

THE 37TH DAI AL-MUTLAQ

SYEDNA NOOR-MOHAMMAD NOORUDDIN ^{RA}

URUS 4TH RAJAB, 1130 AH / 1718 AD, MANDVI

This is a brief biographical article about the 37th Dai al-Mutlaq Syedna Noor-Mohammad Nooruddin ^{RA}, highlighting his *noorani sirat*, his *shafaqat-bhari tarbiyat* of mumineen, and the travails that he faced at the hands of the ruler of Jamnagar, such that he had to leave his home and hometown and live in hiding, passing away in the port town of Mandvi.

The material in this article is derived from Syedna Taher Saifuddin's ^{RA} *Risalat Sharifah* of 1374 H titled *Nahr un Noor ash Sha'sha'ani* (نهر النور الشعشعاني). Syedna Taher Saifuddin ^{RA} opens his narrative of Syedna Noor-Mohammad Nooruddin's ^{RA} life with the following glowing description of his luminous qualities:

[Syedna Moosa Kalimuddin ^{RA}] was succeeded in his high *maqam* by his son, the noble Dai, lofty of station, Syedna Noor-Mohammad Nooruddin ^{RA}. Thirty-seventh in the *silsila* of *Satr* Dais, Dawat became ablaze with his radiant, shining light when he became the *na'ib* of Rasulullah's ^{SA} son, Imam Tayyeb ^{SA}. He called people to pure sincerity (*ikhlaas*) and conviction (*yaqeen*). He was munificent in giving, his fingers pouring forth gifts. He had attained the highest peak of purity and sincerity. Like his auspicious name (Noor-Mohammad Nooruddin ^{RA}), his upright form was the embodiment of light (*noor*). In the dark, black night of *Satr*, his radiant light guided his followers. ... Fully worthy of the exalted *rutba* of Dai, the light of the luminous Fatema Zahra's son shone forth from his luminous face. (*Nahr un Noor ash Sha'sha'ani*, pp. 206-207).

Syedna Noor-Mohammad Nooruddin ^{RA} was born in Jamnagar in the era of his great-grandfather, the 34th Dai Syedna Ismail Badruddin ^{RA} bin Mulla Raj (*wafaat*: 1085 AH/1674 AD). When the glad tidings of his birth were brought to Syedna Badruddin ^{RA}, he offered praise and thanks to Allah, and said, "The one who will sit on the throne of the caliphate, the throne I sit on, the one who has been selected for the *rutba* of Dai al-Mutlaq, has arrived." Then he prayed for the *azeem ush shaan* newborn, saying "I invoke Allah's protection for him by the grace Allah's *kalimaat taamma*, from the malevolence of every malicious eye, and from the evil of the slinker and the slitherer."

Syedna Noor-Mohammad Nooruddin ^{RA} was very close to his grandfather, the 35th Dai Syedna Abdut-Tayyeb Zakiyuddin ^{RA}, so much so that Syedna Zakiyuddin ^{RA} said that he considered

him his son, rather than his grandson, and Syedna Taher Saifuddin ^{RA} affirms that he was closer to him than any of his three sons. Syedna Zakiyuddin ^{RA} nurtured Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} and brought him up, and he entrusted to him the *khazana* of *kitaabs* and gave him charge of managing all his properties. Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} served his grandfather with devotion, especially in his last illness. Before Syedna Zakiyuddin ^{RA} passed away in 1110 H/1699 AD, he bestowed Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} his ring, “indicating his future accession to the *rutba* of Dai al-Mutlaq” (*Nahr un Noor*, p. 208). Then Syedna Zakiyuddin ^{RA} did *wasiyyat* to his son and successor, the 36th Dai Syedna Moosa Kalimuddin ^{RA}, that he should appoint Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} as his successor.

Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} served his father, Syedna Kalimuddin ^{RA}, with devotion, and aided him in conducting the Dawat. Syedna Kalimuddin ^{RA} entrusted him with executing all the affairs of Dawat, appointed him in the *rutba* of Mazoon, and made him also his Mansoos.

