

# My Days with Brother Maulana Abdul Mohymen

My first acquaintance with Abdul Mohymen Bhai happened in the second week of January 1999. Brother Dr. Abdul Bari –the former Sectary General of the Muslim Council of Britain introduced me to him. At that time, he was the Imam of Tottenham Masjid. Our first meeting took place in the mosque office. At my first meeting with him, I was deeply impressed by his warm brotherly attitude towards me. Since then, I lived in the mosque premise for about two and a half years, As a result, I had an opportunity to see him from close proximity. In those days I was alone in London. But my stay in the premises of the mosque bestowed on me huge blessings. In those days, I was passing through some of the most distressful days of my life. He is senior to me. Because of my stay in the mosque, I was relieved of my loneliness. It gave me the opportunity to enjoy the warm and brotherly comfort of Abdul Mohymen Bhai and his family. I also enjoyed the opportunity to be friendly with many multi-ethnic musallies of the mosque,

In those days, I used to cook my own food myself. Since I wasn't a good cook, it wasn't a good and pleasant experience for me. In those difficult days, it was a blessing to enjoy the brotherly hospitality of Mohaimen Bhai and especially our respected *bhabi*. May Allah Subhana Wa Ta'la bless on her for her kind hospitality. I have been invited so many times to his home and every time *bhabi* used to cook varieties of excellent items. I would never forget those days. In any of the family functions, I used to be invited there. As an imam, it was very common for him to be invited by many of his friendly musallies. If I was free, he used to take me with him to those invitations. In those days, Mohaimen Bhai has the family of his deceased elder brother living in Tottenham near to the mosque. His newly married daughter also used to live near his house. I used to be invited to their family events. As if, I was the family member. It is memorable that in the month of Ramadan, the *bhabi* used to make my favorite iftari like *chola muri* (roasted gram and fried rice). I never felt any iota of diminished

brotherly feeling towards me.

I found Mohaimen Bhai thoroughly and profoundly a gentleman. He is a man of simplicity and humbleness. His interpersonal skills and empathy for other people are impressive. Many people used to visit him every day in his office. Sometimes he looked tired, but he was never found deficient in a highly warm and welcoming smile. He used to make a cup of tea by his own hand and present some cakes or biscuits to the visitors. It didn't need an important person for that. While I firstly observed such hospitality by an imam, it was indeed a cultural shock for me. In Bangladesh, I have hardly seen any imam making tea by his own hand for a visitor. Moreover, he used to invite many of the misallies at his home. In Bangladesh, imams are mostly at the recipient end of any such event and not the provider. So, he appeared to be highly exceptional and impressive.

Abdul Mohymen Bhai was very keen to disseminate the Qur'anic knowledge to others. Because of his personal initiatives, unlike many other mosques in London, the community could found the Tottenham mosque as a vibrant learning premise. I took some Qur'an tajweed lessons from him. He used to run several learnings session in the mosque for the men and women living in the community. Five sessions used to take place in the mosque premise every week: three were for the men, one for the women and one for the girls. For males, there were two sessions on Sunday: the morning study circle and the Qur'an *tafseer* after the noon prayer. On every Saturday, there used to have an afternoon study circle. The women used to have a session in the morning on Sunday. He used to teach Qur'anic Arabic each week after Isha prayer. And every month, the used to have a special seminar addressed by some invited guests followed by a free meal for the attendants.

Sometimes Abdul Mohymen Bhai used to give me some opportunities to share my views in some of those sessions. Moreover, in his office we used to hold informal discussions on various social and Islamic issues. Truly, during my stay in the mosque, I was blessed with a rare environment of continuous learning and teaching facilities. I developed a good circles of friends who were very committed to

learning. At that time, I used to edit a monthly journal named "Alor Path" and Abdul Mohymen Bhai sometime helped me to check the spelling errors. In those days, I completed a post-graduation course in dermatology at London University. Despite my absence from my family, I still remember those sweet memory of the mosque. And those memories indeed owe to the pleasant company of Abdul Mohymen Bhai. May Allah Subhana wa Ta'al bless him with a long and healthy life. Ameen.  
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