

INTRODUCTION

Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Raheem. All praise is due to Almighty Allah, the Sustainer, Nourisher and Cherisher of the universe. Peace, Blessings and Salutations be upon our beloved Master and Leader, Nabi Muhammed Mustapha ﷺ.

Alhamdulillah, Mufti AK Hoosen was the resident Mufti at Channel Islam Radio, the first Muslim satellite radio station in South Africa, for 17 years, from 22nd January 2001 to 31st January 2018. In this 2010¹ *Ulama Profile* interview with Cii presenter, Zahid Asmal, Mufti Saheb recounts details about his upbringing: the experiences, events and people who moulded and guided him to become the successful Alim he is today, Alhamdulillah, with Allahu Ta'ala's Grace, Help and Mercy.

InshAllah, it will serve as motivation and inspiration to others who are serving, or intending to serve, the Deen. The path of Haqq is never smooth but, if one is sincere and has the correct intention, Allahu Ta'ala will assist him or her.

THE INTERVIEW

Zahid Asmal: We are speaking to Mufti Abdul Kader Hoosen, the resident Mufti at Channel Islam International, profiling him like we've done with many Ulama over the past 15 days.

Mufti Saheb: *Hatha min fadhli Rabbi.* It has nothing to do with our intelligence, our cleverness, nothing. It is all the Grace and Mercy of Almighty Allah. And when people praise us, we should read the following du'a, as Sayyidina Abu Bakr *RadhiAllahu Anhu* did:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي خَيْرًا مِمَّا يَظُنُّونَ

Allahummaj-'alni khayram-mimma yathunnoon

O Almighty Allah, make me better than what they think of me,

وَاعْفِرْ لِي مَا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

Waghfirli ma la ya'lamoon

and forgive me for what they do not know about me,

O Almighty Allah, people do not know but You know everything – how many vices, how many sins we have committed. We beg of you Almighty Allah, for forgiveness for all our shortcomings and sins.

وَلَا تُؤَاخِذْنِي بِمَا يَقُولُونَ

wa la tu-akhithni bima yaqooloon

and do not hold me accountable for what they say about me.

O Allah, do not take us to task for what they are saying because, many a time, people make *mubalagha* – they exaggerate the facts.

Zahid: Aameen, Allah accept, Aameen. Mufti Saheb, I want to start off with you at the time when you grew up – very, very young – and I am talking about four, five years old, at that time to go to school, you had to wear a *kortbroekie*², as they say in Afrikaans. Did that happen to you when you were young?

¹ Corresponding to Ramadhan 1431 AH, most probably on Friday, the 16th ~ 27 August 2010.

² A shortened pants reaching above the knees

Mufti Saheb: I used to wear only *kortbroekie*, short trousers. I grew up in Heidelberg in the African location. Our shop is still there; our house is there. I just went the other day, when I was in Heidelberg before Ramadhan, and nostalgia overtook me. Lo and behold! I saw that they had changed our shop into a church now. Anyway, I went there and simply looked at it.

I grew up only with Africans and was absolutely fluent in Zulu. I used to walk around, not only with *kortbroek*, but without shoes as well; *kaalvoet*³, as we say in Afrikaans. I still have cuts on my feet, till today, because my feet got cut accidentally on zinc sheets. I used to be the captain of the soccer team and we would play Town. It was me – one Indian and ten Africans – or two Indians and nine Africans. But I was the captain, obviously, because I had the soccer ball with me. If I took the ball away, there was no soccer game. Anyway, those were wonderful, wonderful times. My mother used to get upset with me because, if I wanted cooldrink or food, then the whole team must also get, not only me, so that we would then all be motivated for the big soccer match.

Zahid: And at that time, was this all played in the yard, around the home and in the business area, and so forth?

Mufti Saheb: Yes, we had the *pale*. For those who don't understand – in America, Europe or Pakistan – *pale* are goal posts. Our goal post was also half in *sakharat*, death throes. If you hit a very hard shot, the *pale* would fall down. Anyway, those were blissful days. I always tell Fathima, my students and other people, that if Allah gave us a reverse gear so that we could start our lives all over again then, me, I wouldn't mind because I really enjoyed my youth.

Along with my family there were also the Bhabha and Timol families. The Bhabhas had two daughters and the Timols, five. Both families had no sons so, I was a brother for all the girls. They all used to fight to play with me. This was when we were all small; a lovely memory, Alhamdulillah.

