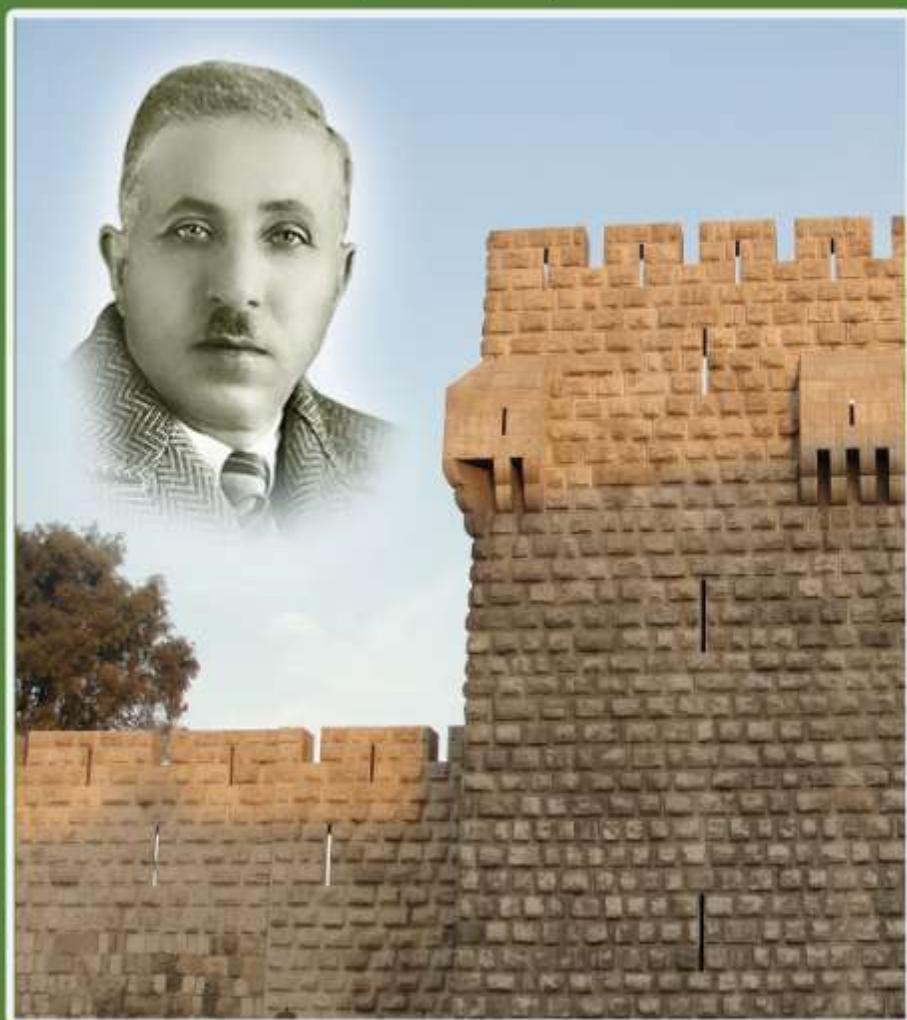


Stories of the Scholar

Mohammad Amin Sheikho

His Life, His Deeds, His Way to Al'lah

(1890-1964)



Checked and Introduced by
Prof. A. K. John Alias Al-Dayrani

Stories of the Scholar Mohammad Amin Sheikho

*His Life, His Deeds, His Way to Al'lah
(1890-1964)*

The Great Humane Eminent Scholar

Mohammad Amin Sheikho
(God has sanctified his soul)

