

# **Dr. Mufti Mohammad Mukarram Ahmed**

*Shahi Imam and Khateeb of Fatehpuri Masjid, Delhi*

**By: Jalaluddin Aslam**

## **Birth and Family Background:**

Dr. Mufti Mohamed Mukarram Ahmed Naqshbandi, the Shahi Imam and Khateeb of Fatehpuri Masjid, Delhi, was born on 15 November 1952 in Delhi into a renowned and distinguished scholarly family. His family has long been associated with religious learning, spiritual guidance, and public service, and it played a notable role during the War of Independence.

## **Upbringing and Early Education:**

His upbringing and early education took place under the supervision of his grandfather, Sheikh-ul-Islam Mufti-e-Azam Muhammad Mazharullah Naqshbandi, the former Shahi Imam of Fatehpuri Masjid and Sajada Nashin of Khanqah-e-Aalia Naqshbandia. His respected father, Imam-ul-Hind Maulana Mufti Muhammad Ahmad (رحمه الله), also served as the Shahi Imam of Fatehpuri Masjid and as the Sajada Nashin and spiritual guide of Khanqah Aalia Naqshbandia.

## **Legacy of Imamat and Khitabat:**

The Imamat and Khitabat of Fatehpuri Masjid have remained within this family since the era of the Mughal Sultans. During the uprising of 1857, Faqeeh-ul-Hind Hazrat Shah Muhammad Masood Naqshbandi, the author of Fatawa Masoodi and the grandfather of Sheikh-ul-Islam Mufti-e-Azam, served as the Shahi Imam and Khateeb of Fatehpuri Masjid. He passed away in 1309 AH. Dr. Mufti Mohammad Mukarram Ahmed received his early education at home and completed the memorization of the Holy Qur'an in 1961. In 1968, after graduating from Madrasa Aalia Arabia, he continued his academic pursuits with distinction. He passed the Molvi Fazil examination from Punjab University, securing First Division and First Position.

### **Imamat-o-Khitabat and Higher Education:**

Following the demise of his father, he assumed the office of Imamat at Fatehpuri Masjid in 1971, corresponding to 1391 AH. In 1972, he passed the Higher Secondary examination from Jamia Millia Islamia board with First Division. In 1975, he completed his B.A. Honours in Arabic from the University of Delhi, and in 1977 he obtained his M.A. in Arabic with First Class and First Position. He was awarded university medals in both B.A. Honours and M.A. Arabic. In 1994, he received his Ph.D. from Jamia Millia Islamia. He also completed a course in Modern Arabic at Madrasa Aalia under the supervision of Professor Jamal Manna Ali Azhari, who had been deputed from Al-Azhar University in 1964 to ceremony of his sister. Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam attended his daughter's marriage on 29 January 2005 at Mahavir Vatika, Daryaganj, New Delhi, and later visited Fatehpuri Masjid on 7 March 2007 for Friday prayers. Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari visited the mosque on Eid al-Adha in 2008. Central ministers, Lieutenant Governor, Chief Ministers of Delhi, political and social leaders, diplomats, and leaders of other faiths have also visited Fatehpuri Masjid at his invitation. It was a unique distinction that two Presidents of India attended functions in Old Delhi, something that had not occurred previously.

### **Friday Sermons:**

Dr. Mufti Mukarram Ahmed has been delivering scholarly addresses before Friday prayers, a practice that continues to this day. His speeches are non-political, simple, eloquent, and widely appreciated by the public. His oratorical style is gentle, clear, and accessible. A renowned scholar from Sambhal, Maulana Mufti Aal Hasan (رحمه الله على) once remarked that, because of his long teaching experience at Jamia Millia Islamia, Dr. Mufti Mukarram explains matters in his Friday sermons as though he were teaching students.

### **Media and Contemporary Issues:**

Alongside his responsibilities as Imam, he addresses contemporary issues and modern challenges in his Friday sermons, presenting important reflections for the intellectual, moral, and social upliftment of the community. His statements are published in Urdu, Hindi, and English newspapers, reflecting the respect and attention his views receive.

