, I heard the people shouting that “Khumayni has come! Khumayni has come!” Everyone was going in that direction. That is when we realized that it was ‘Allāmah Rizvi who had arrived to New York for programs in Ramadhān. This was his first blessed arrival to America. After that he regularly visited the US and mostly would stay with us; and people still remember him.

112 Maulānā Qāzi Muḥammad ‘Askari, “Khashiyyat-e Ilāhi awr Muballigh-e A‘zam,” in *Tawḥīd Mail*, vol. 4 (15 Sept-4 Oct 2002) no. 29-30.

(1) Muslim Foundation Inc organized a summer camp for youths probably in 1980 in an area which had been rented for this purpose. About 70 to 75 youths aged 10 to 13 attended that camp. Maulānā Rizvi had been invited to this camp. On the first day, the program ended in the evening. Unfortunately, on that day, ‘Allāmah had a foot sprain and so he went home. Next day, when we reached the camp, the lecture had already started and we heard the teacher saying that “No, the prophets are not infallible.” He had thought the “Masumeen are only 14; therefore, the other prophets cannot be ma’sūm.” Maulānā Rizvi was so much sad and concerned that in spite the pain in his foot, he decided to stay at the camp for the whole week.

(2) We have been organizing a qasidah (poetry) program at Mehfil-e Shah Khurasan since 1984. Fortunately, in one of such occasion, Maulānā was in New Jersey. There wasn’t enough time to compose a new qasida, so Maulānā telephoned his son in Tanzania and asked him to fax his old qasidah. Maulānā recited that in the program and received loudest accolades from the audience.

(3) The weekend school started in Bloomfield, NJ, by four families. Then in 1984 it was moved to Mehfil-e Shah Kurasan and the number of students increased with the efforts of the youths, especially Salman Shamsi and Hasan Rizvi. Their need for a text book was felt more than before. By chance Hasan got hold of the late Maulānā’s book, *Elements of Islamic Studies*. This book was very well received by both the teachers and the students. It proved very useful and the students benefited quite a lot. It is still in need therefore we got 10,000 copies published through TTQ Inc.

(4) As I had mentioned earlier, whenever the Maulānā would come to New Jersey, he would mostly stay with us. We got the opportunity to observe the Maulānā from close: by looking at his deeds and actions as a servant of the Imam, I could converge the

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

greatness of the personality of the Infallible Imams.

In his speeches and writings or his personal life, you can observe the righteousness (*taqwa*), contentment, maturity, greatness and depth. I can't remember him ever saying anything negative about others.

Maulānā was a great ‘ālim, a pious personality, a living organization, and a community by himself. He was not interested in forming organization but in serving the din of Allāh.

No one can doubt that Maulānā spent his whole life in loyalty to Muhammad and Al-e Muhammad, and in their service and in their defence - and therefore the pen and tablet of destiny belong to him. It is difficult to count his books, booklets and articles but you can find his books and articles on all important issues.

It has been commonly observed that when a person attains higher status, he considers others as lesser than himself. But a great personality is extraordinary: even when he attains higher status, he does not consider others as lesser and therein lies his true greatness. Maulānā Rizvi, despite his uniqueness, piety and greatness, he would deal with those who are his equals as well as with the young ones with same love and concern. Youths could openly talk with him, attend his gatherings and he would treat them equally.

Maulānā was a thinker and reformer who would always promote the cause of the faith and the community with a heart and mind ever concerned for the people.

May the Almighty place him in the highest place.

* * *

Dr. Manzoor Rizvi also wrote an Urdu poem in tribute of ‘Allāmah that he read at the 40th day program in Toronto and it was also printed in special issue of the *Tawhīd Mail* (15 Sept.-4 Oct. 2002) in Lucknow:

اک کوہ سر بلند زمیں پر گرا ہے آج
 علماء کی مجلسوں میں محرم پیا ہے آج
 بارش ہے آسمان سے اشکوں کی ہر طرف
 منعموم و سوگوار سی باد صبا ہے آج
 وہ رہنمائے قافلہ علم اور خرد
 وہ تھک کے راستہ میں کہیں سو گیا ہے آج
 افریقہ ہند و پاک اور امریکہ ہر جگہ
 ماتم پیا ہے عالم کرب و بال ہے آج
 لاکھوں سے اہلبیت کے رشتہ کو جوڑ کر
 دست اجل کے جور سے ٹوٹا ہوا ہے آج
 مضمون کوئی اسکے قلم سے نہ بچ سکا
 ابر کرم سے دین نہایا ہوا ہے آج
 جو ہاتھ وقف مدح و ثنائے حسین تھا
 جنت پہنچ کے مدح علی لکھا رہا ہے آج
 وہ مرد عہد ساز مجاہد وہ دیدہ ور
 جلتے رہیں چراغ صدا دے رہا ہے آج
 ہے دین اہلبیت پہ ظلمت کی اک گھٹا
 خورشیدِ ارجمند کہیں جا چھپا ہے آج
 اک فلسفی مفکر اسلام مجتہد
 دانشورانِ خلد سے خود جا ملا ہے آج
 مرتے ہیں عاشقانِ محمد بھلا کہیں
 جاگا تھا رات رات ذرا سو گیا ہے آج
 وہ تھا سعید اختر چرخِ سخنوری
 جانے سے کہکشاں میں اندھیرا ہوا ہے آج
 وہ حلم بردباری وضع داری نیکیاں
 سارا جہان اسکو دعا دے رہا ہے آج
 منظور ایسے عالم دوراں سے چھوٹ کر
 ہے زندگی کا لطف نہ کوئی مزہ ہے آج

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Here is the translation that I have done:

The very tall mountain has fallen today
‘Ulamā’s gathering is mourning today
 The sky is showering tears all over
 The morning breeze is gloomy and sad today
The guide of the caravan of wisdom and reason
Is tired along the way and gone to sleep today
 Africa, Indo-Pak and America, everywhere
 People are lamenting and mourning today
After joining thousands to the Ahlul Bayt
Alas, death has separated him today
 No theme was untouched by his pen
 The faith is saturated by his wisdom today
The hand that was dedicated to praise Husayn
Is writing the praise of ‘Ali in Paradise today
 He was the trend setter, a mujāhid, a visionary
 Keeping the lamps shining is his call today
Ahlul Bayt’s *dīn* is covered by dark clouds
The noble sun is hidden somewhere today
 A philosopher, thinker of Islam, a mujtahid
 He has joined the Heavenly sages today
Devotees of Muhammad, do they ever die?
After night vigil, he is just resting today
 That was Saeed Akthar, the star of oratory
 With his passing, the galaxy is dark today
His patience, forbearance, humility, charity
Everyone is praying and blessing him today

By losing such a world class scholar, O Manzur
Neither is there any joy nor happiness today

* * *

**6. HIWM Syed Mohammad al-Musawi,
Secretary of World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League, London.**

Bismillahir Raḥmānir Raḥīm; wal-ḥamdu-lil-lahi Rabbil
‘ālamīn; wa ṣallal-lahu ‘ala Muḥammadin wa Alihit ṭāhirīn.

It is the tradition of our scholars to keep alive the memory of the past scholars in order to take that as an example of those who have served [the faith] in the past. Among those who especially offered great services to Islam and Muslims in Africa and other places is the late honourable al-‘Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi (may Allāh shower His mercy upon him).

I heard of him quite a lot before having met him; and that was after my feet set on the land of India in 1979. And there was correspondence between us before we finally met on a number of occasions. Our meetings were extensive even before the establishment of the World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League in London.

When he was residing in the UK, he was an active member of the steering committee which was formed to establish the WABIL. He was an instrumental member of the committee of WABIL which consisted of 25 active Shī‘a ‘ulamā’ of the world.

The respected Sayyid Rizvi used to closely work with the respected S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm who was later assassinated in Sudan in the 1988. The Sayyid was with S. Muḥammad Baḥrul ‘Ulūm and S. Mahdi al-Ḥakīm (may Allāh has mercy upon them all).

Establishing the WABIL was an extensive and time-consuming task, and Sayyid Rizvi played an instrumental role in those meetings and gatherings. After the establishment of the WABIL in August

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

1983, Sayyid Rizvi had a very active role [as its Director General] in establishing and maintaining links with various personalities and organizations around the world.

Even in the meetings of WABIL in Sayyida Zaynab in Syria and in Bombay, India, Sayyid Rizvi played an important role as an active member of its executive committee. He was also an essential part of the administration at WABIL’s office in London. In short, he was a prominent figure of the WABIL during his entire stay in London.

We developed a deep brotherly bond as I found him to be a sincere servant of the faith, devoid of any desire for worldly titles or any political aspirations. I held great respect for him and I wished to be a supporter of him in serving the faith and the believers. Almighty Allāh gave me an opportunity to visit Gopalpur, the place he grew up and lived, and was able to see from close his services for the believers in that region.

I always cherished his visits whenever he came to Bombay when I was in India; and his visits were an opportunity to renew our link and seek his counsel on matters related to the community, etc.

I must say that the personality of the glorious ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi was a unique personality, and his loss has created a great void in the Shī‘a community in Africa, India and other places.

And I pray that may the Almighty grant to his honourable son, Ḥujjatul Islam wal Muslimeen Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi, the opportunity to be on his path, and he is on that path, and that He may grant him further success in serving the faith and the believers.

May the Almighty bless the deceased with vast mercy and elevate his status in the Paradise; and grant him the intercession of Muḥammad and Al-e Muḥammad, and to be in their proximity in the presence of the Powerful King; and may Allāh give me the opportunity to be close to him in this world and the hereafter.

May shower His blessings upon Muḥammad and his pure progeny.¹¹³

* * *

7. Sr. Zishan Karim

‘Allāmah, We Mourn You

Sayyid Saeed, born in nineteen twenty seven
Africans and Asians, to him were all even
Excellent of all muballigheen
Every act done so neat and keen
Death parts him from us, Alas!

A man of great honor, great respect
Kindness flowing in every aspect
He has left a heart breaking effect
To the natives, he spoke their dialect
As to what he was, we now reflect
Rarely will we find another, Alas!

Ready to give up all comfort
In order for Islam to get support
Zealous in his rapport
Very truthful, never to distort
Is he replaceable? Alas!

* * *

113 I am grateful to HI Syed Mohammad al-Musawi for sending his audio message in Arabic upon my request for this book. What you see is its English translation.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

8. Dr. Kazim Dhalla, Dar-es-Salaam

‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (r.a.) was a household name we used to hear frequently as kids, being discussed by our elders after his majalis of shahadah or wiladah of the holy personalities (a.s.). This created a sense of awe in me for the ‘Allāmah whom, at that time when we were still in our primary and secondary school days, I could not even dream of meeting, let alone come close, to him.

Somewhere around 1988/89, we were a group of 7 young medical students at the University of Dar Es Salaam’s Muhimbili campus. By Allāh SWT’s Grace and Mercy, we all had a strong inclination to religion and started regular academic discussions on Islamic sciences. The group comprised of Murtadha Alidina, Karim Manji, Rizwan Hamer, Sajjad Manji, Jameel Kermali (Kabana), Jaffer Dharsee and myself. Murtadha Alidina was our teacher and someone we used to look up to for our religious questions. We used to have long discussion sessions on Saturday nights mostly at the house of our dear departed friend Jameel Kermali (may Allāh SWT raise his station in barzakh). Our discussion would span across the common Islamic sciences namely Fiqh, Tafseer, Akhlaq, Aqaaid etc as well as discuss literary works of Shahid Mutahhari and other scholars. We were also active in community work focusing our energies in youth affairs.

One good day, our silent mentor, Dr. Shiraz Datoos suggested we meet ‘Allāmah Rizvi and request him to conduct the weekly sessions for us. It appears that Dr. Shiraz had already spoken to ‘Allāmah about us and our activities. This was the beginning of a lasting close association and relationship with this great man who in many ways influenced our thinking and activities.

We used to look forward to the Saturday night classes with the

Sayyid. Initially, the classes were very formal and strictly academic focusing on ‘aqā’id, Islamic history, tafsīr al-Qur’ān and akhlāq. In these sessions, he would discuss topics and issues not commonly discussed in general congregations or even in higher classes in the usual madaris, like badā’, tark-e awla, ‘iṣmah, philosophy of miracles, and of course his favorite was history. We would have special sessions on the history of a Ma‘ṣūm whose wiladah or shahadah fell on that week. From time to time someone would have a fiqhi question and Sayyid would aptly answer with references and this is where we saw the humility of this great scholar. If he did not know the answer offhand, he would humbly admit it and ask for a few days to find out and by the next class the answer would be ready with references. Sometimes he would ask one of us to pull a book from his large library and after flipping a few pages he would read the answer directly from the book. We would refer to “Sayyid Akhtar” for any socio-religious and sometimes political issues. I believe he too cherished our presence and gave these sessions great importance. He took time to prepare for the classes in spite of his busy schedule and would be very apologetic if due to health or other reasons he was not able to conduct the classes. These classes continued till we graduated from the medical school and once we settled in our professions and families, the frequency reduced but our relationship continued. I believe my dear brother Sajjad Manji benefited the most from Sayyid’s ocean of knowledge later on when he used to be his scribe in translating *Tafsīr al-Mizān*.

As we became more acquainted to Sayyid, he became more of a fatherly figure to us than a scholar. There would be no Eid without visiting him and eating the delicious rice custard. I remember how I insisted he should recite my nikāḥ and in spite of his ill health at that time, he took the trouble of attending the ceremony and recited the nikāḥ. I will always cherish that. There are many incidences one

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

could narrate showing the different facets of this great and humble scholar; however, we will only mention three.

1. Sayyid was gifted in mastering several languages.

Of note was his mastery of the Swahili language. Sayyid had commissioned a well-known, native African Shaykh to translate an Arabic book to Swahili. I saw the Shaykh sitting on the floor with great respect and humility reading the Swahili translation of the Arabic passage he translated. After listening for a while Sayyid stopped him, pointed out a subtle grammatical error he made in the translation which gave a completely different meaning and asked him to rewrite it. Note here that Swahili grammar is difficult and the translator was a native Swahili speaker.

2. He had deep love for the household of the holy Prophet (s).

I vividly remember that day, it was a Sunday. We had finished our Zohrayn prayers and were “chilling” at the Dar Es Salaam’s masjid compound with friends. Suddenly, the Sayyid entered the compound running towards the masjid, literally running, bare feet, no ‘amāmah on his head and weeping profusely. We went after him inside the masjid. My first thought was someone very close, perhaps one of the sons, must have passed away. He sat on the pulpit and for almost 5 minutes he wept without uttering a word. “They bombarded the shrines of Aba Abdillah and Abul Fadhlil Abbas and kidnapped Sayyid Khui” is all he could say.¹¹⁴ I had never seen Sayyid in this state before. He recited the maṣā’ib of Aba Abdillah and after that several activities ensued. This manifests his deep love for Ahlul Bayt and how much this incident affected him.

114 In his dairy, my father wrote that he was initially told by a prominent member of the community from London that Saddam’s forces had “bombarded” the shrines of Karbala. And so his immediate reaction was what you see above. It was later on that he was told that the shrines have not been bombarded rather they were fights inside the shrines and, as a result, many bullets have damaged various walls -- some such locations have been preserved by the present administration.

3. His passion and love for Tabligh.

Rizwan Hamer and myself went to bid farewell to Sayyid, as we were leaving the country for our postgraduate specialist training to Zimbabwe. His parting advice was for us to continue with Tabligh activities in Zimbabwe. He had 4 Zimbabwean native students graduated from Bilal Muslim madressa and asked us to team up with them. Soon after settling down we managed to trace Sayyid's students and through them got introduced to Fatema Zahra (a.s.) Centre. With Sayyid's encouragement and guidance we managed to work closely with the center which, by the Grace and Mercy of Allāh SWT and extreme hard work of the co-founders, Shk. Abdulla Makwinja and Mrs. Hajra Makwinja, very sweet fruits are coming out. The madhhab of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) has spread far and wide in Zimbabwe and without doubt, Sayyid had a large share in this.

We soon realised that there was no Shona translation of the holy Qur'ān (Shona is the official native language of Zimbabwe). We therefore wanted to embark on the translation project after consulting Sayyid and getting his permission and blessings. We were sure Sayyid would be thrilled with the idea. On one of my vacation trips to Dar-es-Salaam, as usual, I visited Sayyid and briefed him of the Tabligh activities in Harare. I quickly brought up the subject of the translation expecting a huge smile and a pat on the back. "Do you know Shona yourselves?" He asked. "No" I answered. "How will you translate the holy Qur'ān then?" he asked. Our plan was to give it to one of his students to translate from English to Shona. He was not happy with this idea at all. His concern was who would edit the work if none of us knew the language. I insisted that we really needed the Shona translation even if it was not very accurate. His final words of wisdom - and indeed these were the final words as we never met again after that - were "If you don't get water will you drink poison?" I understood what he meant. This statement, worthy

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

to be written in golden ink, echoes in my mind from time to time and has helped me make some principal decisions in my life.

A lot can be said about our experiences with Allamah Sayyid Rizvi but suffice it to say here that I truly miss his fatherly presence and spiritual radiance. I stop to recite sura al Fatihah first at his resting place before proceeding to my own father.

The full extent of this great man’s contribution, achievement and impact will only be realized on the day of judgment. May Allāh SWT raise his status in barzakh, closer to his ancestors, the Ahlul Bayt of the holy Prophet SAWW. Finally, we owe our sincere gratitude to Dr. Shiraz Dato for having introduced us to this great scholar of his time and many generations to come.¹¹⁵

* * *

9. Br. Mustafa Fazal, Dar-es-Salaam

Bi Ismihi Ta‘ala.