Zahid: Well, the correct term for that, Mufti Saheb, they say, is *dolly housey*. But, moving away from there – obviously, you had to get more serious education; both secular and Islamic education became a must. Did you school in Heidelberg and do your Islamic education, your *maktab* education there, as well?

Mufti Saheb: Do you know, if you go to the Heidelberg Masjid in town, it is the second oldest masjid in, what was then known as Transvaal, in the old South Africa. The first and oldest masjid is the Kirk Street Masjid, here in Johannesburg.

The madrassah and the school were both there, alongside the Heidelberg Masjid. My father, *Rahimahumullah*, used to take me to school, which I started when I was five. And that time, they were not strict and would allow any learner to attend. The school was housed in a prefabricated building. I still remember the Badat's house was nearby and we used to visit them there, as well.

We attended madrassah where Imam Rabbani was one of our Imams. In one of my lectures, somewhere, his son came to me and said, "I believe you mentioned my father's name." He was interested to know what I remembered about his father at that time. There was also a Moulana Bux. They all passed away, *Rahimahumullah*, Almighty Allah give them Jannatul Firdous, Aameen.

Then, Hafidh Qari Jeebhai came, a master cricket player. We used to play cricket before we went to madrassah. Qari Saheb used to bat. When he was bowled out, the madrassah would start. He's in Benoni now, MashAllah, my honourable Ustadh. When I see or meet him, I make a lot of du'a for him.

My honourable teacher, Hafidh Limalia came in 1968 when I was still schooling.

³ Barefooted

On one occasion, he delivered a memorable khutbah in his golden voice which so impressed my father that he told my mother about it. What she heard from all of us so inspired her that she simply went on her own to Hafidh Limalia Saheb, with the love and desire that one of her sons must become a hafidh. She told Hafidh Saheb, “*Mane poi-ro nahafidh banawano* – Please make my son a hafidh”.

The next day I went to him. My honourable teacher, Hafidh Saheb, told me, “You! You can't even read Qur'an looking inside, what hafidh are you going to become?!”

At that time, I was just 11 years old, rather young. I mean, what could I say? I simply kept quiet. I still have my *Amma Para* [last chapter of Qur'an] here in my room, where I'm speaking to you from now. In my Qur'an Shareef, which I used while I was becoming a hafidh, in the *Amma Para*, it is written: “Babu Hoosen, Apsey Street, Heidelberg”. They all used to call me Babu in those days.

In the first lesson, Hafidh Saheb started, “Now, read.”

I read, “*Amma yata saa'aloona, anin-naba'il atheem...*” then he makes the *ghunna*, the marks, everything. Ayat for ayat he used to teach. Therefore, I can never forget him, my beloved teacher. He taught me how to read Qur'an and he *really* loved me. Not once did I get a hiding from him. Hafidh Saheb used to *donner*⁴ the students. He used to pick up weights also. Maybe he's listening to the interview now. I was the youngest guy so I used to be terrified when I saw the other guys getting a hiding. But it was a terrific experience. I was the first student to complete there in Heidelberg, all with the Grace and Mercy of Allahu Ta'ala, our parents' du'as, our teachers' du'as – a great experience.

We then went to the Mia's farm where Hazrat Mufti Ebrahim Sanjalvi, *marhum Rahimahumullah*, was teaching. My father had bought a new Ranger, South Africa's first car. It was green and had a black vinyl top, I'll never forget. At Mia's Farm, Hazrat Mufti Saheb asked me, “You *baligh*?” He was speaking Gujarati and I didn't know what he was talking about ‘*baligh*’. He must have thought, “This *laaitie*⁵, he's still wet behind the ears; he can't make *taraweeh*.”

Therefore, for one or two years, after I completed my hifdh, I would read Fardh salaah in the third, fourth or fifth *saff* in Ramadhan. Then, when *taraweeh* started, they would bring me to the first *saff* and say, “You, just correct everybody's mistakes.” I would do so, but I couldn't perform *taraweeh* myself because they said I'm disqualified because of my age. These were all memorable moments.

Zahid: Obviously, then you met Appa, Mufti Saheb, and you moved on to Pakistan for a while to study, as well?

Mufti Saheb: Now, what happened was...Appa came much later into the picture.

See the *barakat* of Qur'an – to you, to you, my youngsters: Go for Qur'an. Qur'an is the greatest miracle of Mustafa *alayhi salaatu wa salaam*.