### **Multilingual Ability:**

Major Urdu dailies, especially those published from Delhi, prominently carry his Friday sermons. Weekly and monthly journals regularly publish his interviews on religious, social, and community issues. His interviews are marked by seriousness, balance, and moderation, and are appreciated across religious and ideological lines. He has command over Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and English, and expresses his views fluently in all five languages.

### **Academic and Scholarly Contributions:**

In the field of writing and scholarship, he holds a distinguished position. Anmol Publications, publisher based in Delhi, has published a fifty-volume Encyclopaedia of Islam, of which he serves as Chief Editor. Among his notable scholarly works are his Ph.D. thesis, titled A Critical Study of the Poetic Dramas of Aziz Abaza, the Egyptian Poet, Al-Sheikh Ahmad Sir Hindi, and a comparative study of Fatawa Razawiya and Fatawa Rashidiya. He has also translated several religious treatises of Professor Dr. Masood Ahmed into Arabic, which were published in Karachi.

### **Exceptional Teaching Ability:**

Dr. Mufti Mukarram possesses exceptional teaching ability. He explains complex subjects in a simple, engaging, and effective manner. He has never charged fees from students who came to him to learn Arabic, Persian, or Urdu.

### **Spiritual Guide:**

Dr. Mufti Mohammad Mukarram Ahmed is also a spiritual guide in the Naqshbandi, Qadri, Chishti, and Suhrawardi Sufi orders. He received spiritual authorization, or Khilafat, from his grandfather, his father, Professor Dr. Muhammad Masood Ahmed (Karachi), and Arif Billah Pir Syed Abdul Ghani Naqshbandi Mujaddidi (Indore, M.P.). His disciples are spread across India and abroad, and his deputies serve in India, Pakistan, and other countries.

### **Efforts for Muslim Unity:**

Unity among Muslims has always been a sensitive and significant issue. Dr. Mufti Mukarram maintains that true unity can be achieved only on the foundation of the Kalima of Tawheed. He emphasizes cooperation among religious and community organizations and advocates constructive engagement with secular compatriots for the resolution of common social issues. He actively participates in interfaith programs to promote mutual understanding, respect, and harmony.

### **Role in Promoting Peace and Communal Harmony:**

In the modern world, peace is a fundamental necessity. In India, especially since independence, communal harmony has remained essential for social stability and national progress. Dr. Mufti Mukarram has played a prominent role in promoting peace and interfaith understanding.

Under his leadership, the area around Fatehpuri Masjid, a historic Mughal-era mosque built in 1650, has remained peaceful and harmonious. On occasions such as Ramadan, Jum'atul Wida, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha, large gatherings attend his sermons and prayers without disturbance. Festivals of different religious communities are observed in the area with mutual respect and goodwill.

### **Present Responsibilities and Activities:**

At present, Dr. Mufti Mohammad Mukarram Ahmed continues to serve as the Shahi Imam and Khateeb of Fatehpuri Masjid and as the Sajjada Nashin of Khanqah-e- Aalia Naqshbandia. He remains actively engaged in issuing religious verdicts, or fatwas, and in guiding the community on religious and social matters.

**Descendants:**

He has three sons: Maulvi Muhammad Anas Ahmed, Deputy Imam; Maulana Hafiz Saad Ahmed; and Maulana Hammad Ahmed, Honorary Deputy Imam. All three are actively engaged in religious and social service.

Dr. Mufti Mukarram maintains cordial relations with political leaders, government officials, Members of Parliament, and religious leaders of other faiths. He refrains from political partisanship and is respected across party lines. His speeches and statements are frequently published in print and electronic media.

**Foreign Visits:**

He has travelled to Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Tajikistan. In 2007, he was invited by Al-Azhar University to participate in an international conference.

**Commendable Efforts for the Nation and the Community:**

Dr. Mufti Mohammad Mukarram Ahmed's efforts for the progress, unity, welfare, and betterment of the nation and the community are truly commendable and worthy of appreciation.

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