

REPORT ON THE IMAM QAASIM NANOTWI CONFERENCE

The Second World Ulama Conference
held at Darul Uloom Azaadville South Africa

By Hadhrat Moulana Abdul Hamid Is'haq Saheb
Daamat Barakaatuhum



FOREWORD

All Praise is due to Allah Ta'ala, The Most Merciful,
The Most Beneficent, The Friend, The Protector and
The Inspirer of Faith.

May Peace and Blessings be upon the Beloved of Allah Ta'ala,
Rasulullah (ﷺ)

Alhamdulillah, with the Grace of Allah Ta'ala, Darul Uloom
Azaadville was granted the great and wonderful honour of hosting
the Second World Ulama Conference this year of 1435 (2014).

It was, no doubt, beyond expectation – in its benefits and all-
encompassing goodness : A learning experience, an eye opener, an
inspiration, and a bright, burning flame of hope in these times of
darkness and fitnah.

Just the presence of these pious and learned personalities had a
great impact on hearts and engendered within all, a firmness and
resolve in doing the work of Dien.

Alhamdulillah, Thumma Alhamdulillah, the conference offered
renewed enthusiasm and zeal in serving Dien and working towards
a shared goal, of establishing Dien throughout the world, seeking
Allah Ta'ala's Pleasure. May Allah Ta'ala use us all in the Khidmat of
Dien with Ikhlaas and Maqbuliyat.

This is a report from our respected Sheikh, Hadhrat Moulana Abdul
Hamid Is'haq Saheb (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ), which presents the background to
the Darul Uloom accepting the request to host the conference, a
systematic order of events of how the conference reached fruition,

together with the beautiful outcome of the five days, wherein Ulama from around the world gathered, in an effort to unite and fortify the efforts of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama`ah.

Some friends, who are close and who had assisted tremendously with the Mu'tamar (conference), requested that this report be also presented to the general public. Insha-Allah, they will also benefit from what had transpired, since the Mu'tamar was for the Ulama and by invitation only, and thus not accessible to the general public.

May Allah Ta'ala accept all the preparations that went into hosting the conference, together with each and every person's noble contribution and participation – and may Allah Ta'ala make the conference a means of tremendous good and a means of Hidayah wherever the Ulama-e-Haq are expending themselves for Dien. Aamien.

Jumad Al Aakhirah 1435 | April 2014

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MU'TAMAR REPORT | KAARGUZAARI

BACKGROUND TO HOSTING THE CONFERENCE

More than a year ago, in the month of Rabi ul Awwal 1434 (January 2013), we were informed by our students, who graduated in Azaadville and who thereafter studied under Sheikh Muhammad Awwaamah (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) in Madinatul Munawwarah, that Sheikh Muhiyuddien, the son of Sheikh Muhammad Awwaamah, wished to hold a Mu'tamar (conference) with regard to the life and works of Hadhrat Moulana Qasim Nanotwi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) and the Ulama of Deoband.

I was aware that a similar conference was held in Istanbul, Turkey, sometime ago. However, conferences of this nature were not the way of our elders, nor in our mizaaj. ...Infact, I was invited to the conference in Turkey. Since it was not in accordance to the ways of our Akaabir, I did not consider attending. ...So in respect to this proposal and request also, I did not pay any real attention.

After some time, I was again approached, and once more I did not give much attention.

Then Sheikh Muhiyuddien himself contacted me and explained to me what the conference was about and what it entailed. Whilst it made sense to me, the cost involved was beyond our reach. There were also some negative aspects of the conference in Istanbul that had been brought to our attention, which created hesitancy.

The initial proposal presented to us, was that the conference be hosted in a hotel or resort – which was something that we disapproved. Moreover, the cost to host such a conference was phenomenal, for the few days. The air-fare costs, for the participants, were also very high for us – which we explained to Sheikh Muhiyuddien.

It was then decided that the conference be held at the Darul Uloom, where the environment for such a Dini programme would be far more conducive and also without any cost! From his side, Sheikh Muhiyuddien took the responsibility of organising the air-tickets. As such, we did not have to pay anything towards the air-fares.

We corresponded extensively with the Sheikh, regarding our concerns, such as photographs being taken, the event being videoed, televised and speakers without beards. Alhamdulillah, Sheikh Muhiyuddien agreed that there would be no photography and that he would choose speakers with proper beards, as far as possible.

With these assurances, and considering the great benefits of such a conference, we finally agreed. This was done after Istikharah, as well as making Mashura with senior Ulama, locally and abroad, the Shura of the Darul Uloom, senior members of the Azaadville community and other respectable people.