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Checked and Introduced by

Prof. A. K. John Alias Al-Dayrani

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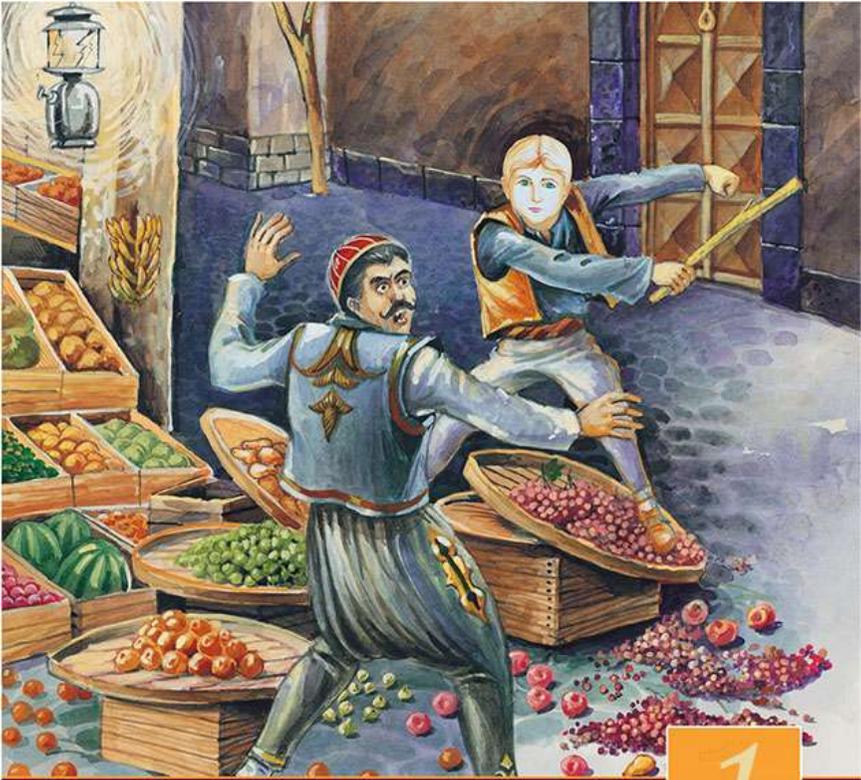
Introduction

You may wonder, as do I, and as do people everywhere: how could this great scholar have gained access to such truth, when all of the earlier scholars and the great guides and imams failed to do so? I would reply to you: a person has nothing except what they strive for.

Indeed, people are differentiated through their actions. This is true even for the Envoys (Messengers) and noble Prophets... and there will be a different level for everyone according to their deeds in this world.

Our own great scholar M. A. Sheikho was given awareness and understanding by Al'lah, and he was distinguished by his outstanding deeds and his great and humane sacrifices. Al'lah did not give him anything except that which he deserved. God says, "And We sent it down deservedly, and with righteousness it came down." [1]

Part One



His Life, His Deeds, His Way to Al'lah

Checked and Introduced by
Prof. A. K. John Alias Al-Dayrani

1

A Glimpse into the Life of the Eminent Scholar M. Amin Sheikho (His soul has been sanctified by Al'lah)

His Honourable Birth

A splendid full moon appeared over Damascus on a blessed night in 1890 when a baby son was born to a Damascene merchant and his wife... surely a portent of good news! The father loved his son very much because of his admirable and bright companionship, and because, for him, he resembled the full moon in all its heavenly beauty.

All during his young years, the son was an active, clever, and lively child; and his constant cheerfulness and joy radiated out to all those around him, creating a great sense of well-being in them too. Day by day he grew bigger and stronger, and showed an ever increasing level of intelligence and strength of personality, which led his devoted parents to become ever more deeply attached to him. They adored the child and cared for him with great love, affection and understanding. Sadly, however, his loving father died at a young age after suffering an exhausting and painful illness.

The entire family was greatly affected by the death of their husband and father, for he left behind a widow and two sons to grieve his passing. He was also sorely missed by his friends and colleagues for he was a good and honest man. The child, Mohammad Amin was not yet seven years of age when he took on the responsibility of protecting his mother and defending her against the difficulties which surrounded his family after the death of his father, and the departure of his brother Saleem to Turkey.

Even as the only child Mohammad Amin was distinguished for his serenity when faced with the many problems of life. Patiently he bore difficulties that powerful men might never have been able to deal with, because he was a member of a small, respectable family that had faced much adversity.

A Distinguished Young Man and a Glimpse at His Deeds

Because of his honourable lineage that is linked directly to the great Envoy [2]Mohammad (cph)[3]he had direct access to the hierarchy of the ruling Turkish state of the time, which entitled his family to reside in Sarouja Quarter, known as 'Little Istanbul', a residential quarter reserved then for Turkish statesmen. This connection also enabled him to study at Amber, the Royal Ottoman Faculty for police officers in Damascus.

Mohammad Amin completed his studies when he was eighteen years old and graduated with the rank of police officer. He was far superior to his colleagues insomuch as he displayed extreme courage, trust, and integrity; also his perseverance and dedication to hard work led to distinction. Successively, he became the commanding officer of many of the police stations in various districts of Damascus, thus eliminating the criminal and political chaos rampant in the city at that time. Thereafter he was

appointed as the chief of police in a succession of small towns away from the capital city, where, yet again he established law and order in his unflinching way. In recognition of his professional ability and success he was eventually appointed to the position of director of the citadel of Damascus where the central prison was located. He was a great example to all, for no sooner had he taken up each new position than peace and safety prevailed throughout the entire area under his administration.