I felt greatly honoured when Maulānā Sayyid Mohammed Rizvi requested me to write few words in memory of his late father, for the biography that he was writing.

I have known the late Allama and his family since the late 1950’s, when I was 8-9 yrs. His first posting as resident ‘ālim, was to Lindi Jamaat, in southern Tanzania, in 1959.

Being the Resident ‘Ālim, amongst other duties, he was supposed to run the Jamaat’s madressa: teaching Qur’ān, Diniyāt and Urdu language. He was helped in this by late Mulla M P Daya, whose services many of Lindians still recall. (May the Almighty elevate his status amongst the Chosen Ones.)

115 I am gratefully to Dr. Kazim Dhalla for writing a report on the weekly classes that my father used to run at home for the medical students. He has actually done much more than what I had asked. May Allāh bless him for this.

‘Allāmah used to teach Urdu to the higher class students. I together with Mustafa Pirmohamed (now in Orlando) and ‘Allāmah’s eldest son, (late) Syed Ali Imam, were amongst his students.

Syed Ali Imam and I were great friends, as a result I was very close to the family. I used to go to his house, he would come to mine. So ‘Allāmah had a special affection for me, since those days in Lindi and even later on in my life in Dar-es-Salaam, as his student and an adult. Sadly, Syed Ali Imam succumbed to some illness in his 30’s in India. ‘Allāmah even wrote to me from India informing me about my friend’s illness and subsequent demise. Let us pray that may the Almighty grant the marhūm *maghferat* and high status in Jannat.

Upon his arrival in Africa, ‘Allāmah had a vision for the tabligh work and propagation of the true Islam amongst the local people. Now, to attain that goal, knowing Swahili, the local language, was inevitable. ‘Allāmah took up this challenge, studied the language, sat for the Government exams for the adults and passed with flying colours. No ‘Ālim in the history of our Khoja community had ever achieved this milestone. Even the Government officer in charge was surprised to see the zeal and enthusiasm in ‘Allāmah.

In mid 1960’s, Allama was transferred to Dar-es-Salaam as the Resident ‘Ālim. Coincidentally, I too moved to Dar-es-Salaam for my secondary education, staying with my uncle. Again, I was his student at the madressa. There used to be annual exams for all madressas in whole East Africa Jamaats. The best student would be awarded a trophy. Alhamdu-lil-lāh, getting trained under ‘Allāmah, I sat for the final exams and achieved 1st position and was awarded the trophy (see the photo below). It was a real proud moment for me -- credit, of course, goes to my teacher, ‘Allāmah.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



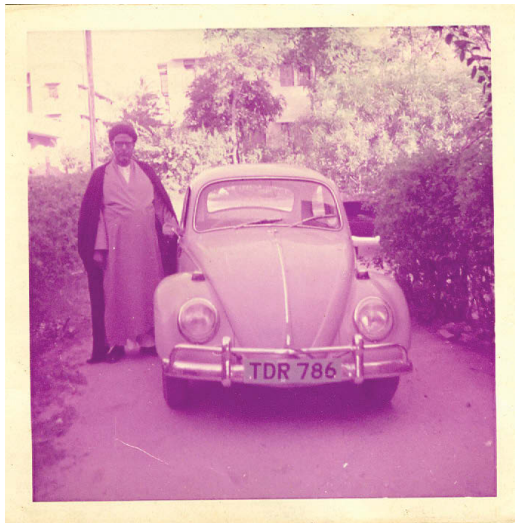
Mustafa Fazal receiving the award by Maulānā Agha Haider saheb while his teacher and mentor ‘Allāmah Rizvi looks with a smile.

At this juncture, I would like to mention one incident, which will reveal another one of his qualities. As we know, in the holy month of Ramadhān, every night, there is the recitation of du‘ā-e Ifitāh in the mosque. Different reciters would be given chance to recite. I was still at the madressa, a 14 years old boy. I told ‘Allāmah about my desire to learn and recite that du‘ā. He personally trained me for that, and told me to contact the person in charge, to allow me to recite. Mukhi Saheb was in charge; so I approached him. He was a bit hesitant, because no one of my age had ever recited. I told him that Maulānā had personally trained me, so he can ask him. Having got assurance from ‘Allāmah, I was given a date. Come that night, and al-hamdu-lil-lāah, I recited, quite ably, getting applause from the public. For such a young boy, to recite among adults was not common those days. Now, to my surprise....what? I saw ‘Allāmah himself had come to witness how his student was performing. He was so pleased, he really commended me and me, my joy, knew no bound, my heart was full of happiness, seeing ‘Allāmah taking so much personal interest in encouraging me.

The Setting Star

Those days in 1960's, religious education was compulsory in schools. We had many students in Azania Secondary School where I was studying. 'Allāmah used to come personally to impart knowledge. He would bring printed notes and would distribute them among the students. Now, in those days, there were no computers or good machines. 'Allāmah would type on stencils himself, and print on a cyclostyle machine, in the Jamaat office. Occasionally, I would help him...

In late 1960's when Bilal Mission was established, its town office is where the present day Ebrahim Haji Hospital is and I used to work part time as typing and accounts clerk. During those days, I would observe how deeply engrossed 'Allāmah was in running the daily activities of the mission. At times writing articles, answering queries, for hours locked in his cabin. 'Allāmah even learnt how to drive, was given a car, would drive up and down to the Temeke ḥawzah and mosque centre. Again, a very rare thing in our community to see an 'alim drive.



Such was 'Allāmah, the way I knew him. A great legend, my

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

mentor, a great muballigh full of enthusiasm, zeal and commitment. An amazing inspiring personality. In his various activities, be it publications, lectures, ḥawzah establishments, the tabligh work, translations etc. ‘Allāmah has engraved his name in GOLD, in the annals of Shī‘a history. Indeed we are so indebted to him. In all these acts of *sawab e jariya*, ‘Allāmah, you have made yourself immortal. My many many salutations to you, who helped me acquire something, mould my life, your memories always lives on. May the Almighty rest your soul in eternal peace, elevate your status amongst the chosen ones. Such was the ‘Allāmah that I knew, the late Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

* * *

10. Shaykh Abul Qāsimi, of Sazmān-e Farhang-o-Irtibātāt, Tehran

“I can confidently say that most of those who are working as religious scholars and missionaries in East Africa, South Africa and the Horn of Africa are somehow, directly or indirectly students of ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi.

“He could have easily acquired a seat of academic teaching or a seat of leadership, he could have even comfortably settled in England or USA because of his command of the English language and a higher level of knowledge, as was done by some of those who were lesser than him in knowledge. Nonetheless he choose this part of the region despite of his level of knowledge – and this shows that nothing but the sense of duty and love for serving the path of the Ahlul Bayt and Shī‘ism, could have motivated such a great man to come to Tanzania and that also fifty years ago when the resources were not that great as far as basic facilities like electricity, clean water, and problems like malaria, etc. This demonstrates the spirit, the faith and strong belief of the noble Sayyid!”

* * *

Chapter Eight

Posthumous Awards

The Bearers of the Qur'ān

**Appreciation of the Ḥawzawi Personality
on International Scene**

**Ijāzāt of Riwāyat & Umūr-e Ḥisbiyyah
by Various Marāji‘ & Senior Scholars**

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ
وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

“Allāh will raise those who believe
and those who have been given knowledge in rank,
and Allāh is Well Aware of what you do.”
(The Qur’ān 58:11)

The Bearer of the Qur'ān

An international event for the appreciation of the 'bearers and reciters of the Holy Qur'ān' of the year 2002 was chaired by Dr. Sayyid Muhammad Khātimi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

‘Allāmah Rizvi was among those awarded as “the bearer of the Qur'ān” for his contribution towards the Qur'ān by translating *Tafsir al-Mizān* of ‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī.

The award was presented posthumously by President Khatimi and was received in trust by Mr. Anṣāriyān. The award consisted of a certificate and 14 golden coins.

See the certificate on the next page.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

قرآن کریم این ودیعه کرامت را لے و کتاب سرا سر اور و حکمت و سرچشمہ زلال ہدایت
در مبارک ترین ماہ در شعبے کہ برابر ہزار ماہ است بر قلب مطہر محمد مصطفیٰ (ص) نازل شد۔
قرآن کریم نازل شد تا اندیشہ با استعداد ہی خفہ انسانیت شب زدہ را با نورانیت
پایمانے انسان سازش بیداری، سکوناً و حرکت و حیات بخشد۔ انوار در خان آیت
روحش قرآن کریم ہموارہ چراغ فروزان راہ عالمان حدیث و دانشمندان و ہنرمندان
حق طلب در طول اعصار و قرون بودہ است و عاشقان و خادمان آن کتاب ہدایت، با
خلوص تام نسبت بہ تعلیم و ترویج، ترجمہ و تفسیر، حفظ و قرائت، تدبیر و تہلیل و تفسیر
این کتاب شریف ہمت گارہ اند و عشق و ارادت خویش را بہ ساحت مقدس قرآن کریم
بر اثبات رسانند۔

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

ایک کہ شاہانیت حق تعالی و جاکسری ہمت بلند خود بہ شرف خدمتگداری بہ ساحت
مقدس قرآن کریم نائل شدہ لید و بہ عنوان مترجم علوم قرآنیہ
در سار خادمان پر افتخار این کتاب ارزندہ الہی قرار گرفتہ لید۔ ضمن تقدیر از ہنرمندی دوام
توفیقات شا را در خدمت بہ قرآن شریف نشر و ترویج فرمائے آن از در گلا خداوند
متعال مستمت می دارم۔

سید محمد حسینی
رئیس جمہوری اسلامی ایران

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

The Noble Qur'ān is a precious divine gift, a Book full of light and wisdom, and a source of the fountain of guidance which was revealed in the most sacred month, on a night that is better than a thousand months upon the pure heart of Muḥammad Muṣṭafa (s). The Qur'ān was revealed so the hidden thoughts and potentials of human beings who are in slumber could be awakened by the light to generate movement and life.

The shining light of the reviving verses of the Noble Qur'ān for centuries have always illuminated the path of the sages who seek God, and of the scholars and artists who seek truth.

Those who love and serve this book of guidance have put forth their best efforts, with total sincerity, to teach, promote, translate, interpret, memorize, recite, design, bind and scribe this Noble Book thus they have demonstrated their love and devotion to the Qur'ān.

Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimīn marhum

Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi


Now that you, with the grace of the Almighty and your determination, have attained the honour of being in the service of the Noble Book as the translator of the Qur'ānic sciences, you are considered among those who served the precious divine book. While recognizing your good-self, we pray to the Almighty for granting you perpetual opportunity to be in the service of the Noble Qur'an by promoting its values.

Sayyid Muḥammad Khātimi
President, Islamic Republic of Iran

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

CALL FOR PAPERS

المجلس العالمي
المصطفى
Department of Research



Allameh Sayyid Sa'id Rizvi /1927-2002

Printed papers and letters of articles

- 1-Biography and scholarly life
- 2-Review of books and literature
- 3-Review of Islamic works and scholarly achievements
- 4-Review of approach in scholarly works
- 5-Theological, jurisprudential, principal of jurisprudential thoughts
- 6-Ethical, moral and pedagogical thoughts
- 7-Allameh Rizvi's contribution to the spread of Islam and the school of Ahl Al Bayt in Africa (including Bilal Muslim Mission)
- 8-Factors and contributions to the success of Allameh Rizvi in the propagation of Islamic teachings
- 9-Introduction to his instructors and students

Conditions for Submission of Articles

- 1-The articles must be limited to a maximum of 25 A4 Pages in Word Document
- 2-The abstract of 300 words must be submitted as an A4 page by November 21,2011
- 3-The articles must be original and not printed or submitted elsewhere

* Prizes will be given to selected articles.

Selection Committee
Email: cmr_hozavil@iu.ac.ir
Tel: 98 251 7172 251, 258, 285
Fax: 98 251 7172 248

Deadline for Submission of Articles
January 20, 2013
Event Date: March 1, 2012



Appreciation of the Hawzawi Personality on an International Level

Al-Mustafa International University, under the Ḥawzah ‘Ilmiyyah of Qum, had started an annual event for “*nikūdāsht chehrah-hāy māndgār ḥawzawi dar ‘arsah-e baynul milal* – celebrating the renowned personalities of the seminary in the international arena.” The purpose of this event is to recognize ḥawza personalities with the intention of inspiring and encouraging others in the field of tabligh. This event was organized by the Research Department of Al-Mustafa International University under the supervision of its head, HI Shaykh Muḥammad Ja‘far ‘Ilmi. (Dr. ‘Ilmi was the first head of the Islamic College for Advanced Studies, London)

In its second commemorative event in the year 2012, the organizing committee decided to celebrate two personalities: Dr. ‘Allāmah Shaykh ‘Abdul Hādi Fadhli and ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. It was interesting to note that two non-Iranian personalities were celebrated in this event: the first was originally from Qatīf (Saudi Arabia) and the second was originally from India. The event was held on **8 March 2012 / 15 Rabi II 1433** at the venue of Imam Khomeini College for Advanced Studies, Qum.

The University issued a call for papers on the life and thoughts, works and accomplishments, and issues related to his *tablighi* activities in Africa. Dr. Muḥammad ‘Ilmi first contacted me by phone regarding this event, and later sent an official letter inviting me to speak at the event.

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi



IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HIGH

AL-MUSTAFA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Ref. No.: 507/10509

Date: 2012/01/23

Respected Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi,

Salaamun alaykum

We hope this letter finds you in the best of health and faith. We would like to inform you that Al-Mustafa International University intends to hold a convention that aims to celebrate the renowned personalities of the seminary in the international arena. We would like to commemorate the sincere efforts of your father, **Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi** in this convention and would like to invite you to speak therein. We would highly appreciate you accepting our invitation.

Time: Thursday 8st March, 2012

Place: The Imam Khomeini College for
Advanced Studies, Qom, Iran



Yours Sincerely,

Al- Mustafa
International University

P.O Box 439
Mullim Blvd, Qom-IR, Iran

Tel. +98 251- 717273

Fax. +98 251- 7172222

Website. www.miu.ac.ir

Email: info@miu.ac.ir



Banner on the stage with pictures of the two personalities being commemorated.



Audience during the early moments of the event.

A shaykh from Arabia, Maulana S. Shamim-ul-Hasan and I in the 1st row. Mahdi Rizvi and his friend and student, Zaki Imam, S. Somji, A. Dharamsi, M. Dhirani, Shk. Musabbah, M.T. Anshariyan and others can be seen in the 2nd row.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Since ‘Allāmah Rizvi came from India and worked mostly in Africa, Al-Mustafa International University had invited some dignitaries from the Indian subcontinent and Africa to be part of this event. Among those who attended from Africa were Haj Anwarali Dharamsi (chairman of the Africa Federation), Shaykh Murtadha Alidina (Resident ‘Ālim of Dar-es-Salaam Jamaat), Haj Mohamed Dhirani (former chairman of Federation), Br. Shabir Somji (chairman of Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania), and Shaykh Musabbah Shaban (of Bilal Muslim Mission).



Some African shaykhs with me,
Anver Dharamsi (far left) and Shabir Somji (far right)

The University had also invited some scholars from India and Pakistan: HI Maulānā Syed Shamim-ul-Ḥasan who is the current head of Jawādiyya Arabic College of Banaras and HI Maulānā Syed Iftikhār Shah Naqvi of Pakistan, who represented HI ‘Allāmah S. Sājīd Naqvi, the head of Tehrik-e Nifaz-e Fiqh Ja‘faria, Pakistan.

My siblings from Africa and America had also been invited, and those who attended were my brothers Zaki Imam, and Masud Akhtar, and my son Muhammad Mahdi as well as a few of my relatives in Qum, my nephew Kazim Saeed, niece Farida and her husband, Imon Rizvi, and my cousin’s husband, Wajeeh Zaidi.

Posthumous Awards



The program started with the recitation of the Qur'ān, and an introduction by Shaykh Dr. 'Ilmi. Followed by a speech by Āyatullāh Shaykh 'Ali Raza A'rāfi, the head of Al-Mustafa International University. Then the son of Shaykh 'Abdul Hādi Fadhli gave a speech in Arabic about his father, and then I was invited to give a speech in which I talked about my father in Farsi.



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



This was followed by a speech by Āyatullāh Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Ali Tashhīri who knew both personalities personally.



Posthumous Awards

After the speeches, two books specially prepared for that occasion were unveiled: *Manshūr-e Fadl* about the life, thoughts and selected writings of Shaykh Fadli and *Akhtar-e Tābān* about the life, thoughts and selected writings of ‘Allāmah Rizvi. The organizing committee used linguistic expertise to select titles based on the names of the two personalities.



“Akhtar-e Tābān” means the Shining Star

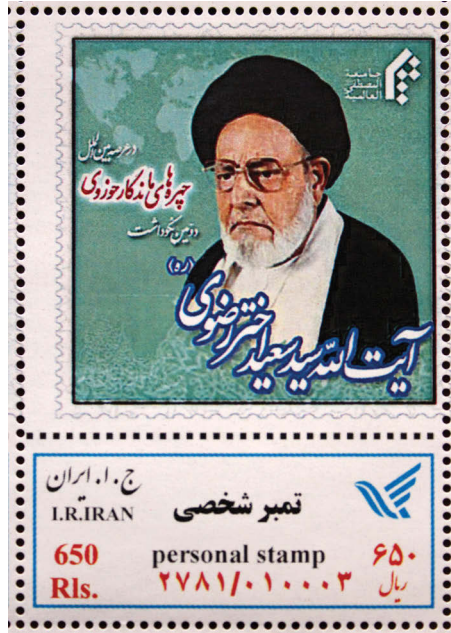
Thereafter, a documentary that was prepared for both personalities were shown. (During the launch of the book, *A History of the Shī‘a People*, we prepared the documentary’s English subtitle and it can be viewed at <https://al-m.ca/biography>)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Besides the two books, a commemorative postage stamp for both personalities was unveiled during the program by Āyatullāhs Taskhīri and A‘rāfi.