Now, a change took place in South Africa. When we were in primary school, I remember the books – exercise books and textbooks – all used to come from the TED, the Transvaal Education Department. And then, when I went back to school, it was under Indian Affairs. Now, with Indian Affairs, you don't get everything free. But, to cut a long story short, I went back.

At that time, Mr. Moodley was our principal. He called me ‘Hoosen’. He would say, “Hoosen, come here!”

I would say, “Yes, sir!”

“Say, you think you can fit in that class there? I think you are too tall.”

I said, “Yes, sir!”

Then he said, “Go and sit in the Standard 6 [Grade 8] class, and don't do Standard 5.”

⁴ Donner – beat or thrash

⁵ laaitie – youngster, young boy; equivalent of ‘lad’ or ‘sonny’.

In that way, he gave me double promotion: he told me I'm too tall for Standard 5 [Grade 7] and that I should go to Standard 6. Alhamdulillah, I did so and passed comfortably.

Afterwards, I attended William Hill Secondary School because Heidelberg was a small *dorpie*⁶ without a high school for Indians. We would travel daily with Mr. Farouk Badat who was called 'Spanner' because he used to have a spanner in his Kombi. He was well known for his lift service in Heidelberg. I met him the other day in a Robertsham masjid. He was so happy to see me and I was equally happy to see him.

Now, what happened is, my fellow students – those who became hafidh with me and after me – some of them were doing *dhor* [Qur'an revision] and then they started going to Pakistan to study. I was the only guy left and the youngest. In 1974, I told my parents, "This school, they are wasting my time. I'm not learning anything," and all that. At the time, William Hills was a top school. I was exceedingly good at soccer and cricket and used to represent the school in matches. As for my teachers, some are still alive. When I was in Benoni now, before Ramadhan, I went to meet Mr Ismail at his house as I had heard he was not well. He was delighted to receive me. I also remember Mr Bhattay⁷. They were all my honourable teachers.

As I was saying, I used to play soccer and cricket for William Hills, and Alhamdulillah, I was a good sportsman but, eventually, I tired of school. Allahu Ta'ala wanted it. So, my Ustaadh, my parents made *mashwarah* [mutual consultation]. My mother was crying, "How can you go to Karachi? 7,000, 8,000 miles or kilometres away, whatever. We can't see you. We can't speak to you..." Because they used to love me.

Any clothing I wanted – shirt, trouser, tie.... I used to wear smart clothes to schools. I used to compete with the teachers to show who can wear better clothes. One day I got six cuts [lashes] for wearing my big double-breasted suit and expensive tie. I'll never forget...Bala gave me six cuts and switched on the intercom for the whole school to hear that, "I'm giving this guy a good hiding". He *donnerd* me properly that day but, the next day, I came back with another suit (*laughs*) just to show we're rebellious.

Iqbal Dockrat and I left South Africa for Karachi, Pakistan, in 1974 because my mother said, no, I can't go alone. The plane ticket also, was a *barkati* [cheap] ticket. It must have been about R1 000, or R2 000 in those days – probably about R1 000 – I don't know the exact amount.

As for the route: from Johannesburg, you fly to Malawi; from Malawi to Nairobi, then on to Karachi with PIA, Pakistan International Airlines.

We left and, from Joburg to Malawi, no problem. From Malawi to Nairobi, big problem.

First time we're going overseas. I was 17 years old at the time. There, as we were going over Lake Malawi, they told us, "Go into the brace position. The pressure in the cabin has dropped and maybe the plane won't make it."

We started reading Kalimah, Iqbal Dockrat and I, thinking, "We finished our studies, everything, in Air Malawi; we're going to die now and we will be buried in Lake Malawi".

Somehow and somehow, that pilot brought the plane back to the airport in Malawi, but it was all while we were in the brace position and wearing oxygen masks.

There was a Hindu lady in front of me, I can never forget. I knew a little bit of Urdu (*laughing*). She said, "Ay Nairobi Airport to bow *jaldi agiya*." We had landed in Malawi but she thought we had landed in Nairobi! Anyway, that was again Allahu Ta'ala's Mercy.

We then went on to study at Newtown Madrassah.

⁶ A *dorpie* is a small town, village or provincial rural settlement.

⁷ Mr Ismail Bhattay passed away in December, 2025. May Allahu Ta'ala grant him Jannatul Firdous, Aameen.