By day and by night he was constantly alert and prepared to protect and defend his country.

Whenever the state was confronted by any lawlessness or atrocity, his assistance would be requested. When all manner of evil such as killing, corruption and criminality spread across a region, he was their hope, their saviour, the man they could always rely on to resolve a dangerous situation and liberate people from oppression.

When decay began to nibble at the body of the Turkish state, and the light of Islam was dimmed, corruption and chaos prevailed all over the country to the extent that the level of crime became overwhelming; life became difficult, the daytime was fraught with danger, and the darkness of the night covered many horrific crimes; except in Damascus! Damascus, its suburbs and surrounding countryside, was a haven of calm and safety under the ever watchful eye of the eminent officer Mohammad Amin, whose life was dedicated to peace.

In his work he dauntlessly faced numerous criminals, showing superior courage and audacity, besieging many guerrillas and arresting their leaders. All of the tasks he undertook in the line of duty culminated in success and further support and he was given the nickname Aslan, meaning 'the Lion', for his fearlessness in facing adversity. With the Help of God, he was the only officer possessing the courage to confront

injustice and terrorism. Fearing his bravery, criminals would surrender to him, and beg for his mercy and compassion.

He rose through the ranks and was moved from one police station to another until eventually he was appointed director of the citadel of Damascus, which contained the city's warehouses and prisons. He held this position for many years during which he achieved great distinction and demonstrated a level of bravery, the like of which Damascus had never seen before. He took audacious measures when, during the First World War, he freed thousands of prisoners facing the death sentence and put them in the army front lines to defend the country against the invading enemy. This singular decision was the reason that all gallows throughout the country could be demolished. These gallows had originally been constructed on the orders of Jamal Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Syria, known as 'the Butcher' for his brutal acts. They were placed prominently in marketplaces and neighbourhoods across the country and were used, rightly or wrongly, to snuff out the lives of hundreds of young men every day. For that reason he was frequently exposed to the threat of death. Thus, by His Greatness, His Mercy, and His Assistance, Al'lah saved Mohammad Amin by enabling him to have this innovative idea.

During the French mandate of Syria 1920–1946, as he was a trusted civil security officer, he was returned to his former position as the director of a district or the chief of a police station, until the great Syrian revolution took place. At this time, due to his love for God and his noble wish to serve his country, he became the incomparable driving force of the revolutionaries and the life blood of the revolution. In recognition of his sincerity and commitment to their cause the revolutionaries put the seal ring into his trustworthy hands. He unnerved the French forces with the astounding tactics that he employed to turn retreat into victory. The French forces were further infuriated when he showed his sympathy to the revolutionaries and arranged, to the benefit of the revolutionaries, the greatest arms transfer between France and Greater Syria.

At that time the French had appointed him to the prestigious position of director of Anjar Castle (in Lebanon) where they had stored a great amount of arms. One dark night, Officer Sheikho handed over these arms to the revolutionaries. General Catroux, the governor of Syria at that time, was totally enraged and ordered that Mohammad Amin be executed, but the Almighty God saved him and his accomplice through

His Complete Words, and the French came to trust and respect him again despite their original error of judgement.

Guidance and Invitation to Al'lah

When Mohammad was forty years old, God revealed to him the full knowledge of all things, that is, His Omniscience.

He began to envision and to hear the Prophet's recitation of al-Fatiha (the Opening) Fortress[4] while he was praying to God. After that he started to guide his disciples, undertaking this great task with unparalleled strength and great worthiness. He used to be called 'Amin Bey' for 'Bey'[5] is a Turkish word meaning 'the pure'. His salon attracted the flower of the youth of Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, who came asking to bathe in his Mohammadan well of wisdom. Here they found a rich, dignified and generous spiritual sanctuary.

'It is sufficient that your noble deeds are mentioned, for us to know that you are the shining example to all of us.'

A Glimpse of Mohammad Amin's Invitation to Al'lah - His Revelation

Mohammad Amin's blessed gatherings were distinguished by his captivating and unique revelations which he explained perfectly with plain and realistic meanings. His words flew like an arrow that always hit the target and fell peacefully on the hearts of the listeners, and was like a light that charmed them into allowing their spirits to soar higher and higher.