Present author in conversation with Āyatullāhs Taskhīri & A‘rāfi.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

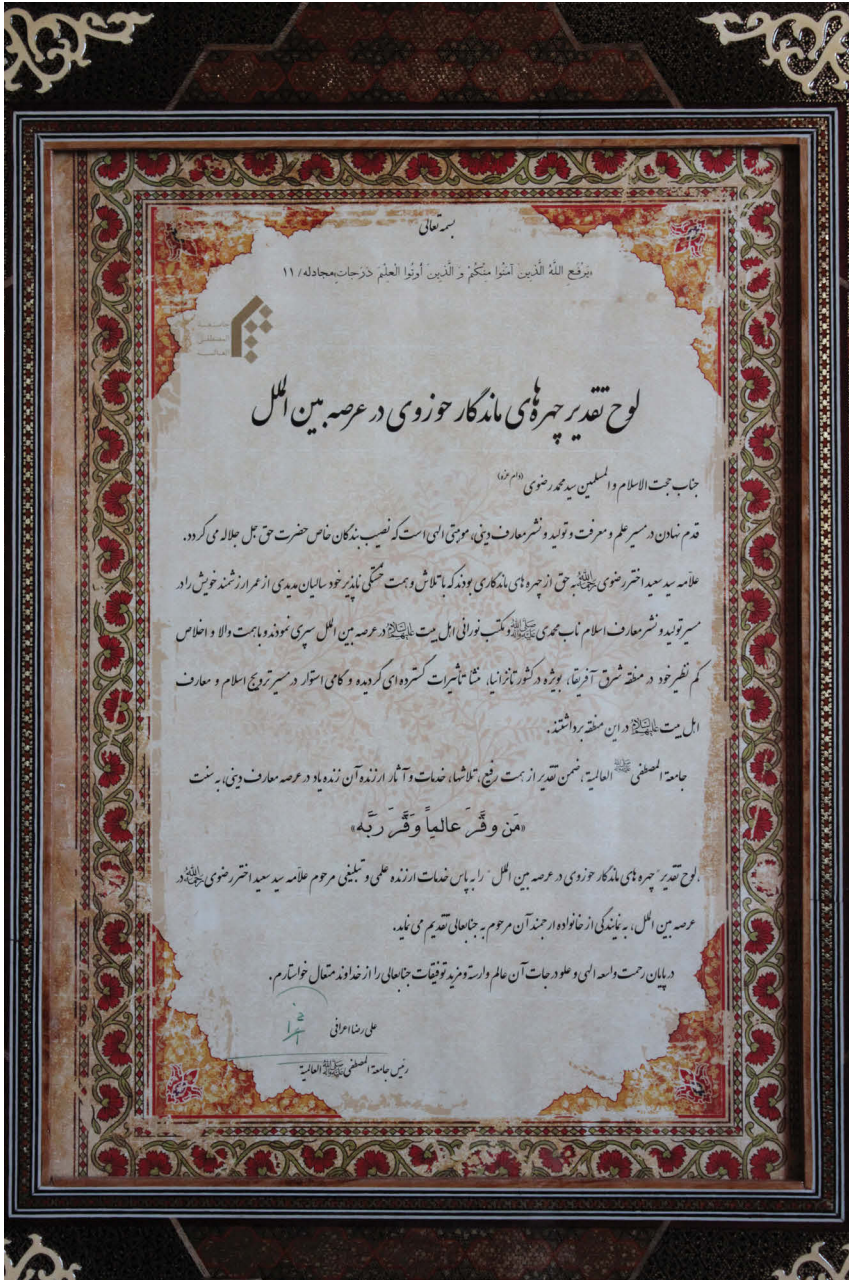
At the end of program, the significant guests were invited on stage.



Iftikhar Naqvi, A'rafi, Shamimul Hasan, myself, Salman Naqvi, Murtaza Alidina, Masud Akhtar, 3 Shaykhs from Hijaz, Somji, Zaki Imam, Anver Dharamshi, Mahdi Rizvi

Then the son of ‘Allāmah Fadhli was awarded the Appreciative Frame by the senior ‘ālim from Pakistan and the present author was awarded the Appreciative Frame by Shaykh ‘Amri from S. Arabia.





بسم الله

بِذِيْعِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَفْنَا مِنْكُمْ وَ الَّذِيْنَ اَوْثَقَ الْعِلْمَ ذِلْحَاتِ بِنَجَادِهٖ ١١

لوح تقدیر چهره های ماندگار حوزوی در عرصه بین الملل

جناب جت الاسلام و المسلمین سید محمد رضوی ^(دامت برکاته)

قدم نهادن در سیر علم و معرفت و ترویج و نشر معارف دینی، موقی اهل بیت است که نصیب ندگان خاص حضرت حق جل جلاله می گردد. علامه سید سعید اختر رضوی ^(رحمتهما) جناب از چهره های ماندگار می بود که با تلاش و بهمت شخصی پلنری خود مابین معبدی از اعرار از شهدا خویش را در سیر ترویج و نشر معارف اسلام ناب محمدی ^(صلوات الله علیهم) و کتب نورانی اهل بیت ^(علیهم السلام) در عرصه بین الملل پستی نمود و با همت والا و انحصار کم نظیر خود در منتهی شرق آفرینا، بیرونه و کوششهایشان، نشانیات گسترده ای گردید و و کانی استوار در سیر ترویج اسلام و معارف اهل بیت ^(علیهم السلام) در این منتهی بر داشتند.

جامعه المصطفیٰ العالمیه، ضمن تقدیر از بیست رفیع تلاشها، خدمات و آثار ارزنده و آن زنده و با در عرصه معارف دینی به نسبت

«مَنْ وَفَّرَ عَالِمًا وَفَّرَ رَبِّهٖ»

لوح تقدیر چهره های ماندگار حوزوی در عرصه بین الملل را برپای خدمات ارزنده علمی و تبلیغی مرحوم علامه سید سعید اختر رضوی ^(رحمتهما)

عرصه بین الملل، به نمایندگی از خانواده ارجمند آن مرحوم به جناب عالی تقدیم می نماید.

دیلمان دست واسد الهی و علو درجات عالم دارت و در توفیقات جناب عالی را از خداوند متعال خواستارم.

علی رضا اعرافی

رئیس جامعه المصطفیٰ العالمیه

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

In the name of the Almighty
“Allāh elevates those who believe among you
and those who have been given knowledge.” (58:11)

The Appreciative Plaque for Lasting Ḥawza Personalities on the International Scene

The Respected Ḥujjatul Islām wal Muslimeen Sayyid Muḥammad Rizvi (may his honour continue).

Stepping onto the path of knowledge and wisdom, and producing and spreading the religious knowledge is a Divine grace which comes into the share of the chosen servants of Almighty Allāh. ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may Allāh’s mercy be upon him) was indeed among the lasting personalities who spent many years of his valuable life in producing and disseminating the teachings of the pure Islam of Muḥammad (s.a.w.) and the shining school of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) on the international scene. With his lofty aspiration and exceptional sincerity, he became a source of wide-reaching impact in East Africa, especially in Tanzania, and he took unwavering steps in the path of promoting Islam and teachings of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) in that region.

While recognizing the extraordinary determination, struggles, services and valuable results of the unforgettable personality in the field of religious knowledge, and in following the Prophetic tradition,

“Whoever honours an ‘ālim has indeed honoured his Lord,”
Al-Muṣṭafa International University presents this “Appreciative Plaque for Lasting Ḥawza Personalities on an International Scale” in recognition of the valuable scholarly and missionary services on the international level of the late ‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi (may Allāh’s mercy be upon him) to your good self as a representative of the honourable family of the deceased.

In the end, we pray for the vast Divine mercy and elevated status of the late noble scholar, and for your increased success from the Almighty.

‘Ali Rizā A‘rāfi
President, Al-Muṣṭafa International University

* * *

Posthumous Awards

All praise belongs to Almighty Allāh for granting me the honour of standing in that august audience to talk about my great father and to receive the appreciation plaque for his outstanding service to Islam and Shī‘ism on the international arena. ‘Allāmah Rizvi indeed deserved this recognition which reflects his endeavors and sincerity in serving the cause of His Lord.

There was also a trophy accompanying the plaque:



The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi

This event was also reported in various print and social media, including *Safīran-e Nūr* and *Shafaqna*.



عالمان دین؛ مروجان اسلام ناب در جهان

اهمیت آموزش تفسیر به حافظان قرآن کریم

آنندالله (عربی: اسرار) روزنامه‌های مستشرقان را در تمام دنیا از طریق رساله‌نامه و روزنامه دیگر این نشریه‌ها را منتشر می‌کند. این نشریه‌ها در تمام دنیا از طریق رساله‌نامه و روزنامه دیگر این نشریه‌ها را منتشر می‌کند. این نشریه‌ها در تمام دنیا از طریق رساله‌نامه و روزنامه دیگر این نشریه‌ها را منتشر می‌کند.



امام خمینی (ره)؛ بنده خالص پروردگار
 آن مقام معظم‌عالی، روح‌القدس، در تمام دنیا از طریق رساله‌نامه و روزنامه دیگر این نشریه‌ها را منتشر می‌کند. این نشریه‌ها در تمام دنیا از طریق رساله‌نامه و روزنامه دیگر این نشریه‌ها را منتشر می‌کند.

Ijāzāt of Riwāyat & Umūr-e Ḥisbiyyah by Various Marāji‘ & Senior Scholars

‘Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akthar Rizvi was granted with ijāzāt (authorization) for *riwāyat* (to narrate aḥādīth through the chain of narration from the issuer of ijāzah to the compiler of the early books of ḥadīth). There were also ijāzāt in which the senior marāji‘ had allowed the ‘Allāmah to collect religious dues and use and disburse them as per the religious requirements with conditions specified in the ijāzah-e umūr-e ḥisbah. There were also ijāzāt enabling him to judge and decide religious matters. In all, there were 20 ijāzāt given by 17 marāji‘ and senior scholars:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Ijazah:</u>	<u>Grand Āyatullāh’s Name:</u>
1388-01-21/1968-04-20	qazāwat	S. Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm ¹¹⁶
1390-06-21/1970-08-24	qazāwat	S. Abul Qāsim Khū’ī
1391-07-10/1971-09-01	ḥisbah	S. Maḥmūd Shāhrūdī
1392-09-06/1972-10-14	riwāyat	S. Abul Qāsim Khū’ī
1400-04-27/1980-03-15	ḥisbah	S. M. Kāzim Shariatmadari
1406-01-14/1985-09-29	riwāyat	S. M. Riza Gulpaygānī
1409-01-18/1988-08-31	riwāyat	S. Shahābuddin Mar‘ashi
1410-01-07/1989-08-10	riwāyat & ḥisbah	S. A. A‘ala Sabzwāri
1414-02-01/1993-07-21	ḥisbah	S. M. Riza Gulpaygānī
1414-05-19/1993-11-04	riwāyat	Shk. Muḥammad ‘Ali Arāki
1414-05-20/1993-11-05	ḥisbah	S. Muḥammad Rawhāni
1414-06-21/1993-12-06	riwāyat & ḥisbah	Shk. Makārim Shirāzi
1414-07-01/1993-12-15	ḥisbah	S. ‘Ali al-Ḥusayni Sistānī
	ḥisbah	Shk. Waḥīd Khurāsāni

116 See the image and translation on p. 128 for this and the next item.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Ijazah:</u>	<u>Grand Āyatullāh’s Name:</u>
1414-09-04/1994-02-15	ḥisbah	Shk. Fāzil Lankarāni
1414-09-15/1994-02-26	ḥisbah	S. ‘Ali al-Ḥusayni Sistānī
1418-03-06/1997-07-12	ḥisbah	Shk. Luṭfullāh Ṣāfi
1418-10-01/1998-01-30	ḥisbah	Shk. Mirza Jawād Tabrīzi
1420-11-14/2000-02-19	ḥisbah	S. M. Sa‘īd Ṭabāṭabā’i
1421-03-19/2000-06-22	riwāyat	S. M. Sa‘īd Ṭabāṭabā’i
1388-01-15/1968-04-14	riwāyat	S. M. Mahdi Shirāzi



‘Allāmah Rizvi with ‘Allāmah S. ‘Abdul ‘Azīz aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī
(See his ijazah for the present author on the opposite page)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله الذي صغرت في عظمته عبادة العابدين وحصرت عن شكر نعمته
 السنة الحامدين وقصرت عن وصف كماله أفكار العالمين وحسرت عن
 إدراك جلاله أبصار العالمين والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا ونبينا
 محمد سيد الأولين والآخرين وعلى عمر الطيبين الطاهرين المنزهين
 عن الرجس نبص الكتاب المبين ولا سيما ابن عمر وخليفته من بعده سيد
 الوصيين وإمام المؤمنين ولعنة الله على مناويهم ومبغضهم أجمعين
 إلى يوم الدين .
 أما بعد فقد استجازني الشاب الذكي والفاضل التركي والمهذب
 الصفي الذي جمع بجمه وجهله بين الطارف والتلبد والقديم والجديد
 من الدروس الحوزوية والدراسات الأكاديمية السيد محمد الرضوي
 ولاغرو فانه ابن العلامة الجليل والباحث النبيل زين الأفاضل فخر الإمام
 قدوة الفضلاء المحققين عمدة العلماء المبرزين صاحب المؤلفات الكثيرة
 والكتب الشهيرة عز الشريعة مروج الشريعة السيد سعيد اختر الرضوي
 اللكهنوي . العلم المشهور والمرابط في الثغور مد الله في عمره وبتعبنا
 بطول بقائه ، فالشبل من ذاك الاسد وسالك ناهج الاسد آخر الله
 به عيون ابية وجعله ذخراً للامة وفخراً للملته .
 وقد أعزت له سدده الله خطاه وبلغه مناه أن يروى عن عن شني
 واستادى شيخ الكل في الكال سلطان المفهرسين شيخ الباحثين حجة المؤثر
 قدوة النسابين خاتمة المحدثين العالم الرباني الشيخ آقا بزرك الطهراني
 المتوفى ١٣١٣ ذوالحجة ١٣٨٩ له صاحب الذريعة وطبقات أعلام الشيعة
 قله ورام فضله عنى عنه ١٤٠٤ لله بطرقه المذكورة في مستنجد المطرعة
 (الاسناد المصنفى إلى الالمصطفى) وأوصيه بتقوى الله وتلازمة الاحتياط
 عبد العزيز الطباطبائي
 ١٤١٥ شعبان



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Chapter Nine

Personality,

Family

& Photo Album

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Personality

Struggle & Sincerity:

‘Allāmah Rizvi was an embodiment of the constant struggle to uphold Islam with total sincerity and reliance on Allāh’s will.

He was a hardworking person, constantly improving his skills and field of knowledge. He was a good teacher and strict disciplinarian as attested to by those who worked or studied under him.

Exceptional Memory:

Almighty Allāh had blessed my father with an exceptional memory. It was only in the last two years of his life that he started forgetting recent things, but his memory of the past was still intact. He never forgot a person’s face and name; he could easily recall and recite long poems that he had studied during his school days. I have mentioned some examples earlier in this book. One more example comes to mind when he was writing *A History of the Shī‘a People*: when he wrote about Abu Firās al-Ḥamdāni (d. 357 AH) who was a great poet as well as a great warrior. His *qaṣīdah ash-Shāfiyyah* in 58 verses in response to an ‘Abbāsi poet is very famous. Abu Firās entered Baghdad with 500 horsemen with swords drawn, and recited his poetry. ‘Allāmah Rizvi did not need to look at the reference, he just wrote the translation of some of those verses by memory! Later on, while editing for the final print, I added the references to that poem. (See *A History of the Shī‘a People*, p. 106-107.)

My father had mentioned an interesting story about his memory: The famous ‘ālim of Gopalpur, Āyatullāh S. Rāḥat Ḥusayn Rizvi, was planning a booklet to be published on the 1300th anniversary of Karbala. He wanted to include the prophecy of Imam Ḥusayn (a)’s martyrdom in the Old Testament part of the Bible but he could

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

not locate it. My father, who was only 15 years old at that time, came forward and offered to locate it. Āyatullāh Rāḥat Ḥusayn was surprised and said, “You can locate it?” My father replied, “Yes, I can show it to you.” He took the Bible and opened the relevant chapter and verses, and gave it to the Āyatullāh who praised him for it.

Maintaining Family Ties (*Ṣilatu ’l-Riḥam*):

‘Allāmah Rizvi was very particular about maintaining ties with relatives. Wherever he travelled, if he knew of a relative whom he had not seen for a long time, he would make a point of seeking them out and meeting them. Same goes for his friends. Notes in his diaries show that whenever he went to Gopalpur, his first task would be to go and pay condolence visits to the relatives and friends of those who had passed away. Even his travels to places like Karachi and Lahore would have scheduled slots to visit relatives and close friends. He also maintained ties through letters.

‘Allāmah Rizvi not only maintained ties but was also charitable throughout his life in helping relatives who were in need. In this aid process, he was not alone; my mother was an active partner in sharing whatever the Almighty had given to them with the less fortunate ones amongst the relatives.