THE BENEFITS WHICH WE ENVISAGED

- 1.) The Arab Ulama, particularly, and all other Ulama, would be introduced to Hadhrat Moulana Qasim Nanotwi (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) and the Ulama of Deoband. This was our duty, as students

and sons of Deoband – to inform the people of the world, who our elders and fore-fathers in Dien were, what they stood for, their mission and their sterling works of Dien! But alas, we had failed miserably!

Here, in this conference, which was to be hosted, we saw a ready-made format for this, brought to our door step. ...How could we refuse, such a Ni'mat-e-ghair mutaraqqabah (an unexpected blessing)?!

- 2.) To introduce, on a general and larger scale, the Ulama of Deoband, their works, sacrifices, mission and vision, to the Arab Ulama in particular, and the Ulama of the world in general; as well as to come to know the other Ulama of the world.
- 3.) To create an awareness of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah; in particular, the Hanafi Ulama.

This was also to strengthen ties with the Ulama and foster Dieni relationships between them, which is of paramount importance.

- 4.) To make known the Maktab system in South Africa, since the Maktab system is the back-bone of the Ummah. This was done so that they could be encouraged to promote and endeavour in this most important field of Dien, in their own countries.
- 5.) To acquaint them with the Maktab system and propagation work undertaken in South Africa for the indigenous people – which is being done with the Fadhl of Allah Ta'ala.

- 6.) To introduce and encourage them on the Maktab system that South African Muslims are doing in various parts of the world – again, with Allah Ta’ala’s Fadhl.
- 7.) To introduce and inform them, on a one on one, personal level, about the work of the Tabligh Jamaat. This was with the intent to remove the ill-conceived ideas about the Jamaat work, as found in many Muslim countries, where the religious affairs departments in those countries had banned Tabligh work.
- 8.) For these Ulama, particularly from the Arab countries, to see how Muslims have established Dien and practise on their Dien, even in non-Muslim Countries, and to inform them of the causes for this.
- 9.) Generally, to make Ikhtilaat (interact with them) and introduce them to the Dieni aspects of the various departments of life, of South African Muslims.

All of this was the brain-child of Sheikh Muhiyuddien. He has been greatly impressed by the Ulama of Deoband of the sub-continent and has a burning desire to introduce this system to the Arab Ulama and the world – including introducing the procedure of our Jumu’ah Salaah.

This stems from the close relationship, and the I'tiqaad (great reverence) Sheikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) had with our great Ulama of the subcontinent. This respect and honour passed onto his student, Sheikh Muhammad Awwaamah (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) and in turn, his son, Sheikh Muhammad Muhiyuddien (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ).

MASHURA AND DECISION MAKING

Carefully and with great concern, we ventured forward; taking each step, attentively and alertly; repeatedly seeking Allah Ta'ala's guidance with Istikharah, continuously making Dua, frequently making Mashura with our elders, with the Ulama and Ahlullah.

When negative aspects of the convention were brought to our attention, we were naturally very concerned. Again, making Dua to Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu, for guidance and the correct way forward, and treading cautiously, we consulted with the senior Ulama of the country and abroad, to re-assess our stand. Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu reward the Ulama for their positive and encouraging input.

I phoned many Ulama to request their Duas, to enquire from them of any wrongs they envisage, how to remedy it, any words of advice, and also requested their presence at the Mu'tamar.

Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu reward Mufti Ebrahim Salejee (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) of Isipingo Beach, who gave me the golden advice of seeking the Duas of the Ahlullaah.

Moulana Haroon Abasoomar (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) informed me that in Turkey, food was served in buffet style, and this should be avoided.

Moulana Usman Kadwa of Umzinto told me to be positive and not worry about the negative aspects being highlighted. He said: *"Remember that these are your guests, not your students or mureeds. Your duty is to make Ikraam of your guests, not their Islaah. Islaah is for your mureeds and students - This is what we*

learnt from Hadhrat Moulana Maseehullah Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) and what we saw in the Khanqah there.”

BEING VIGILANT AND CAREFUL

I shared with our friends – the Asaatiza of the Madrasah, who sacrificed so greatly and selflessly – an incident, related by Hadhrat Moulana Jalaluddeen Rumi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ), which we learnt from our illustrious Sheikh, Hadhrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ):

Two brothers saw, what they thought to be, a very high quality blanket, floating in the river. Since winter was approaching, the one brother said to the other: *“Go and get the blanket. It will keep us warm during the cold weather.”*

The brother thus went into the water and swam towards it. After much time passed, the brother who was waiting on the bank of the river, shouted: *“Why are you taking so long? Why aren't you returning with the blanket?”*

The other brother said: *“It won't let me go!”*

The brother asked: *“What won't let you go?”*

The first brother said: ***“This is a bear, not a blanket. ...It has caught me and won't let go of me.”***

So I told all those involved in this conference: **We want to take benefit from this Mu'tamar. It must not happen that we get caught in something else and get involved in other things, or that we**

change our allegiance from our Akaabir and Aslaaf, from whom we have gained our Dien.