He drove away darkness, ripped apart all contradiction, and finally obliterated the schools of intrigue and empty debate which created a mental chasm between the people and their God. He made them aware of the reality of God, and the consummation of His Qualities: a Merciful God, Compassionate, Wise, Fair, Conferrer of benefit, Giver, and that He deserved to be worshipped for Himself for He is the Owner of Beauty and Consummation. He should be praised even if a man suffers something harmful because this harm results in a cure and assistance from God. Al'lah has no need of any part of creation nor of man's allegiance and obedience, because He is Rich and we are poor; our obedience to Him is solely for our own good and benefit. We need to enter His Presence through prayer and good deeds in order to enter the

shining stronghold of faith, and to be protected from misfortune and adversity.

The history of Mohammad Amin's acclaimed life is full of meaning and is a perfect structure for the wonderful revelation that he brought: a revelation which contained facts at which heads bowed in great respect. The reality of his life was like a light: his own behaviour was proof and his true practical application of God's Word was a guide. His revelation was without equal in world civilizations and the positive laws of contemporary life.

Why are we created?

What is this universe for?

What is the use of religious rituals?

What is the reason for fasting, followed by eating in Ramadan?

What does prayer achieve? And what are its benefits?

Why go on pilgrimage to a dry and barren desert?

Why were we brought into existence?

Where were we before coming to this earth?

What is death for? And what really comes after it? What is the spirit?

What is the soul?

What is the mind? What is Paradise? What is Hell?

What about the question of fate?

What is the pre-material world (the world of spirits)?

People have not allowed themselves to ask these questions because they were taken up with the temptations and deceptions of this human world, and they forgot to search in the files of existence to discover the secrets it holds.

In one of his meetings with other Western scientists, the famous English scientist, Sir John Bennett, a contemporary of Mohammad Amin, said, 'Indeed, all the sciences that we have obtained do not equal the sea of sciences of that great scholar in the Orient.'

His invitation to follow God's Path is based on a course of action that never fails, "Say, 'This is my way: I, and whoever follows me, invite you to Al'lah with certainty, for Al'lah is Glorified and Exalted. And I am not one of those who worship many gods.' "[6] After Mohammad Amin received such a message through this honourable Ayah (verse), he began to ask for God's Guidance for all mankind and continued to do so for a period lasting more than thirty years, concentrating on the following points:

1 Advising people how to achieve consummation with the Almighty God; demonstrating His Mercy to His servants; and His Justice towards His creation.

2 He discredited all the immorality that remained in the minds of humans, and whatever else that acted against Godly Justice, Clemency, Mercy, and all Godly Perfection. In all things M. A. Sheikho was guided by the Word of God, "And all the most Beautiful Names (Attributes) belong to Al'lah, so call on Him by these Names, and do not keep company with those who deny His Names. They will be paid back for what they have done." [7]

3 Revealing the fulfillments of the Envoys (ptt), [8] whose purity and flawless spirits God guaranteed in His Glorious Book (the Qur'an), and He made them the ultimate role models and guides for all the worlds [9] as mentioned in Mohammad Amin's book, Impeccability of Prophets, the like of which could only have come

through God and could never have been written by his predecessors. He refuted all falsehood or interpretation that disagreed with the Envoys' high spiritual worth and their flawless adherence to the Word of God, relying on the Qur'anic verse, "They are the ones who are guided by Al'lah, so follow their guidance." [10]

4 Calling people to adhere to the highest principles and truly to attain the devotion to God (as witnessed by Al'lah's Light), besides warning people not to let their spirits follow their capricious whims, nor to depend upon worthless wishes but turn to the Word of God, "It will not be according to your desires, nor to those of the people of the scripture; whoever does evil, will receive the appropriate payment, and he will find no one except God to protect or help." [11]

And also calling on the tradition of the Envoy (cpth), “The discerning person is one who knows his own faults and works towards what comes after death; and the disabled person is one who follows his own whims and asks God to grant whatever he wishes for.”