Accountability in Charity:

His concern for the welfare of the community is clear from the narration of his life in the pages of this book. In the matters of charity, he was very particular about maintaining accounts and reporting to the donors, as we saw especially in his diary entries in Lindi and later on.

* * *

Skh. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ibrāhīmi, one of the officials of Ahlul Bayt

Personality, Family & Photo Album

World Assembly (Tehran), who was then in charge of international relations, makes an interesting note about my father's personality. He writes that ABWA would help many people who were engaged in propagating Shī'ism in their own regions. Of course, the help by ABWA was not very substantial. But according to Shaykh Ibrāhīmi's observation, 'Allāmah Rizvi was the only person who would send details of the project (e.g., census of the Shī'as in Tanzania and the translation of books into Swahili) and would actually return the leftover money if it was not used on those projects!¹¹⁷

* * *

There is an interesting correspondence between my father and the finance department of ABWA, a copy of which he brought to Toronto for me, mentioning that it may prove useful to me in the future. It shows that ABWA had sent some funds for a specific project and the finance department kept sending him reminders requesting reports for the use of the funds; except that the amount they noted was twice that of how much was actually sent. So my father reviewed his files, prepared a detailed account and sent it back to them with an interesting remark: "You had sent me x amount of dollars and are asking me for accountability of an amount which is much more than that. I didn't know that your dollars lay eggs and multiply! And if this is how you conduct your affairs, then accept my resignation from ABWA." This must have caught the attention of senior officials and the matter reached to the head, Āyatullāh Taskhīri. Upon investigation, they found that the accounts department had mixed up two individuals with the same last names from the African continent and were asking for accounts of the other person from my father. They apologized to my father for the mix up, and during the next conference in Tehran, Āyatullāh Taskhīri personally apologized for it.

117 Based on a note sent to me by Shaykh Ibrāhīmi.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

My Father’s Advice to Me:

It is difficult to write about the father who was a world figure among the Shī‘as. Do I write about him as an author or orator, an ‘ālim or a muballigh, a teacher or a mentor, one who worked for and promoted charity openly as well as secretly; do I talk about his humility or his sincerity, his humour or his firmness in discipline, his courage and strength to face difficulties, or his submission to Allāh’s will in face of tragedies? He was for me a loving father as well as a source of inspiration and guidance at all stages of my life.

Here, I would like to share with you the advice that my father gave me in 1972 when he took me to Qum for my studies. I was only fifteen years old at that time. When I was bidding farewell to my family at Tehran’s Mehrabad Airport, my father told me three things.

I imbibed his advice in such a way that it became a second nature to me; to such an extent of forgetting that moment until after a seminar in Toronto in 1986, when an elderly member of the audience came forth and praised me by remarking: “In my whole life (and my hair has turned gray), I have not yet seen an ‘ālim having the courage to publicly respond to a question by saying, ‘I don’t know, I will look it up and then let you know.’”

For me this response was very natural; there was no hesitation in saying ‘I don’t know; and I will find out for you.’ It was then that I was reminded of the three advices my father gave to me at the Tehran Airport:

1. First, do not write to me for every small issue that you will encounter; from now on, you will have to try to deal with them yourself;
2. Second, concentrate on your studies and gaining knowledge; do not concentrate on oratory, otherwise, you will become distracted and you will learn to speak but will be lacking in your

Personality, Family & Photo Album

knowledge. Gain solid knowledge first and then you will be able to speak.

3. Third, if you ever find yourself in a large audience and you do not know the answer to the question(s) put forth to you, then do not hesitate in saying, 'I do not know.'

It was only after I started studying *Nahju 'l-Balāghah*, that I came across a similar advice given by Amīru 'l-Mu'minīn 'Ali (a), "No one should feel ashamed of saying 'I do not know' when he is asked a matter which he does not know." (Saying no. 82)

* * *

During my first vacation trip back to Dar-es-Salaam, my father advised me that whenever I start a new textbook, try to understand the style and methodology of the author: how he approaches a subject, then goes through the evidences and finally how he reaches to his conclusion. If you are able to master the style of the writer, then it will be easy to study the textbook, perhaps even without a teacher.

* * *

Interestingly, the choice of leisure reading of my father and myself was the same: detective novels. Once a week, I would go to the public library of Dar-es-Salaam and pick two or three books that he and I would read. He also used to tell me that whatever I like to read, "don't hide it from me." He wanted to know what his son is reading! This is an advice for each parent: you should know what your child is imbibing into his mind and heart.

When I look back at my life, I can never thank my father enough for the best advices that he gave to me; and, of course, I have to always thank Almighty Allāh for giving me such a great father and mother. He indeed lived and died with grace.

* * *

It has been observed in certain segments of the Shī'a world

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

that when a father dies, the son becomes the heir of the institution irrespective of his ability or seniority. I am proud to be son of a father who never even once let my siblings and I think of his position in the Bilal Muslim Mission as *gaddi-nashini*, that we would inherit it after him. I cannot thank Almighty Allāh enough for finding for me new ways to serve His religion as soon as I finished my studies in Qum. Of course, my love for Bilal Muslim Mission is that of a brother for a brother and so I have always been supportive in whatever ways possible, and even now pray that the tree planted by my father will grow tall and strong under his able students and disciples.

On a lighter note, once someone asked my father, “Why did you send only one of your sons for religious studies?” He replied, “One sacrifice for the community is more than enough!”

* * *

His Devotion to the Imam of the Time (a):

The impact and influence of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s pen was also blessed by the special grace of God’s Ḥujjat, Imam al-Mahdi (may Allāh hasten his appearance). Here I would like to present a dream and two incidents that he had written about himself.

The Preamble:

“Upon the question of Jābir bin ‘Abdullah (r) about *‘ulu ‘l-amr minkum* - those in authority among you,’ the Holy Prophet (s) named the Twelve Imams and also described the long Occultation of the Ṣāḥibu ‘l-Amr (a). Jābir asked how will the people benefit from him during the Occultation. The Prophet (s) replied, ‘The way the people benefit from the sun when it is hidden behind the clouds.’

“There are thousands of events which show how the sincere believers and pious ‘ulamā’ of the past and the present have benefited from the fountain of grace and how Allāh’s Ḥujjat (a) has helped his Shī‘as in difficult situations.

Personality, Family & Photo Album

“This writer is not worthy of even becoming a sandal-bearer of the pure believers who have been blessed by Wali ‘Aṣr (a) or of the pious ‘ulamā’. Nonetheless, I have approached the Present Imam (a) in various situations and those difficulties were solved in ways that couldn’t happen without the invisible hand. Here I am writing two or three events to prove that if a sinner like me can be blessed by the grace of the Imam (a), what about those who are indeed closer to the Imam in their *imān* and action.

The Dream:

“I was probably 10 or 12 years old when I had a dream in which I saw people running to one direction. When I inquired about it, I was told that they are going to welcome Imam Mahdi (a). At that moment I was studying my lesson, in the dream; and stood up to join the crowd. I was still closing the book when I saw the people coming back and there was a greatly luminous person leading them. I was stuck with awe and frozen in my place while the book was still open in front of me. When that great personality came close to me with calm, he asked: ‘What are you reading?’ I was reading a book on Arabic literature and mentioned its title. He said, ‘Open the book and read.’ I opened the book and he read two lines of poetry from it:

سَأُنْبِئُكَ عَنْ تَفْصِيلِهَا بَيَانٍ أَخِي لَنْ تَنَالِ الْعِلْمَ إِلَّا بِسِتَّةِ
ذُكَاءٍ وَحِرْصٍ وَاجْتِهَادٍ وَبَلْغَةٍ وَارْشَادِ اسْتَاذٍ وَطَوَّلِ زَمَانِ

*O brother! You can't achieve knowledge except by six things
I will inform you of those points precisely by a description:
intelligence, love for wisdom, hard work, and sufficiency
guidance of a teacher and a reasonable duration*

“Then my eyes opened.”¹¹⁸

118 Hand written notes about some events of his life.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Two Incidents Re: *Itmām-e Hujjat*

In the 1954 Muḥarram issue of the weekly *Ridhwān* of Lahore published a supplement entitled “Khār-o-Gul” which consisted of objections on Shī‘a thoughts and history. ‘Allāmah Rizvi was asked by some elders of Pakistan to respond to these objections. His responses were published in the monthly *al-Jawād* from March 1955 to March 1958. These articles were published in book form as *Itmām-e Hujjat* in 1986.

‘Allāmah Rizvi wrote: “These articles were written at a time when not many reference books were available to me. In spite of that difficulty I am grateful to Almighty Allāh that my replies were sufficient and comprehensive enough that the scholars and speakers from Indo-Pak to Africa were able to benefit from them. However, there were two occasions when writing the response without referring to the actual references [quoted by the editor of *Ridhwān*] was not possible. I did not have those references and there were no good libraries in our area that would carry those books. In both instances I sought help from Ḥazrat-e Šāḥibul ‘Asr (a) and with his grace, my problem was solved immediately and unexpectedly.

* * *

“The first incident happened when I reached to the point where the editor of *Ridhwān* had quoted from *Rijāl Kashshi* [a Shī‘i reference on biography of the companions] that Imam Husayn (a.s.) had addressed the Shī‘as and said, ‘O Shī‘as, you intend to kill to me...’ I did not have a copy of *Rijāl Kashshi* in order to verify the truth of this statement, and so my writing stopped. That same evening, I went for a walk and paid a visit to a relative’s home. Inside the house, in a corner of the court-yard, I noticed some old scattered papers discarded as useless items. I gathered those papers, took them home, and arranged them in their proper order; and, amazingly, it was the entire book of *Rijāl Kashshi* published in Calcutta! [There

Personality, Family & Photo Album

is no such statement that the opponent had apparently quoted from *Rijāl Kashshi*.] I thanked God for the grace of the Wali of our time (a.s.) and had the book bound...

* * *

“The second incident happened when I reached to the point where the editor of *Ridhwān* had translated a statement of Imam Husayn (a) from *Majālisul Muttaqīn* supposedly saying that ‘O Shī‘as, you have killed me and also my family.’ The actual statement was: ‘O people, you have killed my Shī‘as and also my family.’ In order to verify the authenticity of the statement and its correct translation, I needed to see the statement of the Imam in Arabic but I did not have any book with this statement of Imam Ḥusayn (a) at that time. I put down my pen and asked for the grace of Ṣāhibul ‘Asr (a.s.). When my mother saw that I have stopped writing, she asked me to go to Ushri (a village five miles away where my maternal grandfather’s house was located) for some task. I followed my mother’s command and went to Ushri. After conveying her message, I sat for a while and, just to pass my time, I pulled one book from the bookshelves of my grandfather. I looked at the title: it said *Maqṭal Abu Makhnaf* [a very prominent book on Karbala]. When I opened it to a random page, the first statement was from Imam Husayn (a.s.) in which he says, ‘O people, you have killed my brother, my children and my companions.’ I thanked God for this divine help; borrowed the book and returned home...”¹¹⁹

* * *

The prayers for his vision:

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s trust in the Prophet as the *wasīlah* is also visible in his prayer to regain his eye sight as I have described in the events of 1989 in chapter six of this book.

* * *

119 S.S.A. Rizvi, *Itmām-e Ḥujjat* (Faizabad, Nur-e Islam, 1986) p. 14-16.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

A Shining Star Even After Death

I would like to end this section with an email I had received on 28 November 2012 from Hujjatul Islam Wal Muslimeen, Syed Murtaza Nūrī, the director of WOFIS, about a dream in which he saw my late father:

Dear and respected Brother, Hujjatul Islam Janab Rizvi (may Allāh protect him and may his *tawfiq* continue).

Salaamun ‘alaykum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh.

My dear brother Agha-e Rizvi, I saw a dream a few days ago and upon waking up, I decided to narrate it for you since it revolved around your respected father (may Allāh’s mercy upon him and may his soul be blessed).

I saw a dream that I was sitting behind my desk at the office. Of course, the office was very different and very beautiful, clean and impressive. You came in and informed me that “my father has come and wants to see you.” I became very happy and looked forward to see him when all of a sudden I saw him coming towards me, calmly and gracefully.

The respected Agha-e Rizvi (may his soul be blessed) had a balanced physical form and had a white robe which would immediately catch your attention, very opulent and richly decorated. His face was bright. He came close to me and I moved towards him to welcome him; I hugged him tightly and cried like a friend who complains to his friend for having missed him. I said to him, “Agha-e Razavi, we have become lonely, we have become lonely.” He said something to console me but I can’t remember the words. Then he stood up, made the handkerchief wet and placed it on my head. In my dream, I thought of that as a sign of love.

Then I woke up from my sleep in state of extreme happiness. I consider this dream to be a very good dream for two reasons:

Personality, Family & Photo Album

First of all, Agha-e Razavi (may his soul be blessed) was from the personalities who had spent his life with numerous challenges and difficulties in defending Shi'ism, the Holy Prophet, Hazrat 'Ali (peace upon them both) and the Infallible Ahlul Bayt. And so he deserved such a bright face and richly decorated dress. Secondly, the respected Razavi (may his soul be blessed) was from the descendants of the Master, the Eighth of Allāh's representatives -- I believe that insha Allāh we are blessed with the special attention of the Eighth Imam (a) and will continue with that blessings.

Since this was a good dream, I wished to narrate it to you.

Was-salaam 'alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.

Murtaza Nūrī

An Open Book: Memories of My Grandfather

Below is the article written by my daughter in 2020 on the death anniversary of my father:

Sitting at a desk, lines of black ink appearing on page after page. A magnifying glass resting on a folded newspaper at a bedside table. Weetabix or toast at breakfast, chai and two digestive biscuits at tea-time. Captivating anecdotes at dinner tables anywhere he went in the world. A penchant for remembering exact dates of events past. And a deep, deep love of reading books. These are some of the childhood memories I have of visits with my grandfather.

Books are what I think of most when I reflect upon my relationship with my grandfather, my Dada, Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi. Whether he was writing a book or reading one, he himself was an open book, enthusiastic about life yet honest about reality.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

It has been almost two decades since Dada passed away in 2002. We were still mourning the loss of our grandmother, Dadee, a few months before, when the void in our lives expanded.

Despite living far apart, my grandparents based in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, and us in Vancouver then Toronto, Canada, we were close. My three younger siblings and I enjoyed the several months they spent with us every few years, and the times we met up in Africa or at our ancestral hometown of Gopalpur, Bihar in India. The settings changed, but the fullness that the presence of grandparents brought to our lives, is missed to this day.

These past few weeks I have been thinking of Dada in particular, not only because of his upcoming death anniversary, the day before Father’s Day, but also because of the recent events surrounding racism in America and beyond.

While it is heartening to see more awareness developing in the public, it is sorrowful that it has taken so long for this learning (and unlearning) to happen. And it will be a long journey still. Additionally, when other minorities engage in racism against Blacks, and when individuals in our very own Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari communities do so, the anti-racist values my grandfather fought for decades ago come to mind.

As a young Indian man in the late 1950’s, Dada immigrated to East Africa as a resident ‘alim amongst the Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari Khojas, and became the first from the community to reach out to black East Africans for tabligh. He faced opposition from some people due to their racist attitude, but he found support among religious-minded leadership and marched forward.

Within a week of his arrival in Lindi, my grandfather taught himself Swahili and started reaching out, succeeding in the conversion of tens of thousands of Africans, and African diaspora, to Shī‘a Islam within his lifetime.

Personality, Family & Photo Album

Looking back at family photos and cherished home videos featuring my Dada, I see not only my grandfather, but a game-changer. A man who held an Islamic worldview that challenged the societies he had lived in, and migrated to, with a different take on culture that stemmed from religion rather than the other way around. By the time I was born, Dada had long ago done what no one else had done before in the Shī‘a community - as an ‘alim he had reached out to the local East African population as a brother in humanity, making thousands into brothers and sisters in faith.

He had done so while doing his oratory work, giving lectures and majalis, comfortable in seven languages, teaching, writing over a hundred books and articles, in both English and Swahili, and translating twelve volumes of *Al-Mizan* into English, which he worked on until his last day in this world. Corresponding extensively (by hand), including with many educated Africans on the continent and those as far as South America, Dada used logic to plant the seed of Shī‘a Ithna-‘Ashari faith in peoples’ hearts and minds.

From the beginning of his tabligh efforts, Dada ensured that local black African Shī‘as were trained as scholars and community leaders themselves, so they could have agency. He also encouraged existing communities to integrate converts, taking concrete steps to ensure this happened.

To many in the world, Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi was a missionary, a scholar, an author, a teacher, and a friend. To my siblings, our cousins around the world, and myself, he was also a beloved grandfather.

Also, during his visits to Canada, to me, Dada was my leisure-reading partner.

It was through Dada that I first realized, as a young child in Toronto, that the newspaper my father, Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, pored over so deeply, published an entire page of comic strips

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

every day, and a huge comic section on Saturdays. I realized this when I regularly saw Dada reading, not only the world news, but each and every page of the newspaper, front to back. Sometimes even obituaries! He loved to read, not only about religion, but on any topic, and so began a daily ritual for me as well.

During Dada’s last years, he continued writing his books for several hours each day. The smell of black ink from a Bic Cristal pen still reminds me of Dada’s notes on ruled paper, lines neatly double-spaced. In the late afternoon, Dada would settle down with his glasses, rectangular magnifying glass with black handle, and the latest issue of *Tanzeemul Makatib*, a politics or science magazine, *National Geographic*, *Aramco World*, *Reader’s Digest*, or even the classic series of *Nancy Drew*, *Hardy Boys*, and *Agatha Christie* mysteries I brought home from the school library.