Another example that I presented was:

Help to save a drowning person. However, when you see that he is pulling you down and you are going to drown with him - let him go and save yourself!

I explained to them that we must always be on our guard and not get carried away and get washed away with modernism or any other ism. We should make Dua for our protection at all times.

A few e-mails were also received, asking me whether I considered this matter properly – that is, hosting the Mu'tamar.

In short, we ventured forward very carefully, considering the negativity that was circulating.

PREPARATION

The staff of the Madrasah, especially certain Ustaads, sacrificed their entire holidays and worked selflessly day and night, to get things in order and ready.

Even during the Mu'tamar, some Ustaads bent their backs backwards to meet all the demands of the guests: transporting them to and from the airport, seeing to their comforts and needs!

Alhamdulillah, the students were also at the forefront in Khidmat, and made such Khidmat that they won the Duas and praises of the guests.

The residents of Azaadville went out of their way – the men, the women, the children, the Azaadville Neighbourhood Watch – all assisted and served, eagerly and with great keenness – before, during and even after the Mu'tamar!

Since it was the holiday, the grand-children of the family were looking forward to a holiday, but my son, Qari Abdullah said: *"How can I go when there is so much of work and such great guests coming to us."* ...This made me make a firm decision that no one in the family would go for a holiday!

Businessmen, from various places, came forward, offered their services, and in fact, took over all the upgrading and renovations of the Darul Uloom. On their own initiative, they did a collection in their circles, for the expenses!

Some people kept their shops closed so that they may serve for the Mu'tamar.

The residents of Azaadville offered their cars and houses, and many volunteered to receive the guests at the airport. We had written to the Department of Home affairs and they instructed all South African Embassies to facilitate and expedite all visa applications for the conference. A senior person of the town kept in touch with the Department of Home affairs to see that visas were issued timeously. Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala facilitated the work with ease.

NEGATIVITY

We received unsavoury e-mails from Salafies and modernists, who did not like the idea of an all-embracing Mu'tamar of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah.

Sadly, there were some of our Ulama, who chose to keep their distance and showed reluctance with regard to the Mu'tamar; others even opposed it – even though not publicly.

It is surprising that when Salafies and when the Imams of the Harams visited South Africa, and when the Islamic Cultural Forum of the Custodian of the Two Harams was hosted in Sandton, there was no objection from anyone; rather there was support for it from our Ulama and people. ...However, when Ulama, Muhaddithien, Mufasssiriien, great Fuqahaa, Sufis of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah and the Mazaahib-e-Arba'a, especially Ulama-e-Ahnaaf, visited South Africa, there was so much of negativity, disapproval and even condemnation.

Time passed and the days of the Mu'tamar arrived and the hosts and guests started arriving. ... A wonderful Nooraani environment began to unfold.

OUR GUESTS

To see so many great, pious Ulama, from around the world – pouring in – Subhanallah - Alhamdulillah – Allahu Akbar! It was almost unbelievable! All these great people, in our small village of Azaadville – all gathered and united in one place, and all concerned about the Dien of Allah Ta'ala.

Great Muhadditheen, Ulama, Imams, Muftis and others, from different parts of the world attended : Scholars from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, The Independent states of Russia, countries across Europe, the United Kingdom, North America and South America! ...Allah Ta'ala sent

such great men as our guests! ...Were we dreaming or was it a reality?! Were we in South Africa – a non-Muslim country – or were we in the Middle East? ...All these pious souls had gathered here. Alhamdulillah.

The first programme was at the Tablighi Markaz in Johannesburg. I was surprised to see that all the guests were transported by busses to the Markaz. Considering that these were great personalities and many of them old, infirm and weak, I expected that other arrangements would be made – that they would be transported in comfortable cars, but Allahu Akbar, they all travelled by bus, in simplicity.

Traveling by bus was not only for this trip, it was their transport from the Darul Uloom, where they were being hosted, to the Azaadville Primary School Hall, where the convention was being held as well.

On return from their visit to the Markaz, there was a lot of positive feedback – which will be included and discussed in the list of the positive results of the Mu`tamar, Insha-Allah.

It was taken for granted that these honourable guests will be giving all the talks. To my surprise, Sheikh Muhiyuddien insisted that I give the Jumu'ah talk at the Darul Uloom. He wanted the guests to see our Tartieb of Jumu'ah, in a foreign country, which he likes very much.

I was very uneasy and uncomfortable to speak in front of such great luminaries. It was only Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu's great help that the talk was given and also appreciated very much. Alhamdulillah. The

request was made thereafter that the talk be transcribed, translated in their languages and printed. May Allah Ta'ala accept.