5 Guiding people to the steps of true faith that the Envoy (cpth) showed to his noble companions: steps which were derived from the Book of God. No person’s heart can be full of the joy of faith unless they follow God’s Order and are self-disciplined so as not to commit sins. God mentioned this in His noble Saying, “And whoever believes in God, will have his heart guided by Him.”[12]

6 Revering God’s Envoy (cpth), glorifying him, and demonstrating the eminent position in which Al’lah holds him; then guiding them towards the way of his love (cpth) and revealing what benefits come from loving that pure, virtuous spirit, are twofold: man will enter into Al’lah’s Presence through him; and if man’s spirit is joined to the Envoy (cpth) through the perfection which comes to him from God, he will be tinted with perfection, according to the Almighty’s Saying, “So those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light sent down through him, will be the ones to gain.”[13]

The years that this pure man spent striving and seeking closeness to Al’lah were of the greatest benefit. And through this closeness to God he achieved great prominence and fulfillment; he brought about wonderful things, undertook work that was full of bitter conflict, and made great humane sacrifices. So his life was the greatest example of perfect behaviour, in that he supported what is right through the unequalled heroic deeds that he did to defeat and destroy all falsehood.

Mohammad Amin devoted his valuable life to the service of mankind. He fought against the passing of time and radiated light as did the sun in the sky. At his hands, the dark, shadowy Damascus nights seemed as bright as day because of the glittering light of his works and the blessed grace brought by his sacrifices. He worked tirelessly, by night and by day, taking little time to rest. He rarely closed his eyes except to take short naps as his over-riding driving force was to save his human brethren who were mired in spiritual sorrow and pain. He gave no thought to the risks and dangers he faced, knowing that he might be punished or even put to death for his teaching and endeavours to lead mankind to God. He made many concessions and despite his previous

wealth, he became penniless. Due to Mohammad Amin's unique virtue it is no wonder that God chose to reveal to him that clear revelation one divine night so that he could witness the Realm of God and his spirit could rise to the sacred lofty worlds of Mohammad (cpth) which were prepared for him because of his truthfulness, endeavours and great sacrifice undertaken to bring the Word of God to mankind. Similarly, anyone who does their utmost to follow this example and is honest in their love and their quest for God and the Envoy (cpth), will find the door open for them along with all their comrades, if they too choose to follow this path.

Joining the Highest Comrade – the Death of Mohammad Amin

In this wonderful way, Mohammad Amin spent a beneficial life, brimming with the knowledge of God, that makes the heart feel secure, and without which humankind will never achieve true happiness. He was like a lamp that lit generations on their path towards achieving bliss through the Book of God (the Qur'an), and the light that guided mankind to great joy, fulfillment, integrity, and the virtuous life that comes only from knowing God. He carried out this unique work until he left this world to join Al'lah, man's highest Comrade, during the first days of Rabi' al-Thani in the year 1384 A.H. (1964 A.D.). He was buried in the cemetery of God's Prophet, Dhi al-Kifl, in the al-Salhiyeh district of Damascus.

God says, "And who can say anything better than the one who invites others to follow the Words of Al'lah, does good deeds, and states: 'I am a Muslim'." [14]

Stories of the
SCHOLAR
Part One

The Great Saint

Once upon a time, more than one hundred years ago, people lived a simple and happy life. Their Arab houses were made of clay and built around large inner courtyards; the rooms were lit by oil lanterns at night, since there was no electricity at that time.

The courtyards were adorned with beds of fragrant, colourful flowers; roses and all manner of other sweet-smelling plants were irrigated by the musical sounds of trickling streams that lifted the spirits and delighted the eyes.

Surrounding the houses were beautiful orchards full of fragrant flowers and tall trees which cast welcome shade on the ground beneath their spreading branches. Life was good, the rains were abundant, and the earth gave generously of its produce. People slept early and rose at dawn to pray; there was no excessive noise, no pollution from cars or factories, and no traffic accidents or unforeseen disasters. Tranquility and peace prevailed; people lived in harmony with each other and were united for the common good.

This was the time during which our story is set.

Ismael, the hajji [15] was pacing the hallway waiting impatiently for the imminent birth of his child. He was a noteworthy, religious merchant, a man of high principles and excellent conduct. He was truly noble and generous, and a man of great courage.

Within a few hours, his wife Um Saleem [16] their son, easily and with little pain. It was a boy! gave birth to A new child had come into this world: his beauty surpassed even that of the full moon and was without any equal. When he was informed of this happy news, Ismael the hajji was overjoyed.

Um Saleem said, ‘Al’lah has just given you a male child... he is more beautiful than the moon... so, what will you name him?’

He said, ‘Thank God... thank God, all praise is to God. His name will be Mohammad Amin, if it pleases God.’

The young master Mohammad Amin grew up basking in his mother’s love, and enveloped by his father’s tender feelings.

He was greatly admired by all who had the good fortune to meet him, and was showered with gifts.

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