When Syedna Kalimuddin ^{RA} passed away in 1122 H/1710 AD, Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} became the 37th Dai. He wrote to his *amils* to renew mumineen’s *misaq* for himself, the new Dai, this being “Allah’s *sunnat* in which there is no change or alteration.”

Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} faced many adversities during his tenure as Dai. Syedna Taher Saifuddin ^{RA} describes these hardships in some detail:

Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} was initially all alone in conducting the Dawat. He had no seasoned counselors in Jamnagar and no mature aides. Meanwhile, the ruler of Jamnagar, the ‘Jaam’ Laakha, was constant in his demands for money and in his oppressive persecution of Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA}. Soon after Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} became Dai, the Jaam sent forty or fifty soldiers to stand guard at Syedna Nooruddin’s ^{RA} home, to forcefully collect the money, and they were uncouth and insulting.

Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} left his home and hometown secretly one midnight, with only three companions (among them the 39th Dai Syedna Ibrahim Wajihuddin ^{RA} bin Syedi Abdul-Qadir Hakimuddin ^{RA}). It was the monsoon season, and Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} walked all night in the rain. He passed through the hamlets of Boodri, where he prayed *fajr namaaz*, then hired an ox, and rode to Daruda, where he hid for a few days in the home of his Aisaheba’s uncle (he had already sent her and his son Abdul-Karim ahead to Daruda). From there, Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} went to Wankaner. From Wankaner, he went to Morbi, where mumineen were overjoyed to have their Mawla with them, and the Raja Kayaji welcomed him with deference and hospitality. Meanwhile, the Jaam had sent soldiers in pursuit, and they searched high and low, and even passed through Daruda, but *behamdillah* they did not find him. When he found out that Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} was in Morbi, he wrote to the Raja to have him sent back, but the

Raja refused. Outraged, the Jaam looted Syedna Nooruddin's ^{RA} home and possessions in Jamnagar, and also seized precious letters written by his forefathers, the 34th and 35th Dais.

Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} lived in security in Morbi for three years. He built houses for students of Dawat *ilm*, to whom he gave *sabaq*, and he built a well and a *wuzu hoz* in the masjid. He also summoned from Jamnagar his cousin (later his successor, the 38th Dai), Syedna Ismail Badruddin ^{RA} *thani* (the second), who had been very ill at the time of his departure. Mawla Abdul-Qadir Hakimuddin ^{RA} (who was to become the *azeem ush shaan* Mazoon of Syedna Badruddin ^{RA}) also came from Rampura to Syedna Nooruddin's ^{RA} *hazrat* in Morbi; much of Syedna Taher Saifuddin's ^{RA} information about Syedna Nooruddin's ^{RA} *paak* life is from the biography of Syedi Abdul-Qadir Hakimuddin ^{RA} (*Sirat Syedi 'Abd al-Qādir Hakīm al-Dīn*) written by his student Syedi Luqman-ji bin Habibullah. Syedi Abdul-Qadir Hakimuddin ^{RA} composed several poems in *madeh* of Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA}, which are rich sources of detailed historical data and *ikhlaas ni tasavvur*. The refrain of one lyrical *qasida* is as follows:

Our firmaments have been illuminated by Noor-Mohammad آفاقنا ضاءت بنور محمد
The noor you see in them is the noor of Noor-Mohammad. فالنور فيها نور محمد

Six months after looting Syedna Nooruddin's ^{RA} possessions, the Jaam fell ill, and with his body infested with parasitic worms, he died a terrible, painful death. Allah Ta'ala made him an *ibrat* among the people. Dawat enemies in every age should beware God's punishment.

The Jaam was succeeded by his son, the new Jaam Raj Singh, who was a devotee of Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} —when he was a youth, Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} had given him a *ta'weez* which had healed him from poison fed to him by his stepmother, and he remained eternally grateful. Raj Singh invited Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} to come back to his home in Jamnagar, and he returned all the furniture and possessions that his father had looted, in addition to the chit of credit for 330,000 gold *Jaamis* that his father had extorted.