From my side, I was undecided as to whether to speak on the virtues of Durood Sharief or the importance and reality of Tasawwuf? Remembering my Sheikh's (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ) advice, I spoke on what Tasawwuf is and the importance of Tasawwuf. Another great benefit of the Mu'tamar was realised!

Alhamdulillah, Moulana Ayyub Jeena presented a wonderful translation, of the Jumu'ah talk, in Arabic.

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The programmes proceeded. Each talk was such a great eye opener. Great Uloom and realities were discussed in the face of the trials the Ummah is presently facing.

Another great aspect of the Mu'tamar, as arranged by Sheikh Muhiyuddien, was the aspect of Ikhtilaat (mixing). He said: **"I don't want these great people to be left alone in their rooms during their free time. I want them to mix with the other Ulama, from around the world, to come to know, understand and discuss various matters of Dien and the Muslims."**

Our Tablighi Ulama took full advantage of this and they met and spoke about Tabligh to these people, who hold key positions and are decision makers in their countries, governments, communities, etc.

Very, very surprising was the meeting with the Ulama of Ahsaa of Saudi Arabia. They - the Ulama of Saudi Arabia - had an objection

against the Ulama of Deoband, that they (the Ulama of Deoband) do not believe in and accept Tasawwuf.

I, for one, always thought it was the other way around. Alhamdulillah, these meetings and talks, at the Mu'tamar, cleared the air for them, and their hearts were placed at rest that the Ulama of Deoband are Sufis as well!

Surprisingly, the Ulama of Ahsaa, Saudi Arabia, were all Hanafi Ulama! One of them asked for our syllabus and said he wants to start a Darul Uloom on our lines and pattern, Insha-Allah. Many inquired about sending their students and children here to study. Alhamdulillah, what great benefits of the Mu'tamar!

Similarly, one great Aalim, of one of the countries of Europe, also expressed his desire to start a Darul Uloom, on these lines, there. May Allah Ta'ala accept all the noble intentions expressed and let them see fulfilment.

As the days of the Mu'tamar passed, I truly believed, and very firmly, that there is perhaps no one else, on the surface of the earth, like Sheikh Muhiyuddien (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ), who has this great concern to unite and fortify the efforts of the Ulama of the Mazaahib-e-Arba'a and Ahlus Sunnah wal- Jama'ah, with regard to which, Rasulullah (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلَّمَ) said: '*Ma ana 'alaihi wa as-haabi*' (upon which I am and my companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ)).

What I, and perhaps all of us, did not envisage or imagine possible – that is, to bring together the Ulama of the world, of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, in one place – was witnessed. We saw how Allah Ta'ala made it a reality, and how Allah Ta'ala created all the

means for such a gathering, in one place. Together with this unique gathering was the concerted effort of how to bring this true Dien alive and promote it in the world.

Many myths were destroyed by the Mu'tamar: For example, it was commonly accepted that Arabs equal Salafies and that Iranians equal Shias. However, so many Arab Ulama and the cream of the Ulama who attended proved that all Arabs are not Salafies; in fact only a very small percentage are Salafies.

Similarly, all Iranians are not Shias. Hanafi Ulama of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah were present from Zahedan, Iran.

We learnt from them that about 50% of Iran is Sunni and that at least 20% of Iranians who go for Hajj or Umrah are, in fact, Sunnis.

...An apt analogy of this state of affairs, is like a mosquito: When it targets or attacks, it makes a noise but is often killed even before it can pierce the skin; whilst a bed bug attacks and retreats, and only then does a person realise that he has been bitten.

Similarly the Shias, Qadianis, Salafies and other Baatil sects make a big noise in the media – via the television, Internet websites, videos, radios, etc. – whilst the majority are the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, and the real work on the ground is that of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah! ...In the form of the Darul Ulooms, Makaatib, Tabligh Jamaat, Ijtimaas, etc.

This offered great reassurance and established that the Sawaad-e-Aazam (the great majority) of the Ummah is the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah. Alhamdulillah.

THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE MU'TAMAR

- 1.) Even if there was no Dieni activity – which, of course, there was, at all times; but even if there was no Dieni work and just a meeting of the Ulama of the Ahlus Sunnah and the Ulama of the Mazaahib-e-Arba'a (and the majority being Hanafi Ulama of not Gauteng or South Africa, but the whole world – Arabs and non-Arabs), it created such happiness.

It generated a feeling of reassurance and great inspiration. In these days of doubts, it dispelled all doubts created through media and propaganda, that Salafies are taking over everything; and we realised that the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah is definitely the Sawaad-e-Aazam in the Ummah.