Like my mother did, Dada always asked about the books I brought home. He was genuinely interested in reading them too. On his last visit, I found myself bringing home big stacks of large-print books from the public library especially for him, to find he had finished reading them all in merely two afternoons! He was an inspiring speed-reader for sure.

One day I brought home a large ceramic art piece from school, with an attempted engraved illustration of the fairy tale *Thumbelina* on it. My Dadee lovingly admired my attempt, and then Dada looked at it too. He complimented it and then said, “I know I’ve read the story of *Thumbelina* before, but I can’t remember the exact details, otherwise I could have appreciated it even more.” He was so sweet. And not just to children in his own family.

He had a gift for joking with any child he met, and his love for children was reflected in his professional life as well. His charitable endeavours included opening schools in Africa and India to ensure both boys and girls could access both religious and secular education.

Personality, Family & Photo Album

On one trip when we visited my grandparents in their flat in Dar-es-Salaam when I was younger, I was reading a Charles Dickens novel one quiet afternoon. Dada was reading something too, and after a while he looked over and said in Urdu, “It looks like this is something you and I share, our love of books.”

There is a photo of Dada surrounded by books in Riyāz Al-Ma’arif, our ancestral library in India. There are volumes in Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu, some a century old, on Islam, and ones on herbal medicine too that belonged to my great-grandfather, who was a Maulānā and also a Ḥakīm doctor who practised traditional Greco-Arabic medicine. Dada cared deeply for the family library (which now consists of books of my great-grandfather, my grandfather, and my father). He even wrote an article on how his own grandfather’s collection of religious journals, which had reports on scholars traveling to remote areas, impacted him as a young person, leading to his decision to go to Africa.

It was in India that my grandfather began writing articles, and that passion for writing would continue for decades. In fact that passion for composition shone through even when, as a grandfather, he interacted with us at home.

On a vacation to Gopalpur, I had brought a black notebook full of my favourite poems copied down from different books over the past year (this was the pre internet era after all). Seeing me copy some more down, one evening as he was resting on a charpai in the veranda, Dada made up almost a dozen funny limericks on the spot for me. I still have them written down.

Once my Dada and Dadee came to visit us in Vancouver when I was around five. They used to speak to me in Urdu, and one day I decided to play English teacher and told them, “I will teach you English!” Dada and Dadee were sitting beside each other. So I turned to Dada and instructed, “Say, ‘She is my wife.’”

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

But Dada said instead, “She is my life!”

This went on for several rounds. I would say, “No Dada; say, ‘She is my wife.’”

And he would again say, “She is my life.” Of course, he knew English well and was just pretending to play with me. Dadee truly was his life though, and a huge support for him in all that he accomplished.

From humouring children, to telling his peers entertaining anecdotes at dinners, Dada was a great storyteller. He always remembered dates and names and connections, and not only because he kept a journal. His memory was sharp too.

He was also a thorough fact-checker. Remember those handwritten pages he wrote each morning in Toronto? Well, they were full of footnotes and bibliographic information too. As a teenager I enjoyed the task of learning from him while typing up some of the chapters he worked on here, for his last book, “A History of the Shī‘a People” (a 1000-page tome of world history, published posthumously). The only thing I privately balked at was typing the footnotes and citations, as at the time, they felt so numerous! (Little did I know this turned out to be excellent practice for university.)

Using facts with solid references, and explaining complex concepts in simple words, were Dada’s specialty. Simplicity and conciseness mattered to him. Seeing an ad for laundry detergent, it irked him to see terms like “new” used with “improved” or “all-new” together, because of the redundancy. After all, what was the difference between “brand-new” versus “new”? He liked straightforward text, and that is a style you can notice right away when you read his work (most of which is now freely available online).

More than the reading and writing though, Dada’s friendliness and charisma is what I remember most about him. Until the very end, he was generous and kind, all while keeping sharp and up-to-

Personality, Family & Photo Album

date with current events, and even youth literature! He kept a pulse on the world until his final days, analysing, sifting and explaining the Islamic view in his own special way.

He was truly an open book, and a powerful one. When that unique book closed, we were left with a void in our lives. The pages of his life were closed shut forever, but our experience of reading that book has never been forgotten.

Please recite Sura Fatiha for Allamah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi and all the marhumeen of the Rizvi family.

Aliyyah Rizvi-Bokhari

June 20, 2020

‘Allāmah Rizvi’s Family

I want to end this narration with a brief list of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s two wives and eleven children. Four of the children (three sons and one daughter) died in infancy and so have not been named here.

First wife: Roshan Jahan bint Syed Mukhtar Imam Rizvi
of Gopalpur.

Married in 1947.

Died in September 1952.

Children:

1. Qaiser Jahan: (b. 1948)
2. Ali Imam: (b. 5 April 1952 – d. 13 August 1982)

Second wife: Fatima Zahra bint Syed Mehdi Hasan Naqvi
of Husainganj.

Born on 1 May 1935 at Motihari, Bihar.

Married on 4 April 1954/eve 3 Sha‘bān 1373 in Motihari.

Died on 25 October 2001/8 Sha‘bān 1422 in Dar-es-Salaam.

She performed one ḥajj, two ‘umrahs, three ziyārats of Medina, one ziyārat of Iraq, more than two ziyārats of Damascus, and four ziyārats of Iran.

She lived in India, Tanzania and the UK.

Children:

3. Muhammad (b. 19 January 1957, Motihari, Bihar)
4. Zaki Imam: (b. 10 December 1959, Siwan, Bihar)
5. Masud Akhtar: (b. 30 October 1961, Lindi, Tanzania)
6. Zainab: (b. 25 May 1963, Arusha, Tanzania)
7. Mukhtar Saeed, aka Murtaza (b. 13 January 1966,
in Dar-es-Salaam; d. 1 May 2016, Dar-es-Salaam)

Some details about ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s children:

1. **Qaiser Jahan** (b. 1948 in India) is the oldest child. She lived in India and Tanzania, and in 1969 married Syed Imam Raza Rizvi (son of Ḥakīm S. Haider Raza of Husainabad, UP) and presently lives in Ballia, UP. They are blessed with 3 daughters and 5 sons.

2. **Ali Imam** (b. 5 April 1952 in India) is the oldest son. He also lived in India and Tanzania, and moved to India in 1972. He graduated with a BA degree from DAV College, Siwan, Bihar. He married to Shakila Khatun (daughter of S. Nasir Husain of Bhikpur, Siwan) in 1976. They were blessed with 1 daughter and 2 sons. After a prolonged illness, he died on 13 August 1982 in Gopalpur.

3. **Muhammad** (b. 19 January 1957 in India) is the present writer. I lived in Tanzania and went to Qum, Iran, in 1972 for Islamic studies. I graduated from the Ḥawzah in 1982 and moved to India. I married Bilqis Zahra (daughter of S. Hameed Asghar Rizvi of Gopalpur) in 1981 and we moved to Canada in 1983. During my stay in Vancouver, I earned my MA degree in History from the Simon Fraser University in 1991. We have been blessed with 3 daughters and 1 son, and presently live in Toronto.

4. **Zaki Imam** (b. 10 December 1959 in India) lived in Tanzania and moved to India in 1976 and graduated with a B Com degree from DAV College, Siwan. He married Binte Rubab (daughter of S. Hameed Asghar Rizvi of Gopalpur) in 1981. They are blessed with 1 daughter and 2 sons. He then moved back to Dar-es-Salaam and entered the clearing and forwarding business as well as transportation. He presently lives in Dar-es-Salaam.

5. **Masud Akhtar** (b. 30 October 1961 in Lindi, Tanzania) lived in Tanzania and moved to India in 1976 and graduated with a B Com degree and a post graduate diploma in Business Management from University of Gorakhpur in UP. He also moved back to Dar-es-

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Salaam, and worked in the private sector as management. He married Afroz Fatema (daughter of Raza Husain of Muzaffarpur, Bihar) in 1990. They are blessed with 2 daughters and 1 son. Then he moved to the USA. He works as a financial analyst III. He presently lives in New Jersey, USA.

6. **Zainab** (b. 25 May 1963 in Arusha, Tanzania) lived in Tanzania and moved to India with our parents in 1978. She married Husain Mehdi (son of S. Zainul Abideen Naqvi of Karachi, Pakistan) in 1981. They are blessed with 4 daughters and 3 sons. She presently lives in Karachi, Pakistan.

7. **Mukhtar Saeed** aka **Murtaza** (b. 13 January 1966 in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania) lived in Tanzania and moved to India with our parents in 1978. After a brief stint for religious studies at Jawadiya Arabic College (Banares), he returned to Gopalpur. Finally, he sat for the exam at the High School in Husainganj, and attained his high school certificate. He eventually moved back to Dar-es-Salaam and worked for some time as a wireless communication technician at a wireless telecommunication company. He married Fatema (daughter of S. Hameed Asghar Rizvi of Gopalpur) in 1992. They were blessed with 1 daughter and 2 sons. After 1998, he joined Bilal Muslim Mission as an administrative staff member. He continued this work until a serious car accident in 2003 during a trip to Qum reduced his mobility. Then a stroke in 2006 restricted his mobility further, followed by another massive stroke in 2012 that left him bedridden. Sadly he passed away on 1 May 2016 in Dar-es-Salaam.

* * *

‘Allāmah Rizvi was blessed with 31 grandchildren and, presently, there are 34 great-grandchildren.

Personality, Family & Photo Album

Geneology of ‘Allāmah Rizvi

Syed Shujā‘at ‘Ali

(migrated from Iran with Humayun around 944 AH)

|

Syed ‘Ali

|

Syed Maṣṣūr

(founder of Gopalpur)

|

Syed Pīr

|

Syed Firūz

|

Syed Mangli

|

Syed Asad ‘Ali

|

Syed Nizām ‘Ali

(d. March 1820)

|

Syed Mukarram Ḥusayn

|

Syed Maqbūl Ḥusayn

|

Syed Abul Ḥasan

(1891-1974)

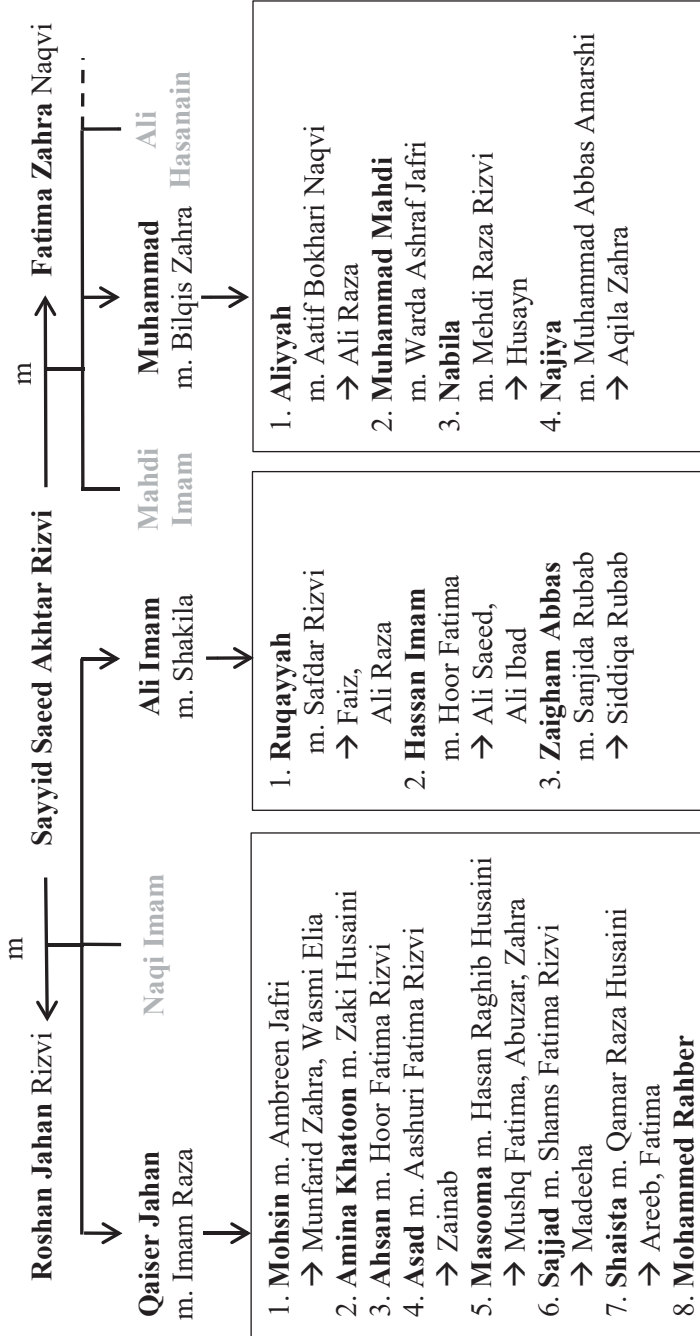
|

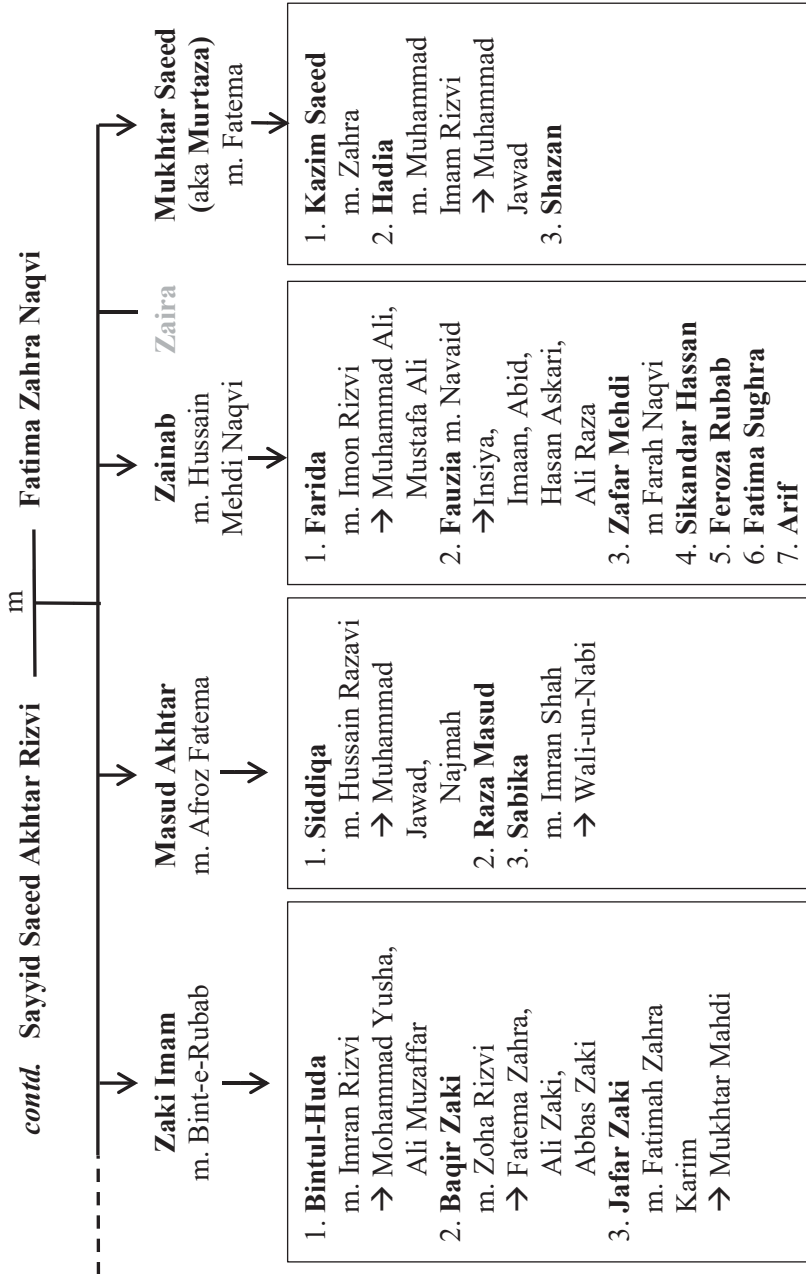
Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

(1927-2002)

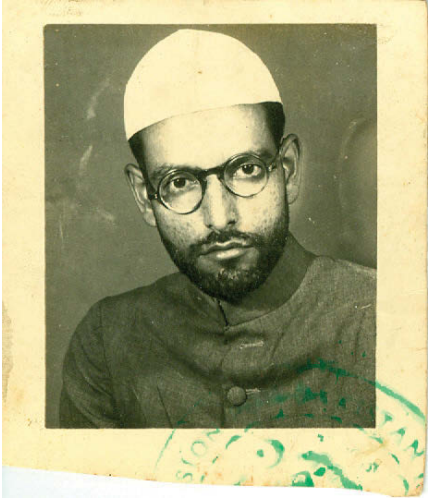
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

THE DESCENDANTS OF ‘ALLĀMAH RIZVI





The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Personality, Family & Photo Album