Now, coming to Fathima: In 1976, I came back for my first holiday. I never used to lecture in 1976 because I had studied only a few years and wasn't too confident but I delivered the Jumuah Khutbah and led salaah in Isipingo Beach.

One day, an old man came and told me – they used to call me 'Hafiz Saheb' or 'Molvi Saheb' – “You made a mistake in your Arabic Khutbah.”

I asked him what the mistake was and, after he told me, I said, “Hundred percent, you are right.”

I was so impressed. He was an ordinary person, not an Alim or Hafidh, so I thought, “This man must be well-read, he picked up one mistake in my Arabic Khutbah”.

Later, I asked my sister and brother-in-law, “Who is this old *bhaji* there?”

They said, “They call him OV Mohammed and he is profoundly well-read. If anybody makes a mistake, nicely he'll take him aside and tell him”.

I said, “Yes, he did the same thing with me.”

We went back to Pakistan and studied, MashAllah. Then in 1979, I came for a second holiday because Ramadhan is their holiday time. Every year, I used to go for umrah or hajj from there: in 1974, '75, '76, MashAllah. In 1979 again, I made umrah and, when I came home, I was in Durban by my Masi, my mother's sister, in Isipingo Beach where my sister is married and, jokingly, I told them, “Man, I'm tired of this Pakistani food, I think I must get married.”

My sister and them said, “You know that old man who corrected you that time? He's got a nice daughter and they're looking for someone like you. They want a Moulana and Imam and Sheikh, like that.”

We didn't tell anybody. My family just phoned and then we went there. I saw Fathima, she saw me and her mother and them were there, as well. When I came back, I told my sister, “Just tell them, this day is the Nikah, finish and *klaar*.”

She said, “They didn't give you a 'yes' answer.”

I said, “I know the answer is yes, you don't worry, nothing”.

They discussed this and that. This was before Ramadhan. After Ramadhan we got married and went away, back to Pakistan.

We had no house, no furniture, no nothing. We stayed in an hotel, Holiday, there in Karachi. I used to lock Fathima up from outside and tell her, “You just look at everything there in the street, what's happening, a lot of activity. The only time you open the door is if the hotel is catching fire. They can knock, knock but you don't open the door for anybody.”

I had to organise a house, organise the visas, organise all the cutlery, crockery, a lot of things... furniture. Alhamdulillah, we got a nice flat and stayed opposite the madrassah. I didn't miss any lesson of hadith, not even one period. Again, the Fadhl, the Grace, the Mercy of Almighty Allahu Ta'ala.

Hazrat Moulana Saleemullah Khan Saheb, my honourable Ustaadh, 88 years old today⁸, was extremely happy that, not one day did I miss a lesson of any teacher. I did ten Hadith kitaabs, all with the Mercy of Almighty Allah.

In 1980, I performed taraweeh in Mufti Nizamuddin's masjid. I didn't like to wear a watch. After the twenty-seventh night, after I made a *khatm*, one Pakistani gave Hazrat Mufti Saheb a watch. He must have thought that this Imam Saheb *to bohut ghareeb hai ne pas ghadi bhi naheen hai*

وہ بہت غریب ہے، اس کے پاس گھڑی بھی نہیں ہے

“He's terribly poor, this Imam, he doesn't even have a watch; let me give him one watch” (*laughing*).

I had that watch, but now it is lost.

⁸ Sheikhul Hadith Moulana Saleemullah Khan Saheb passed away at the age of 96, on Sunday, 17 Rabi-ul-Akhir, 1438 ~ 15 January, 2017.

Anyway, we came for hajj. I told my father, “Don't book the ticket via Nairobi, book it direct to Jeddah, Nairobi, then South Africa”. Alhamdulillah, I left on the 12th of March, 1974, and returned to South Africa. We got married in 1979, 10th Shawwaal, and then, on the 2nd of November, 1980, I came back home and it worked out perfectly. November, December was holiday and January, I started in Newcastle, Darul Uloom. I stayed in Newcastle for 20 years, Alhamdulillah.

Zahid: Alhamdulillah. Mufti Saheb, if you look back, you mentioned your Ustaadhs briefly at Darul Uloom; working with Marhum Moulana Sema Ra, what type of experience was that for you?

Mufti Saheb: One part I missed out was my honourable teachers in Pakistan. I'll come to Hazrat Moulana Qasim Sema just now. I'll just mention four or five of my most important teachers. In Newtown Madrassah, we had Hazrat Mufti Abdussalaam Saheb. I went to him one day and told him, “Hazrat, you know, I come from so far to study and the teacher, who was given this book to teach, half the time is absent and we're not making much progress”. He told me, “You see that pillar there?” I said, “Jee, Hazrat.” He said, “You must come every day after Asr, I'll teach you”.