- 2.) For great Ulama, Muhaddithien, Fuqahaa, Mufasssiriien, Sufis, etc. to be united in one place, with love and Duas for one another, engaged in Dieni talks and A'maal continuously, was such a tremendous bounty. It established a global brotherhood of Ulama – Subhanallah. What a great ni'mat!

Our students, who were continuously engaged in the Khidmat (service) of these great luminaries, reported that all the guests were constantly engaged in Ibaadat as well – in various Nawaafil: Tahajjud, Ishraaq, Chaasht, Awwaabien, etc! Added to this, Alhamdulillah, the Akhlaaq of these guests was great and exemplary! So was their simplicity and humbleness!

Alhamdulillah, these great personalities appreciated very much the Khidmat by the students, and expressed their appreciation in beautiful words.

3.) On their first night, our guests visited the Tablighi Markaz.

They were given a very warm welcome and Ikraam! The guests heard the “kaar-guzaaries” of ordinary people doing the great work of Tabligh, and how the lives of people changed so much due to the efforts made!

This had such a positive effect on them, that a Mufti of the Independent states of Russia, who is in charge of all the Dieni affairs in his country, said: *“When we had gained our independence and were once more free to practise our Dien, the Salafies were the first to come to us, on a religious mission...”*

...The history of the Muslims in Russia requires an entire book, to discuss how, after 70 years of the most oppressive laws against Islam and Muslims under Communism, Islam remained flourishing. Alhamdulillah.

Unfortunately, due to the Salafies having their own picture of a strict and hard Islam, they tried to ban and stop their Dhikr and other programmes, etc. This resulted in the Mufti, who is in charge at the government level, for all religious matters of the country, to put a ban on all religious groups coming in, from outside, and this included the Tablighi Jamaat as well!

However, after the visit to the Markaz, the Mufti announced:

“...Please note that all Dieni Jamaats from outside were banned in these countries, because the Salafies, in their queer understanding and practice of Islam, stopped our Dhikr programmes and other programmes. This led to all foreign

Dieni groups being denied entry in these countries. I had a different view of the Tabligh Jamaat, but now that I have met them on a personal basis, I have realised what great work they are doing and the first thing I will do, on my return to my country, is to open the doors for Tabligh Jamaats to come and work – Insha-Allah.”

Subhanallah! ...What a great achievement and benefit of the Mu'tamar!

- 4.) A senior Aalim, associated with Al-Azhar in Cairo, Egypt, explained that if he knew that this was a conference about the Ulama of Deoband, he would never have attended. However, he made Shukr to Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu that he was ignorant about this fact.

He mentioned that he was the examiner of the students who wrote their thesis for their doctorate degrees. A student who wrote a thesis on the 'Takfier' (disbelief) of the Ulama of Deoband (Ma'aazallaah) was not only passed, but given distinctions by this Aalim. He was in full agreement with the thesis. He further said: ***“Only now have I realised what great Ulama these are and what perfect Tauheed and Ittiba-e-Sunnah they have!”***

- 5.) Two Arab Aalims met Mufti Mas'ood of the Darul Uloom in the corridors of the boarding and they asked him: ***“Why are the Ulama of Deoband so hard on the issue of photography?”***

He explained that that was not the time and occasion to go into an academic debate on the issue, and said: ***“Tell me what brought you here and for what have you come? ...To see the great work of the Ulama of Deoband and how they have served and saved Dien in such dangerous environments. Part of their efforts is that they have prohibited photography, which has made it possible for them to preserve the true and pristine Dien, even in such adverse environments!”***

6.) The Ulama of Ahsaa, Saudi Arabia, had an objection that the Ulama of Deoband do not believe and accept Tasawwuf. After attending the conference, they were satisfied that the Ulama of Deoband are Sufis also and of what a great order! Alhamdulillah.

7.) The same Ulama of Ahsaa, who are very simple, humble and down to earth, requested our syllabus and expressed their intention to start a Darul Uloom of this nature in their place. The Arab Ulama, who are serving Dien in European countries, expressed the same sentiments, and one of them said: ***“Day and night, I am seeing visions of starting a Darul Uloom of this nature back home.”*** ...Alhamdulillah. May Allah Ta’ala accept.