‘Allamah Rizvi with
Maulana S. Murtaza Husain



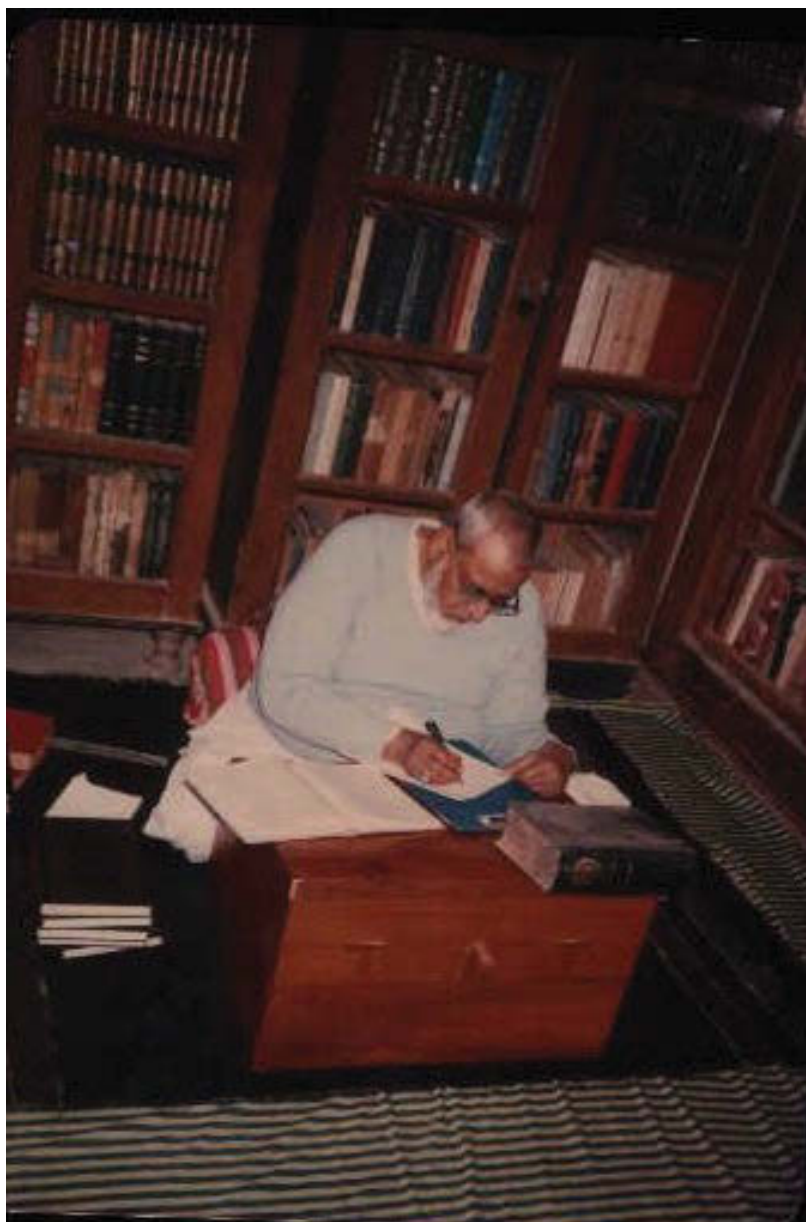
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah Rizvi with his father Maulana Abul Hasan Rizvi
in Dar-es-Salaam 1970-1971

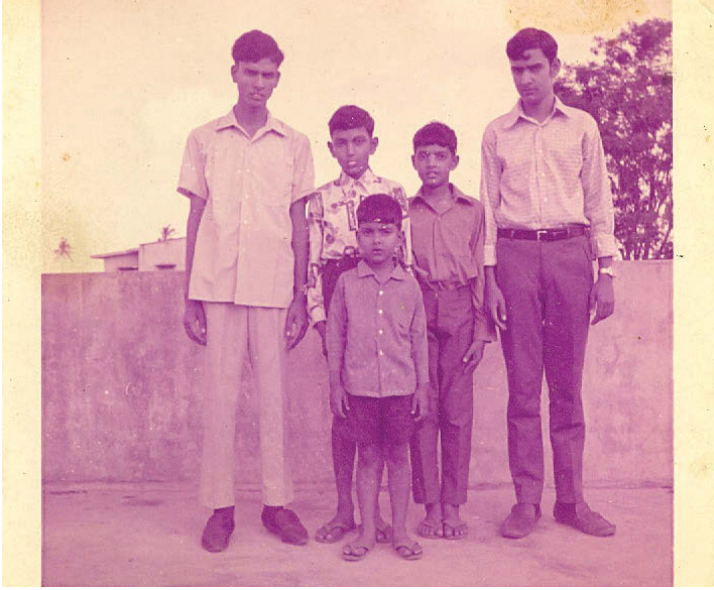


Personality, Family & Photo Album



‘Allāmah Rizvi working in his Riyāzul Ma‘ārif Library in Gopalpur mid 1989.
The name of Al-Ma‘ārif Foundation and Al-Ma‘ārif Publications
is inspired by this library.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah’s sons in Dar-es-salam (1971) from left:
Ali Imam, Zaki Imam, Masud Akhtar, Muhammad & Murtaza in the front.



‘Allāmah with his brothers Hameed Asghar (r) & Tawakkul Husain (l)
in Gopalpur 12 February 1984

Personality, Family & Photo Album



‘Allāmah with his sons in 1990 in Gopalpur.
Me & Zaki Imam seated with Murtaza & Masud standing



‘Allāmah with his sons in 1990 in Gopalpur.
Murtaza, me, Masud and Zaki Imam

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah with his 3 sons Masud, Zaki Imam & Murtaza
in early 1980s in Gopalpur.



‘Allāmah with his sons Masud, Murtaza, Zaki Imam & Muhammad
on 20 October 1992 in Gopalpur

Personality, Family & Photo Album



‘Allāmah with his brothers, sons and my uncle’s son-in-law, Waris Imam (left) on 20 October 1992



‘Allāmah with his brothers and nephews on 12 February 1984

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah with his sons Muhammad, Zaki Imam & Masud and his son-in-law Husain Mehdi and his grandchildren in Gopalpur, 1990.



‘Allāmah with his sons Muhammad, Zaki Imam, Masud and Murtaza and his grandchildren in Gopalpur, 1990.

Personality, Family & Photo Album



With my father in our library in Gopalpur in 1990



The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

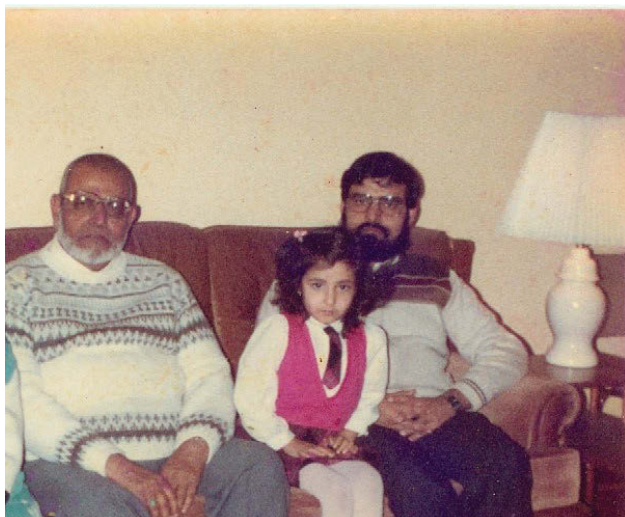


With his grandsons: Hasan Imam (r) & Zaigham Abbas (l),
sons of my elder brother the late ‘Ali Imam.

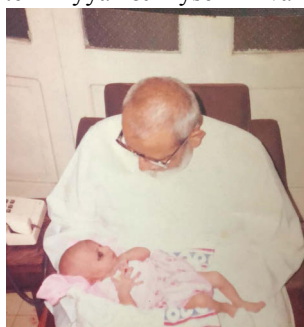


With his grandsons: Jafar Zaki (r) & Baqir Zaki (l),
sons of Zaki Imam.

Personality, Family & Photo Album



With my daughter Aliyyah & myself in Vancouver 1987.

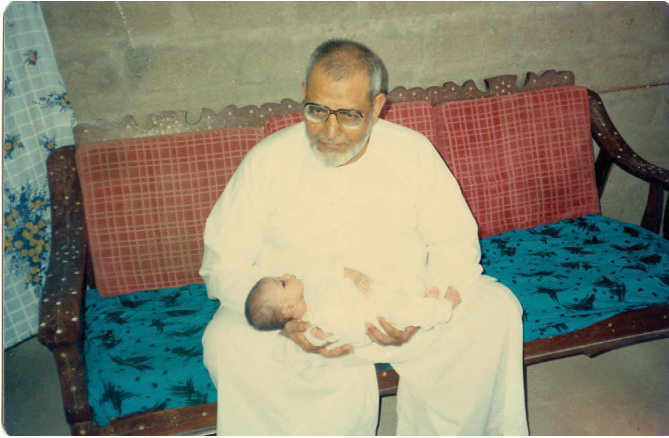


Holding his granddaughter Siddiqa, daughter of Masud Akhtar



Cutting the cake for his granddaughter Siddiqa.

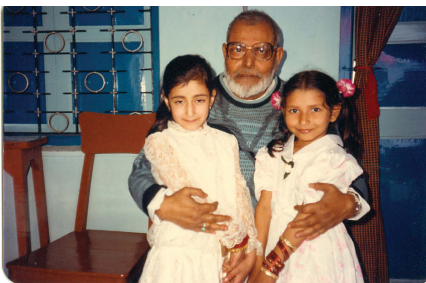
The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



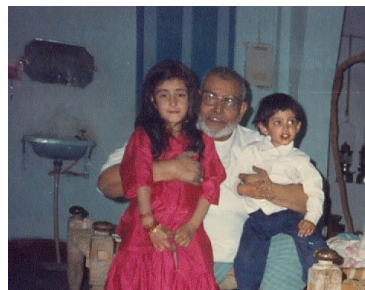
Holding his grandson Zafar Mehdi,
son of my younger sister Zainab & brother-in-law Husain Mehdi in Karachi



Cutting the cake for his grandchildren
Hadia and Kazim, children of my youngest brother Murtaza

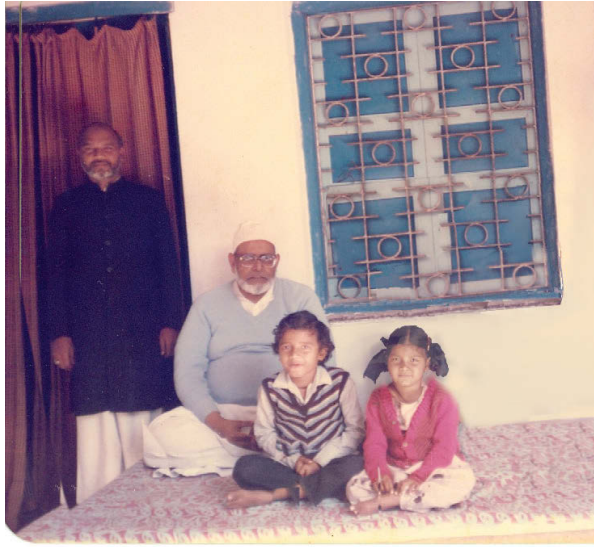


Holding granddaughters:
Aliyyah & Bintul Huda in Goplapur

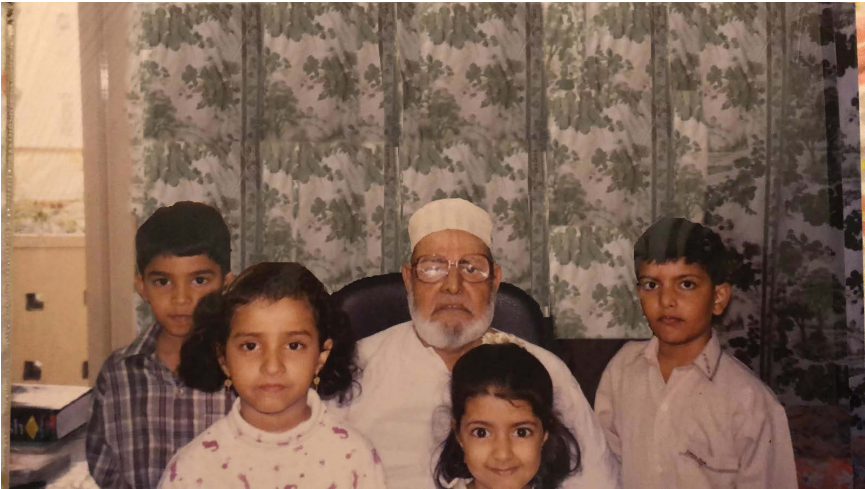


Holding my children:
Aliyyah & Mahdi in Gopalpur

Personality, Family & Photo Album



‘Allāmah with his older son-in-law S. Imam Raza
& two grandchildren: Sajjad & Shaista in Gopalpur



‘Allāmah with his grandchildren in Dar-es-Salaam:
Masud’s son Raza & daughter Sabika (l)
and Murtaza’s daughter Hadia & son Kazim (r)

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



In one of our trips to India, my son Mahdi tries to climb on his grandfather and finally he was able to sit on him!



Personality, Family & Photo Album

Pictures of ‘Allāmah Rizvi at Different Occasions



With Haj Fida Hussain Hameer



With Temeke Hawzah staff & visitors & 2 board members

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



‘Allāmah Rizvi meeting
Tanzanian President
Ali Hassan Mwinyi.
He was accompanied
by Haj Fida Hussain
Hameer and
Haj Murtaza Karbala.



Personality, Family & Photo Album



With Ahmad Sheriff, Haj Ali M Jaffer & Muhsin Jaffer
me with two youth and Nizar Merali (r) at Bilal's stall
at Agricultural Show, Mombasa



With Ahmad Husein Sheriff



With Shk. Dhikiri Kiondo

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi





Haj Mohamedali Meghji, President of Supreme Council giving a speech, apparently about my father as he is smiling and others are looking at him. Marhum Rafiq Somji (a close friend and support of tabligh) is seen in the left corner; Agha S. Mahdi Shushtari is to the right of my father and Maulana Agha Haider is on his left.

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Murtaza, Abba & Masud

Personality, Family & Photo Album



Murtaza, Abba, Baqir & Zaki Imam

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi



Chapter Ten

*Facsimiles
of ‘Allāmah Rizvi’s
Handwriting*

*List of
Written Works*

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

مصعط طرح : اذین حمفور پاؤں کا بخت نہ کی ہے ماوری
تاما دین

روح سے بے نیاز ہے اب یہ جالی ظاہری
کارگاہ حیات ہے ایک طلسم ساری

نسبت کا یہ نظام تو جس کی بھڑک رہی ہے تو
اس کو سمجھ نہ سکر کی آہ تو ہے یہ نمودِ آخری

ہائے یہ شامِ زندگی زہر یہ جامِ زندگی
آف یہ نظامِ زندگی عینِ نظامِ کافری

جنسِ حیا لٹا چکی نفسِ وفا مٹا چکی
روح کو کیا بنا چکی نفس کی حرصِ پروری

سہوشِ دُخرد پہ بار ہے عقل پہ یوں سوار ہے
کتنے نگوں کا بار ہے بادۂ تاپ کی پری

لطف نہیں یہ قہر ہے شہد نہیں یہ زہر ہے
دشت ہے باکِ شہر ہے بس وہی جنگِ زرگری

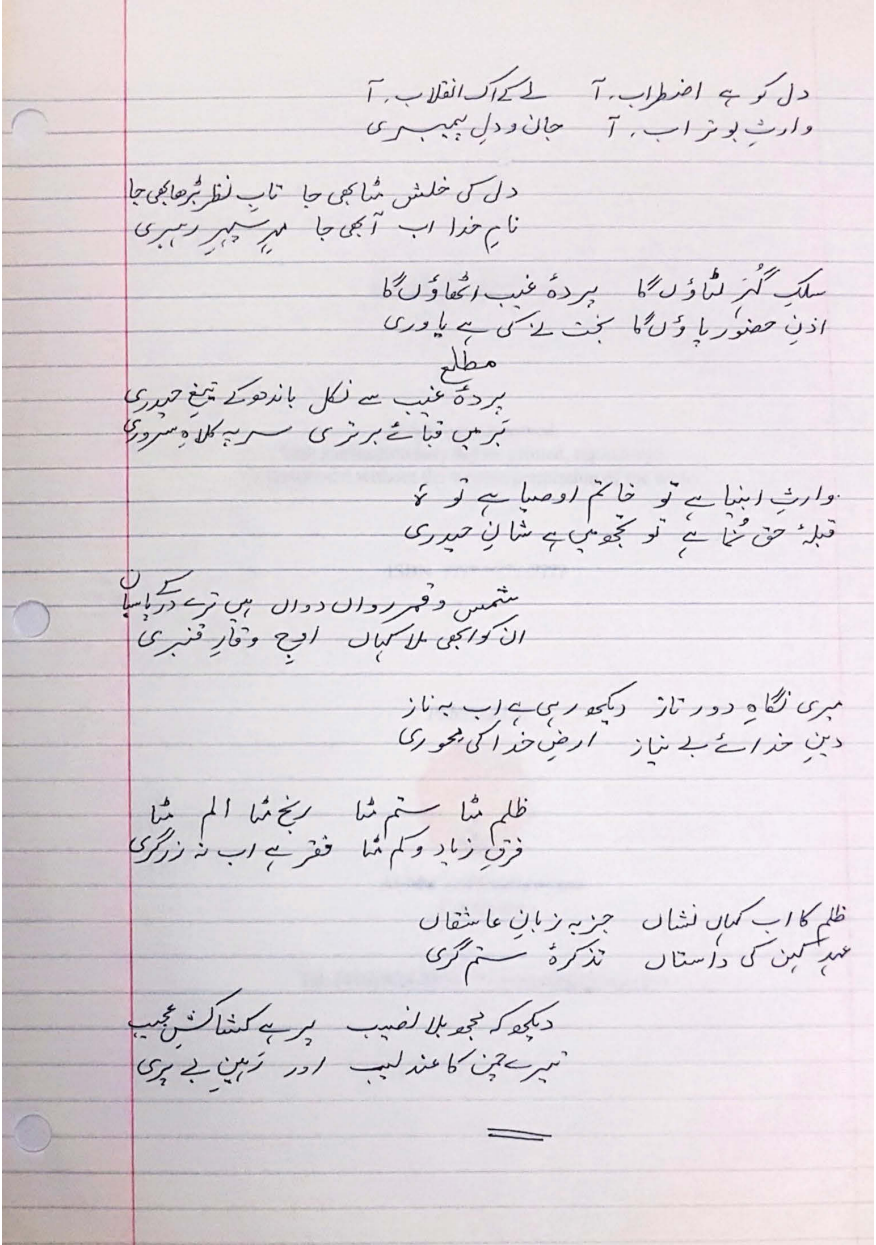
حرص و سوا کے طور سے شدتِ ظلم و جور سے
دیکھو نگاہِ منور سے سارے جہاں کی ابتری