In Dhu-l-Hijja 1124H, Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} returned to Jamnagar, accompanied by fifty students of Dawat *ilm*, and was received by Jaam Raj Singh himself at the head of his full army, all the mumineen of Jamnagar, as well as a host of people from other communities, with pomp and ceremony, drums and bugles. He visited the graves of his forefathers, and set up the *tarteeb* of *hudood*, with Mawla Qasim-Khan as his Mazoon, and Mawla Abdul-Qadir Hakimuddin as his Mukasir.

Some time thereafter, Jaam Raj Singh was murdered by his step-brother, who took the throne. Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} did not feel safe anymore in Jamnagar, and he migrated to Mandvi, a port on the Kachchh coast, where he set up home, and where he set up a new 'Dars' for students of Dawat *ilm*.

During his last years, there was a terrible drought in the lands of Kachchh. A detailed account of these difficult times, and also of Syedna Nooruddin's ^{RA} demise, is given in his successor Syedna Badruddin ^{RA} *thani's* epistle to Yemen. Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} bought grain and fruit and sent it from Mandvi to Jamnagar and surrounding towns, as well as silver *sikkas*. He also wrote to Dawat personnel in Ahmedabad with instructions to distribute money and food to the poor and needy.

Syedna Nooruddin ^{RA} passed away suddenly on Friday, 4 Rajab 1130 AH/1718 AD. Stricken with grief, his Aaisaheba, Fatema Aaisaheba, joined him on the 5th; she was buried beside him. They left behind three young children under the age of eight. Syedna Nooruddin's ^{RA} Qubbah Nooraniyah was rebuilt by Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin ^{RA}. It is visited by hundreds of *mumineen muhibbeen* and thousands of angels *samawiyyeen*.

فَأَعْلَى اللَّهِ قُدْسُهُ وَزَادَهُ عَلَى نُورِهِ نُورًا * وَلَقَدْ أَهَّجَتْهُ سَلَامًا وَجَدَلًا وَخُبُورًا * وَنِعْمَةً وَسُرُورًا * وَزَادَ
لِسَوَارِي بَرَكَاتِهِ فِي الدَّعْوَةِ ظُهُورًا * وَأَطْلَعَ فِي رِيَاضِهَا مِنْ تَوَالِي حَسَنَاتِهِ زُهُورًا * وَأَسْعَفَ بِعَظِيمِ
حُزْمَتِهِ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ آرَابَهُمْ إِسْعَافًا * وَضَاعَفَ بِكَرِيمِ مَقَامِهِ لِرَائِيهِ حَسَنَاتِهِمْ أَصْعَافًا * وَأَدَامَ أَفَاقَ الدَّعْوَةِ
الْغَرَاءِ بِنُورِهِ مُنَوَّرَةً * وَصُورَةَ نُورِهِ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مُصَوَّرَةً *

May Allah raise his sanctity and increase his light, light upon light. May Allah welcome him with *tahiyat* and salaam, happiness and joy, favors and bliss. May Allah increase in Dawat *zuhoor* of his *barakaat*. May Allah fulfill by his *azeem hurmat*, mumineen's hopes and desires. May Allah increase manifold the *hasanaat* of all who come for his *ziyarat*. May Allah keep the firmaments of the radiant Dawat luminous with his light. May Allah preserve his *noorani soorat* always in mumineen's hearts. (*Nahr un Noor*, p. 248)

May Allah keep Syedna Nooruddin's ^{RA} *waris-e-anwar*, Syedna Taher Saifuddin's ^{RA} *noor-e-nazar* and Syedna Mohammad Burhanuddin's ^{RA} *mansoos-e-agharr*, our Aqamola, Dai-z-zamaan and *mushfiq pidar*, Syedna Khuzaima Qutbuddin ^{TUS} in *sehhat kamilah* and *nemat taammah* till *Roz-e-hashar*.