8.) An Aalim who participates in many such conferences said: ***“We generally stay in the finest hotels and enjoy all the comforts, but I have never experienced such peace and tranquillity anywhere else, as I did in the Darul Uloom! ...I have great difficulty in falling asleep, but here I just fall asleep and what peaceful sleep I enjoy!”***

- 9.) Ustaadhs and students had the wonderful opportunity of taking Ijaazat of Hadith from world-renowned Muhaddithien, in one place. Otherwise, for this, one would have to travel the world over. Alhamdulillah, they got permission from seven, and even more, great Muhaddithien!
- 10.) This was a historic event, where so many great Ulama gathered at one place and time, and it was an event which made manifest that the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah are alive and united, and actively involved in the Khidmat of Dien. No doubt, this has had a great impact on the forces of Baatil!
- 11.) All who were present, from around the world, got exposure to:
- a.) Our Darul Uloom,
 - b.) Our simple, traditional way,
 - c.) All our other institutions and structures, like the Maktab system, social welfare organisations, publication of Islamic Literature, Muslim groups working in other countries in the field of Maktab, etc.
- 12.) Kitaabs were prepared and given out, explaining what "*Deobandiat*" is all about, the lives of our great Akaabir and Aslaaf.
- 13.) On a global level, many people found great solace to see how our local organisations united, to host the conference, at a time when we have become so fragmented.

- 14.) The Mu'tamar inspired all, especially our local Ulama and public, and made all feel honoured and not ashamed, to be part of the Deobandi School of thought! Alhamdulillah.
- 15.) The Mu'tamar brought forth the wonderful capabilities of our Ulama, especially our young Ulama who are so fluent in good, proper Arabic.

It brought to the fore, the abilities and skills of our students and our local Azaadville residents - males and females! They truly expended a lot of their resources. This needs to be maintained, enhanced and acknowledged!

- 16.) The Mashaa'ik who attended, personally expressed that all their misgivings and doubts about the Ulama of Deoband, about Tasawwuf and about the Tablighi Jamaat were dispelled by the Mu'tamar. This shows their capacity of accepting the truth when it is presented to them, and forgoing their personal views – when wrong. This, in turn, speaks volumes of their Ikhlaas (sincerity) and Tawaadhu (humility)!
- 17.) The Mufti of Lebanon, Sheikh Osama Rifa'i (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) said himself, that his talk was to awaken the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah and enhance their efforts.
- 18.) An Aalim, who graduated from Darul Uloom Deoband, and who is a journalist in Delhi told us that he had met Sheikh Abdullah Ibne Subaiyiel, the old Imam of Makkah Sharief, amongst other Ulama of Saudi Arabia. This was mentioned in a Majlis, in Deoband, in which I was present, some time ago.

In that meeting, the respected Sheikh Ibne Subaiyel said that two thirds of the Dieni Khidmat (service) of the entire Ummah is being done by the Ulama of Deoband. He also said that two thirds of the Ummah are Hanafis, and if the salafies want to exclude them from the Ummah, by calling them mushriks and kaafirs, there will be no Ummah left!

I included this in the talk I was going to present at the Mu'tamar. However, Sheikh Muhiyuddien vehemently opposed it, saying to me that all the guests who would be present, would take strong offence of even quoting a Salafi, no matter what he says!

I was extremely surprised at how the Arab Ulama are totally opposed to the Salafies. In fact, Sheikh Muhiyuddien expressed clear disapproval with regard to even those who maintain ties with Salafies. I was astounded to see the hard-line stance that the Arab Ulama have for the Salafies!

- 19.) Many of the Mashaa'ik were old, infirm, weak and of advanced age. The respected Sheikh from Morocco was over 90 years. In spite of his age, he and others like him, travelled to South Africa for the sake of Dien and learning. This clearly indicated their sincere concern for Dien and the great importance they attach to serving Dien and uplifting the condition of the Ummah. Alhamdulillah.

Arrangements were made for several wheel chairs and facilities for the elderly, weak and infirm, but facilities were required for so many more.

SOME QUOTES

1. The Mufti from Iraq, Sheikh Abdul Malik As-Sa'dy, fell ill and had to be hospitalised during his stay. He was overwhelmed by the Khidmat of the students from the Madrasah, as well as the Lenz Ulama, and other students and brothers. **He said that he felt as if he was amongst the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ). He also said that it would be his good fortune to die amongst such people.**
2. Mufti Abul Qasim Banaarasi, principal of Darul Uloom, Deoband, said that one great benefit of this Mu'tamar is that Saudi Arabia is keeping a watchful eye on it, because it is a great obstacle in their path and also in the path of the Shias, because today, the Ulama of the World, Arab and Non-Arab, especially the Ulama of the Mazaahib-e-Arba'a are united against these Fitnahs.
3. Shaikh Naasir Abu Aamir of Egypt, now a lecturer in Yamboo (Saudia) said: ***"I am thinking and dreaming and wishing I could also open an institute just like this....The environment is just too good... Words cannot describe it."***
4. Sheikhs, who attended the first conference in Turkey, said that there was no Islamic atmosphere there. They were going from the hotel to the conference centre and back. There was no Ikhtilaat. Here, they found simplicity and a wonderful Islamic environment. They considered it a splendid atmosphere. Alhamdulillah.