دل کا لال کہا کہوں فکرِ مال کہا کہوں
نسبت کا حال کہا کہوں پھل اور اس پہ خود پری

منور شین کفرِ العجبِ دینِ خدا ہے جاں لب
بھڑے مبارزتِ طلبِ دیر سے روحِ خدیری

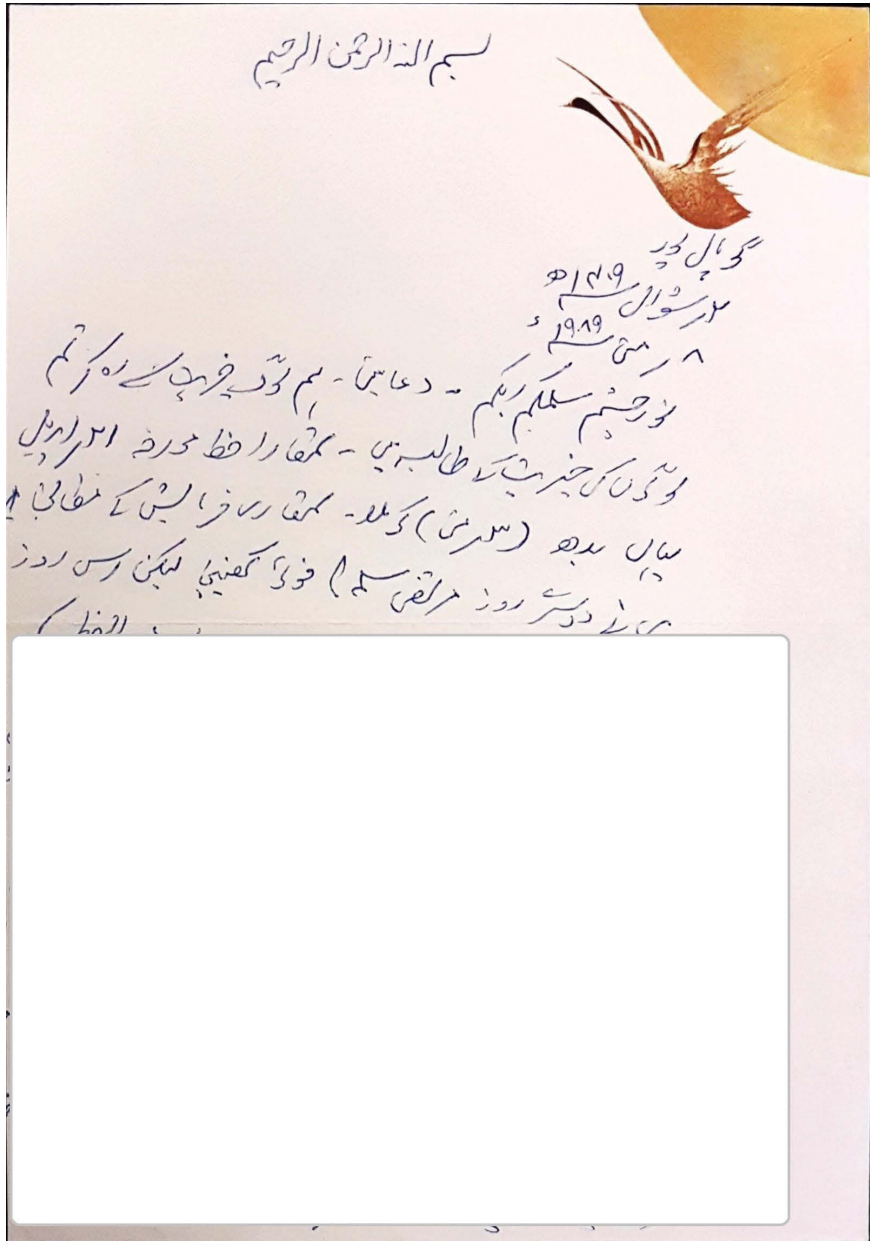
A sample of his Urdu script, a page from his poem

Facsimiles & List of Written Works



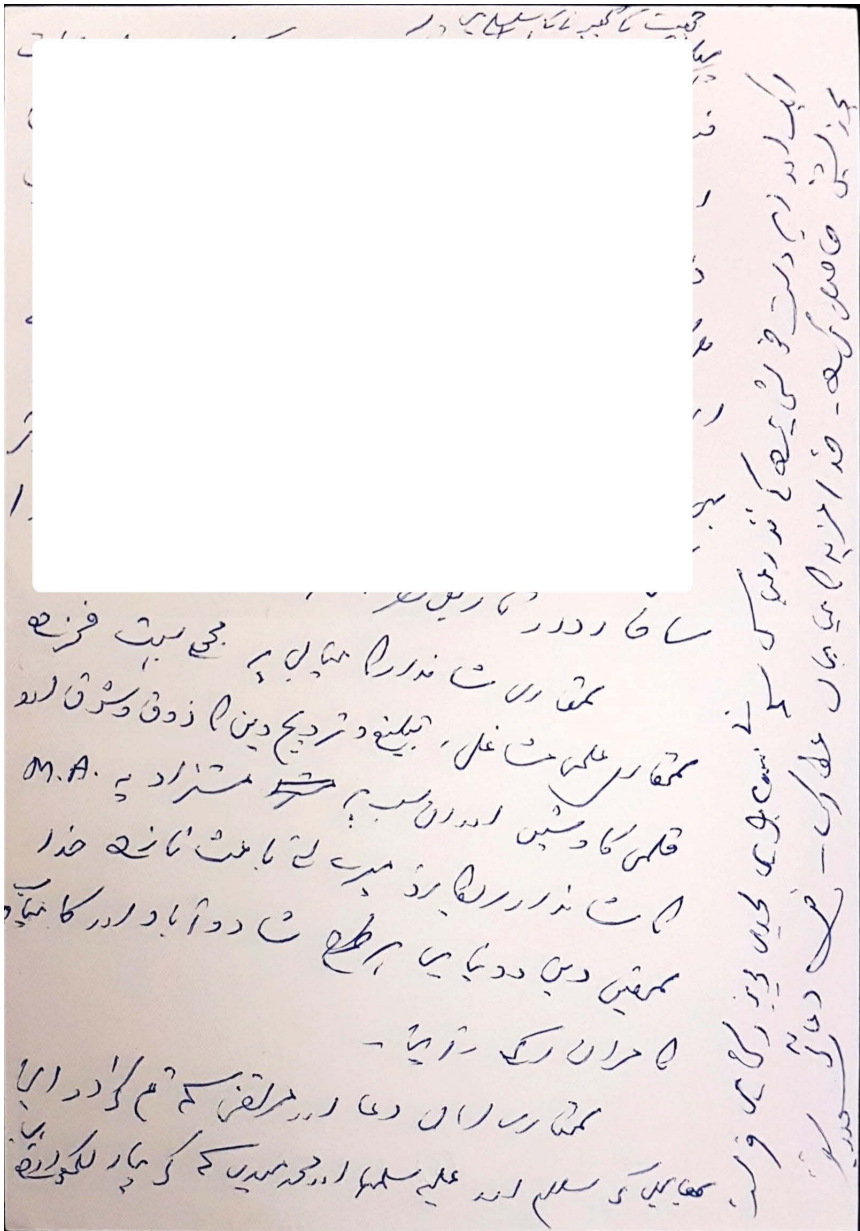
A sample of his Urdu script, a page from his poem

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi



A sample of his Urdu script written at leisure; a letter addressed to me

Facsimiles & List of Written Works



A sample of his Urdu script written at leisure; a letter addressed to me

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

نام و نسب : سید سید اختر رضوی ابن علامہ حکیم سید ابوالحسن طاب ثراه
(المتولد ۱۳۰۹ھ / ۱۸۹۱م و المتوفی ۱۳۹۴ھ / ۱۹۷۴م) ابن سید مقبول حسین ابن
سید مکرم حسین ابن سید نظام علی ابن سید اسماعیل ابن سید منگلی ابن سید فرود
ابن سید پیر ابن سید منصور علی ابن سید محمد علی (المعروف بہ سید علی) ابن سید
شجاعت علی کہ از سادات رضویہ در نسل موسی مہر فتح بودند و از ایران بہ ہند آمدند
(در سنہ ۱۹۲۴ھ علی الاوی) -

عمل و تاریخ تولد : من در قریبہ شمشیری خرد (ضلع سارن ، صوبہ بہار ، ہندوستان)

در خانہ حیدر مدیریم مولانا حکیم سید زین العابدین طاب ثراه (المتوفی سنہ ۱۹۵۰م)
تاریخ مکرم رحیل المرجب ۱۳۴۵ھ / ۵ / ۱۹۲۴م متولد شدم و نام بندہ (سید اختر)
تاریخی است کہ از آن سنہ تولد ۱۳۴۵ ہجری آید - وطن مالوف بندہ در قریبہ گونا پور (ضلع سارن - بہار) است -

پدر بزرگوار : حضرت ابوی علامہ حکیم الحاج سید ابوالحسن طاب ثراه کیے از علماء معروفین
و اطباء نامدار عصر خویش بودند - آن جناب اولاً در مدرسہ ناصرہ (جوینپور - بولی) ولید
از آن در مدرسہ عباسیہ (پٹنہ - بہار) نائب مدیر مدرسہ بودند و سپس از سال ۱۳۶۵ھ
تا ۱۳۶۷ھ (۱۹۴۲ تا ۱۹۴۸م) در قصبہ پگور (ضلع بستی - بولی) امام جمہ و صامت
بودند - بعد از آن بندہ را بجماعت خودشان بہ پگور فرستادند و خود آن جناب بوطن
مالوف رحل اقامت گزارا شدند -

التعلیم و اساتذہ : بعد از تحصیل ابتدائی در وطن خودم ، پدر بزرگوارم
بہ مدرسہ عالی مرا بہراہ خودشان بہ مدرسہ عباسیہ (پٹنہ) بردند - آن جا پر سائے
والد بزرگوارم تا سیراٹ الاسلام درس خواندم و ہم فارسی و انگلیسی و حساب را
با درگرفتم - بعد از انقضائے مدرسہ عباسیہ در ماہ ۱۹۴۴م (۱۳۵۹ھ) تادہ ۵۶
در مدرسہ سلیمانہ (پٹنہ) تحصیلات خودم را ادامه دادم - و در اواخر سال ۱۳۵۶ھ (۱۹۴۴م)
بجایع اسلام جوادیہ (بنارس - بولی) رفتم و تا اواخر ۱۹۴۶م تحصیلات خودی را بہ
بابہ تکمیل رسانیدم - اسمائے محرمی اساتذہ بندہ اس حادثہ می شود : ...

A sample of his Farsi script

Facsimiles & List of Written Works

لسيد الله الرحمن الرحيم

الاسم والنسب : السيد سعيد اختر الرضوي ابن العلامة الحكيم الحاج السيد ابوالحسن طاب ثراه (المتولد ١٣٠٩ / ١٨٩١ م والمتوفى ١٣٩٢ هـ / ١٩٧٢ م) ابن السيد مقبول حسين ابن السيد مكرم حسين ابن السيد نظام علي ابن السيد اسد علي ابن السيد منكلي ابن السيد فيروز ابن السيد پير ابن السيد منصور علي ابن السيد محمد علي (المعروف بالسيد علي) ابنا السيد شجاع علي الذي كان من سلالة موسى الميرزا وهاجر من إيران الى الهند (في سنة ١٩٢٢ هـ علي الاقوي)

محل وتاريخ الولادة : وُلِدَتْ في قرية عَشْرِي خُرْد (ضلع سيوان - صوبه بهار، الهند) في بيت جدي الابي مولانا الحكيم السيد زين العابدين طاب ثراه (المتوفى سنة ١٩٥٠ م) في قرية جيب المرجب سنة ١٢٤٥ هـ (١٩٢٧ م) واسمها سعيد اختر بشيرالي سنة الولادة (١٣٢٥) - ووطنها المألوف في قرية كوكال پور (ضلع سيوان - بهار - الهند) -

والدي العلامة الحاج السيد ابوالحسن طاب ثراه كان من العلماء المعروفين والاطباء المأذنين في عصره - وكان نائب المدير الاعلى في المدرسة الناصرية في بلدة جُون پور (پولي) شمالي المدرسة الباسية في بلدة عظيم آباد (بيتته) بهار * الى شمر ما يوسنة ١٩٢٠ م (١٣٥٩ هـ) ثم الى القراض المدرسة الباسية المدكورة - ثم التمس منه اهالي هَلَوَ سَر (ضلع بيشن - پولي) الاقامة بنعيم الارشاد والموعظة واقامة الجمعة والجماعات فبقى هناك من ١٣٦١ هـ الى ١٣٦٧ هـ (١٩٢٢ - اداكل ١٩٤٨ م) ولجده ذاك اقامته مقامه ورجع الى الوطن المألوف

تحصيلاتي والاساندة : بعد التحصيلات الاساندة في الوطن المألوف ذهبت الى عظيم آباد بيتته مع والدي العلامة (وكان عمري آنذاك ثمان سنوات) - وتدرست هناك تحت ظل عواطفه الى شرائح الاسلام وتعلمت ايضا الفارسية والكلبية والحساب - ولجده القراض المدرسة الباسية استمرت تحصيلاتي في المدرسة السلطانية (عظيم آباد) لمدة سنة ثم ذهبت الى جامع العلوم الجوادية (بنارس - پولي) وامتت هناك من اواخر سنة ١٣٦٠ هـ / ١٩٤١ م الى اواخر ١٣٦٥ / ١٩٤٦ م - واخذت شهادته في الافاضل بالامتياز -

A sample of his Arabic script

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi



Chief Missionary
Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania
P.O. Box No. 20033
Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
Phone: 30345; Cable: Tabligh

مسجد اکتار رضوی
بیلال مسلم مہمیں - تانزانیا
صوبہ: ۲۰۳۳ - دارالکلام، تانزانیا - افریقہ
تلفون: ۳۰۳۴۵ عنوان التلغراف: "تبلیغ-دارالسلام"

Ref:

Date:

۲۱ شعبان / ۱۴۱۳ م

سماحة حجة الاسلام والمسلمين العلامة المحقق السيد عبد الوهيد الطباطبائي دامت براته

عم - ايران

سلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

پس از اطلاع سلام عرض می شود:

بجز اول و دوم در دو جلد از من جمله اول الذریعہ را دیدم و آنجا را شد که نام آن مصنفین است که من خود استم بدین کتاب استنباطاً عوض کرده بودم - آن عالم است و المولوی حمید علی الفیض آبادی است که کتابت بسیار صند شدیم نوشت که من بعد از منتهی الکلام است - اول در الذریعہ من اول (شماره ۳۳ و ۳۴ و ۳۵) دو کتاب از کتابها نیست (که هند شدیم است) بعنوان کتابت بسیار شیعی موصوف شده است - (تولیدات منسک را ملاحظه فرمائید)

(۲) من حسب فرمایش شما الان در جلد الذریعہ را بررسی کرده ام (مقط مصنفین هند و کنان را می بینم) در جایی که لازم است تملیقه می نویسیم - کشف بخدمت شما ارسال می شود - این ادراقی را به بینید و اگر می خواهید که بهین طور ادامه بدیم مرا فی العذر اطلاع بدید - و با اگر به اسلوب دیگر می خواهید مطلع بکنید - (۳) اما نام کتابت حمید مصنفین که در الذریعہ نیستند ، انشاء الله تعالی بعد از بررسی این جمله است (بعد از اطلاع خود می نویسیم و بخدمت شما ارسال می کنیم ، در تکلمه الذریعہ ثبت می شود -

(۴) من در مکتب خودم فقط ناچله شتر دیدم الذریعہ دارم - ولی در سفر ایران دیده ام که دوره کامل است و پنج جلد دارد - اگر جناب عالی لطفاً

العنوان الدائم: Gopalpur, P.O. Bakerganj, Dist: Siwan, Bihar, Pin 841 286, India

A sample of his Farsi script;
a letter to 'Allāmah S.A.A. Ṭabāṭabā'i about
the initial work on the review of Agha Burugh Tehrāni's *Adh-Dharī'ah*

Facsimiles & List of Written Works

P R E F A C E

This book was first published under the title, God of Islam, in 1977, as the 2nd unit of the Islamic Correspondence Course of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania. A revised edition was printed in 1976.

It has been repeatedly printed by the World Organisation For Islamic Services (WOFIS), Tehran, and the Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya (Mombasa). Also World Islamic Network (WIN), Bombay, has reprinted it under its new title. Many of its chapters have been published in Islamic magazines in USA, India and other places. (A pirate edition of God of Islam has recently been printed by a New York publisher.)