5. Sheikhs from Europe, upon entering the Madrasah, said that the Imaan and Noor felt in the Madrasah were not experienced in their institutions.
6. Sheikh Ihsaan Hendricks said that this was a unique occasion, one of the best five days of his life, spent with Ulama from around the world.
7. During one of the Ikhtilaat (mixing) programmes, someone wanted to take a photograph of Sheikh Muhammad Awwaamah (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ). The Sheikh rebuked him severely and told him that it is totally Haraam and said: ***“Why don't you respect all the notices around, which state that photography is not allowed!”***

On a previous occasion, Sheikh Awwaamaah (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) said that if the Ulama of Deoband also give permission for photography then there will be no Ulama left on the surface of the earth!

8. Some other sentiments expressed from other Scholars:

“We went to many conferences, but this was just different. It was simple. It was not fancy; it was just different!”

“I wish I could always be in an environment like this; not seeing women and not exposed to Fitnah. ...Just talks of Dien and in the company of such great Ulama - like being in Jannah!”

“We felt like we were sleeping all this time. You woke us up to see what the Ummah actually needs from the Ulama!”

“People here, walk their talk, by following the Sunnah; contrary to even Ulama from our country.”

“Express Shukr to Allah Ta’ala. He made it easy to practise on Dien in a non-Muslim country. Even some Arab countries do not have this privilege.”

9. The students, who were engaged in Khidmat, shared the following:

“Most of the Ulama, by their outside appearance, look simple and humble, but it was apparent that they are different. We found the Ulama on Musallahs even after an entire day’s programme. These Ulama have a lot of Sabr and they have a great deal of Adab for Hadith!

Sheikh Abdul Malik Sa’di (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) was punctual on Nawaafil throughout the day. He has a very independent personality. His Akhlaaq was remarkable, which prompted students to do even more Khidmat, and vigilantly.

They gave us a lot of Dua for Khidmat. The Ulama were happy to sit with the students and advise them.”

The students also said it was such a pleasure serving the Arab Ulama, because they were so humble, simple and not demanding at all.

10. Sheikh Muhiyuddien said it was unanimous that all those who attended, enjoyed the spiritually rich Islamic atmosphere in the Darul Uloom compared to the un-islamic environments of hotels or resorts. They also did not experience such rich

hospitality anywhere else. ...Alhamdulillah, this is only the Kindness of Allah Ta'ala.

11. Dr Qaasim 'Ali Sa'd from Sharjah (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) wrote a letter to Moulana Muhammad ibn Moulana Haroon Abasoomar (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ), saying: ***“Those were blessed days that we spent with you in the blessed Darul Uloom, Azaadville, where we benefitted very greatly, especially on how to make Ikraam of guests.”***
12. A Tablighi Jamaat from Ahsaa, Saudi Arabia visited us, and on meeting me, said that the Ulama of Ahsaa, on returning, told them that they must visit Azaadville and the Darul Uloom, as they were very impressed with everything here. The Jamaat mentioned that the 'Ulama could not stop speaking about their wonderful experiences here. May Allah Ta'ala accept.

A FEW NEGATIVE ASPECTS

- 1.) Many precautions were taken that there is no photography, videoing, televising, etc. The organisers were informed well in advance and repeatedly; many strategically placed notices were posted, that photography is forbidden, and students did a wonderful job to stop anyone taking photographs. Despite all these measures, a few photographs were secretly taken.

However, there was no videoing and no televising. Alhamdulillah. ...Someone did come in with a video camera and hid it behind and between some chairs. This was picked up by our security, who confiscated it.

- 2.) A few of our own people took photographs, which is Haraam. They posted it on Facebook or on some other social networks, committing a greater Haraam, by publicising their own sin, and then accusing those whose photos were taken of double standards; that they prohibit photography but their photographs were taken.

For a person to be photographed today is almost unavoidable – that is, without asking for it or posing for it. Whilst walking to the Masjid, a person's photograph can easily be taken. Our elders, when addressing thousands of people, are unknowingly photographed! It is not their sin. It is the sin of the one who is taking the photographs. He is the one who is engaging in a grievous sin and he is the one who will be accountable to Allah Ta'ala.

- 3.) Alhamdulillah, none of the Ulama who spoke were beardless. Yes, some did have small beards - not a fist length. Also, for some nationalities, the beard hardly grows or grows very little. And Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu knows best.
- 4.) Mufti Abdul Jaleel Saheb (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) of Shallcross brought to our notice a very pertinent point: He praised the arrangements at the Mu'tamar, etc. but said there were no resolutions taken and no plan on a follow up of those resolutions – which is very true and correct. This will be brought to the notice of Sheikh Muhiyuddien (دَامَتْ بَرَكَاتُهُمْ) – Insha-Allah.