It was translated into Urdu by Maulana Muhammad Taqi Rahimiyan and my son, Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi ~~etc~~ in early 1980s in Qum (Iran). It was serialised in the Urdu monthly, Al-Wa'ez (Lucknow). That in its turn was translated into Hindi by Al-Haj Chaudhary Sayyid Sibte Muhammad Nagvi (editor, ~~fortnightly~~ Hindi fortnightly, Hamari Tarbat Talash, Lucknow) and serialised in that magazine.

Now I have ~~again~~ revised again and annotated the book and it is being published by the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania under its new title, GOD: An Islamic Perspective. It is hoped that this version will prove even more popular than the previous one.

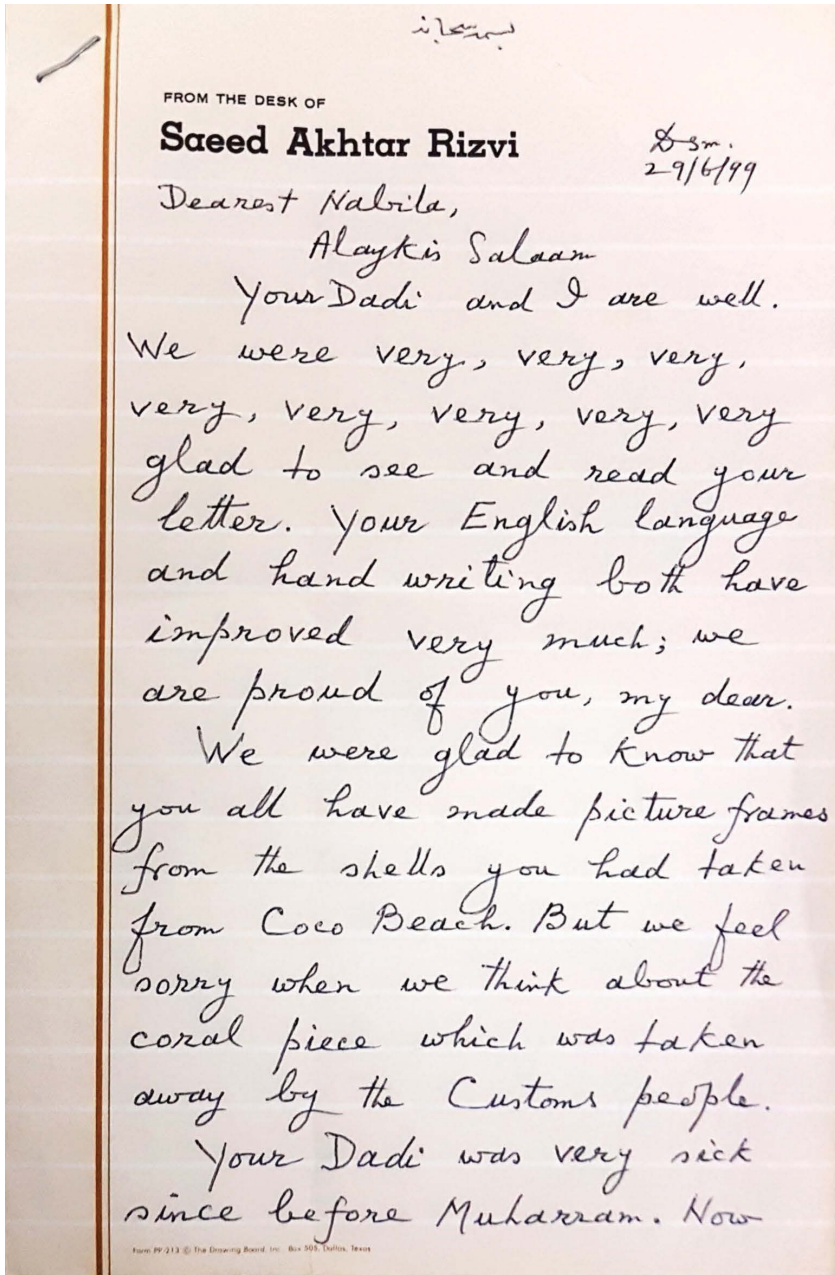
Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi

~~Dar ul Sunnah~~
~~25th May 1994~~
Toronto, Canada
15th October, 1994

Translation taken from
the English with the same
and the Malayalam languages.

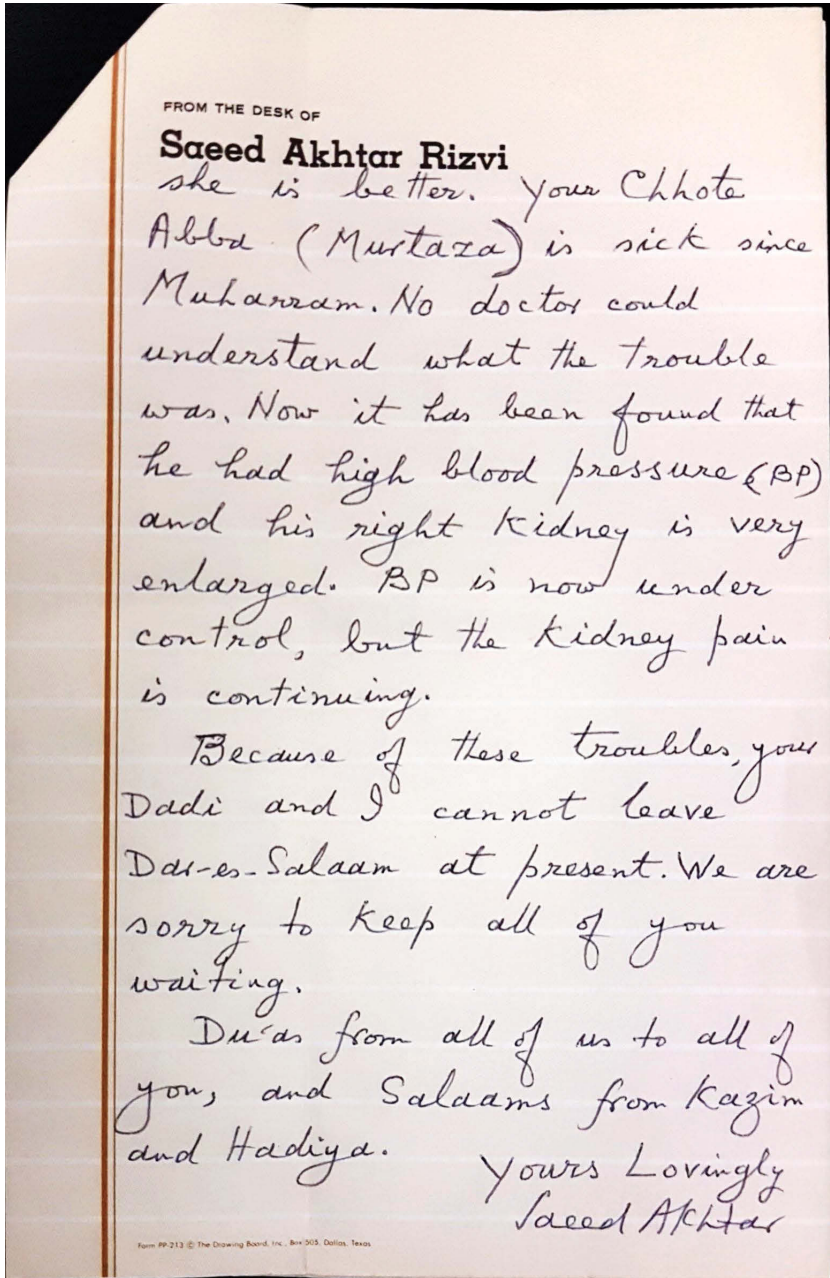
A sample of his English script
Preface of the new edition of God of Islam

The Shining Star: 'Allāmah Rizvi



A sample of his English script
A grandfather's letter to his 8-years-old granddaughter

Facsimiles & List of Written Works



He wrote "very" 8 times as my daughter had done the same in her letter to him saying "I miss you very very very very very very very very much"

LIST OF ‘ALLĀMAH RIZVI’S WRITTEN WORKS

(A) Theology & Comparative Religion:

<i>No</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Publication Date</i>	<i>Translated in:</i>
1.	Need for Religion	1970, 1971, 1975	Swahili
2.	God of Islam	1971 + 20 prints	Swahili, Urdu, Hindi, Swedish, French, Spanish
3.	Justice of God	1970 to 1992 + 6 times	Swahili, Indonesian, Finnish, Bosnian, Hindi, Spanish
4.	Prophethood	Till 1987 + 3 prints	Swahili
5.	Muhammad is the Last Prophet	1971 + many prints	Swahili
6.	Imāmate Vicegerency of the Prophet	1971 + 16 more prints	Urdu, Gujarati, Bosnian, Albanian, Amharic, French, Swahili, Indonesian, Spanish, Bangla, Hindi
7.	الإمامة [Arabic]	1999, Beirut	Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi, Swahili
8.	Day of Judgement	1975 + multiple prints	Swahili, Kinyarwanda
9.	Meaning & Origin of Shi'ism	1977, 1995	Swahili, Indonesian, Spanish
10.	Sects of Islam	1980, Tehran & Bombay	English
11.	اتمام حجت	1986, 2011 [7 articles]	Swahili, Urdu
12.	Taqiyyah	1992	
13.	التقية في القرآن والسنة [Arabic]	1996, Qum	
14.	مصغلة الباء [Arabic]	1996, Qum	
15.	Fadak	1999	
16.	اشخريت	1953, 1387 (booklet)	Swahili
17.	بناؤں کا کام اللہ	1957, Banaras	
18.	Wahhabis' Fitna Exposed	1994, NJ, Dar, Qum	Swahili
19.	Prophecies About Occultation	2002, Dar	Swahili

Facsimiles & List of Written Works

<i>No Title</i>	<i>Publication Date</i>	<i>Translated in:</i>
20. Prophecies About Holy Prophet 2002, Dar		
21. Correspondence between a Muslim and a Christian 1980, Tehran		Swahili, Portuguese, Spanish
22. On to the Right Path 1999, Dar		
23. Shi'ite Sects 198?, Dar		Swahili
(b) <u>Qur'ān & Hadīth:</u>		
24. The Qur'ān & Hadīth 1971 to 1996		Swahili
25. The Qur'ān: Its Protection 1992		Swahili, Albanian, Spanish, Italian
26. نظرة مستجلمة في تحريف القرآن [Arabic] 1996		[21 articles]
27. وحي والهام في آياتهم 1994		
28. The Return of Al-Mahdi 1996		
29. Al-Mizān volume 1 1983		
30. Al-Mizān volume 2 1984		
31. Al-Mizān volume 3 1982		
32. Al-Mizān volume 4 1982		
33. Al-Mizān volume 5 1983		
34. Al-Mizān volume 6 1986		
35. Al-Mizān volume 7 1990		
36. Al-Mizān volume 8 1992		
37. Al-Mizān volume 9 2000		
38. Al-Mizān volume 10 2001		
39. Al-Mizān volume 11 2002		
40. Al-Mizān volume 12 2003		
41. Al-Mizān volume 13 2015		

The Shining Star: ‘Allāmah Rizvi

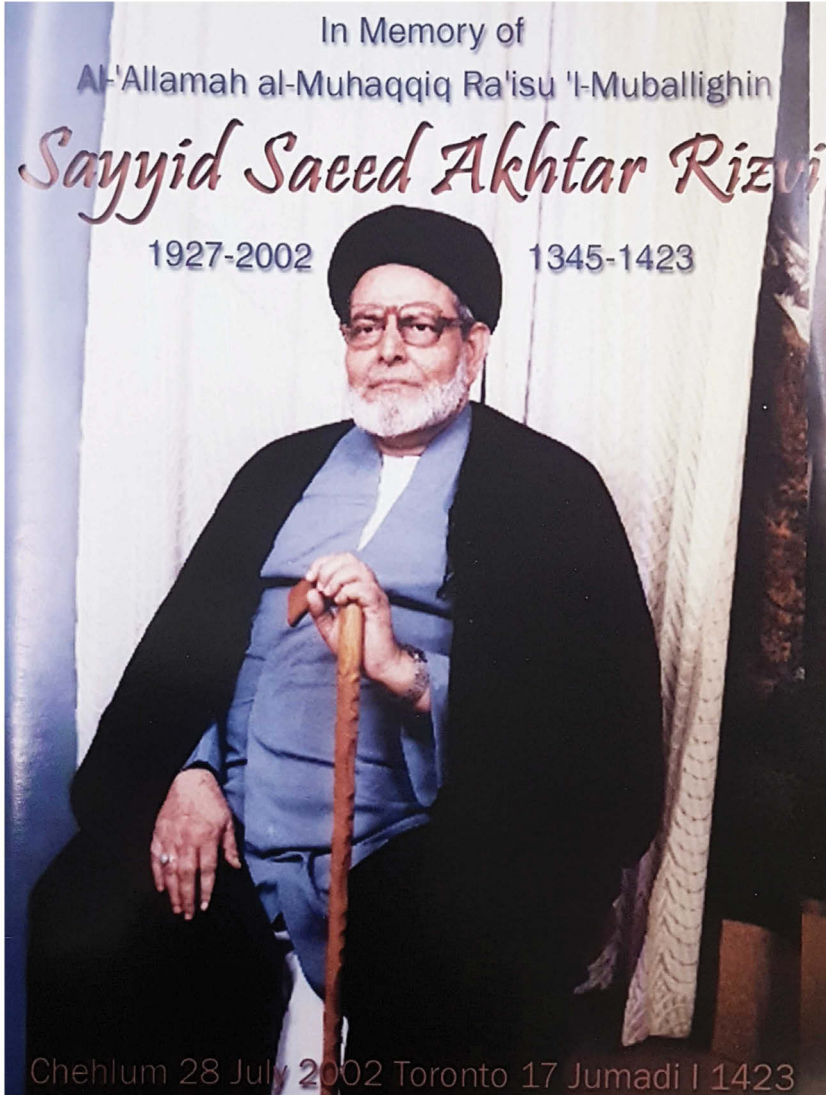
<i>No</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Publication Date</i>	<i>Translated in:</i>
(c) <u>History & ‘Ilm-e Rijāl:</u>			
42.	زجس خاتون	1954, 1962, 1979	Gujarati
43.	کربا شامی	1982, 1989, 1993	[17 articles] English, Swahili
44.	الذواج امام حسین (ع)	1987, 1988	Swahili, Italian, Spanish
45.	The Holy Prophet	1971 + many prints	Swahili
46.	Four Californian Lectures	1989	
47.	A Lecture on Nahj Balagha	2001	
48.	شجره طیبه	2000	
49.	خورشید خاور	2002	
50.	تکملة الذریعة [Arabic]	1426, Qum	
51.	التعلیقات علی الذریعة [Arabic]	1427, Qum	
52.	A History of the Shī‘a People	2015, Toronto	
(d) <u>Jurisprudence & Ethics:</u>			
53.	Inner Voice	1975, 1980, 1989	Gujarati, Hindi, Swahili, Swedish
54.	The Family Life in Islam	1971, 1975, 1980, 1999	
55.	اسلام کا نظام خانوادگی	1997	
56.	Fast	1971, 1974, 1988	Swahili
57.	The Charter of Rights	1972, 1989	French, Swedish, Swahili, Indonesian, Portuguese,
58.	Pork	1972 +	Farsi, Spanish
59.	Slavery	1972, 1988, 2001	Swahili
60.	عزاداری اور بدعت	1949, Lucknow	

Facsimiles & List of Written Works

<i>No Title</i>	<i>Publication Date</i>	<i>Translated in:</i>
61. عزاداری سید الشهدا .	195?, Lucknow	
62. غنائی حرمت	195?, Lucknow	
63. Hijab	1992	Swahili
64. Islamic Personal Law	1967	
65. In Defence of Islamic Laws	1998	Swahili
66. The Ideal Islamic Government	1990, Dar	
67. Bustani ya Elimu	1991, Dar	
(e) Miscellaneous:		
68. Islam	1967 + many prints	French, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, Burmese, Thai, Swahili, Hausa, Sindhi,
69. Elements of Islamic Studies	1967 + 10 prints	Swedish, Sindhi, Swahili
70. What A Muslim Should Know & Believe	1987	Swahili
71. Your Questions Answered vol. 1	1973	
72. Your Questions Answered vol. 2	1975	
73. Your Questions Answered vol. 3	1978	
74. Your Questions Answered vol. 4	1979	
75. Your Questions Answered vol. 5	1991	
76. Your Questions Answered vol. 6	1995	
77. Your Questions Answered vol. 7	1998	
78. غزلیات نیش (poetry)	2008	
79. نیو دیلیٹ	2009	[16 articles]

Note: There are more than 50 articles that have not been included in this list.

The Shining Star: 'Allamah Rizvi



This is the biography of 'The Shining Star' ('Akhtar-e-Tabaan') which rose in Bihar (India), radiated across the Indian subcontinent, and illuminated the path of many Africans towards Shī'a Islam. Through his pen, he lit the lamp of Shī'ism across continents and oceans, from Indonesia, to Guyana, to Europe, and beyond.

'Allāmah Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi was confronted by many dark clouds: unfamiliar lands, languages, cultures, opposition, prejudice, politics, & more. However, his luminosity pierced through, overcoming all hurdles in his path of tabligh.

Hopefully, reading his life's story will re-energize your spirit to serve the cause of Islam, even when challenges come your way.

This book hopes to demonstrate that if a person is equipped with true knowledge, a spirit of perseverance and sincerity, God will grant him *tawfiq* and success.



Al-Ma'arif Publications,
Canada
www.al-m.ca
publications@al-m.ca