Considering that this particular type of Mu'tamar is very much in its infancy, and this was only the second one, these advices

are very much appreciated, and this will, Insha-Allah, be remedied, and better results obtained in the future, Insha-Allah.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It will be impossible to mention all, by their names, who went out of their way, and who worked for the Mu'tamar with zeal, sincerity and passion! Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu Alone knows and He alone can and will reward everyone accordingly!

In spite of all the negativity from various quarters, people opened their hearts and pockets to an unprecedented level and made all our tasks, so very easy. We were taken aback by all the support, in all ways, and understand it was the help of the unseen Hand of Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu!

May Allah Ta'ala reward everyone most graciously and generously. Aamien.

May Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu reward those who we have acknowledged and those who we have not, those we know and those whom we do not know. O Allah, You be pleased with them and us, and reward all in Dunya and Aakhirah. Aamien.

GRATITUDE TO ALLAH TA'ALA

Alhamdulillah, this was, indeed, an opportunity from Allah Ta'ala. And we express our gratitude and Shukr to Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu that He gave us and the Darul Uloom, the great privilege to host the Mu'tamar, in the honour of one of our great and illustrious Elders, Qaasimul Uloom wal Khairaat, Hadhrat Moulana Qaasim Nanotwi

(رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ), to honour the Ulama of Deoband, to make manifest the School of thought of Hadhrat Moulana Qaasim Nanotwi (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ) and what the Ulama of Deoband stand for.

Alhamdulillah, what a unique bounty from Allah Ta'ala : A gathering of the Ulama of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah and the Ulama of the Mazaahib e Arba'a, from the four corners of the world, the East and West, North and South, from the Arab World and the Non-Arab World, from all the continents and lands of the world! ...What a unification of the Ulama of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, wherein there were no Shias, Qadianis, Salafies, modernists, Orientalists or anyone with conflicting views or deviant beliefs or practises!

Alhamdulillah for the great opportunity to introduce the School of Thought and Noble practises of our Elders, to these great Ulama of the world - which was one of the noble objectives of the Mu'tamar. Allah Ta'ala, in His Infinite Karam, fulfilled this objective as well! Fa lillaahil Hamd wa Shukr!

Alhamdulillah, it is indeed Allah Ta'ala's Taufeeq, which I cannot make enough Shukr to Allah Ta'ala for, that we were able to stand up and defend the Ulama of Deoband, in the face of all odds, without fear of condemnation or contradiction. Allah Jalla Jalaaluhu gave us the opportunity to stand up for the Ulama of the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah and the Ulama of the Mazaahib-e-Arba'a. And this, in spite of so many misgivings from various quarters. ...Fa Lillaahil Hamd wal Minnah!

May Allah Ta'ala forgive all of our shortcomings.

JazakAllah khayran

AbdulHamid Is`haq (Moulana)

IMPRESSIONS OF A SHOP KEEPER IN AZAADVILLE

السلام عليكم و رحمة الله و بركاته

Confined behind the shop's counter, I yearned to meet the 'Ulama from the different countries who were attending the world Ulama conference in Azaadville.

People walked in and out of the shop talking about the piety, the Noor and the noble character of these special people. I also had the opportunity of listening to the stories of the students who were engaged in their Khidmat.

I performed Zohr Salaah at the Darul Uloom the day before the two Muftis from Kuwait and Lebanon were leaving. I had heard so much about them and had made Dua to Allah Ta'ala to give me the opportunity of meeting at least one of them. I observed them from the last Saff, where I was seated, but could not reach them in time to meet them.

On completing my Sunnah Salaah, I looked for them and I only found the Lebanese Sheikh sitting on the other side of the glass. Even though he looked at me, I was alone and had nobody to introduce me to him and thought that perhaps he could not speak English. So I left.

Alhamdulillah, Allah Ta'ala answered my Dua , and the next day, Maulana Mansoor came running into the shop, asking for some water, as he, Mufti Mas'ood and others were taking the guest Ulama to the airport.

Since the opportunity was being presented, I requested permission to meet them - just to see them and shake hands with them. I took permission from the customers and left the store.

On making Salaam with the first Mufti, Mufti Mas'ood introduced me to him in Arabic. I felt a wave of current through my arms and by the time I reached out to the second Mufti, I could barely say a word. My throat became so sore and my eyes started burning. All I could say was that they make Dua for me.

My mind was completely blank and my heart was racing as a second wave went through my arms on shaking hands with the other Mufti. I could see his lips moving but I could not hear a thing he was saying. I was just amazed at the light on their faces and the current running through my body.

On taking leave, I turned around towards the store, and being so overwhelmed, tears burst forth. Alhamdulillah, despite my emotional condition, my customers were very understanding.

I am at a loss for words. I just fell in love with them. Amazed, astounded, awe-struck, whatever it was – Allah Ta'ala knows best! ...But they are very special people.