My *very* good friend - InshAllah, I'll be visiting him soon, Hafidh Ismail Ayyub Peerbhai in Port Elizabeth – the two of us, every day, he used to teach us. *Wallah*, the way that man taught us, Allah give him Jannatul Firdous, Aameen. He took his own time, with dedication, and we used to ask him questions; he used to enjoy it and we enjoyed it more.

We really need to place on record our sincerest thanks to Hazrat Mufti Abdussalaam Saheb [Chatgami]⁹. He's still alive, MashAllah, there in Bangladesh, but acutely ill.

And then Hazrat Mufti Ridha-ul Haq Saheb who is here in South Africa now – we used to call him Moulana Ridha-ul Haq Saheb at that time – and we were his first students. He had just started teaching in Newtown.

Afterwards, I studied in Darul Uloom Karachi, where we had Mufti Abdur-Raouf Saheb, and other exceptional teachers as well. We are obviously indebted to them. Subsequently, in Jamia Farooqia, where I studied Hadith, Hazrat Moulana Saleemullah Khan Saheb – he's the biggest Sheikh now in the whole of Pakistan in Hadith.

And, there is an Ustadh – this is where the link comes in now – Hazrat Moulana Aziz Ahmad Bihari, Ra. Now, look at how Allah works:

He taught Hazrat Moulana Qasim Sema Saheb in Dabhel. Moulana Sema went from South Africa, his birthplace. He went to Dabhel, spent 9, 10 years there, and studied from 1935. He returned in 1944. In between, he didn't come back to South Africa. During those 9, 10 years, in 1936, 1937, Moulana Aziz Ahmad taught Moulana Qasim Sema in Dabhel. We used to call him, ‘Hazrat Sheikh-ul Hadith Saheb’. Many students wouldn't attend his class because, being an old man, over 80 years old, his voice was fairly soft. But I would sit right next to him. He called me ‘Abdul Kader Afriki’. He would say, “Molvi Abdul Kader Afriki, *kya hale hai*”. He used to like me a lot and I was the only foreigner in that class. I used to read the *ibarah*, the text, and all that.

He taught us Sunan Nasai, Muwatta Imam Malik, Muwatta Imam Mohammed and one kitaab he taught that no one in the whole of Pakistan used to teach. He taught us *Musnadi Imam Abu Hanifa Ra*. That kitaab, no one teaches but he said, “No, no, I will teach you all this”.

So, excellent, we studied that by him also.

One day, Hazrat Moulana Aziz Ahmad, out of the blue said, “Molvi Abdul Kader Afriki, Afrika *jakar kya karoge* – what are you going to do there in South Africa when you qualify?” Because that was our final year.

⁹ Hazrat passed away at the age of 78, on Wednesday, 1 Safar 1443 ~ 8 September 2021.

I replied, "Hazrat, I heard there's a madrassah, Darul Uloom, that is run by Moulana Qasim Sema". I didn't know who MI Qasim Sema was, I had never met the man. He said, "Achah! MI Qasim Seema." (We say 'Sema', he said 'Seema'.) "He's my student".

وہ میرا شاگرد ہے *woh to mera shagird hai*

And now my mind started racing.

After the final exams, everything we wrote – the Wifaq exams, Alhamdulillah, I passed extremely well; for everything I received a good pass, distinction, everything. Then, I asked Hazrat MI Aziz Ahmad, "Hazrat, I'm going. Please, if you could write a letter."

What he wrote, Allah knows. Till today, I don't know, but it must have been something excellent and impressive. He put it in the envelope and wrote MI Qasim Sema's name on the front.

Fathima and I went for hajj. When we came back, my sister, brother-in-law were there. We were going from Heidelberg to Durban, so I said, no, we must go via Newcastle. Allah wanted it, it was holiday time in December 1980. MI Qasim Sema was there. When we met, I found him to be quite striking – a Moulana, Mashallah, a South African Alim.

I approached him about a post and he said, "But there's no place here in Darul Uloom; there's no vacancy."

I gave him Hazrat Moulana Aziz Ahmad Saheb's letter – his teacher and my teacher – and we were the last students. After our batch – finish – Hazrat retired then, and now he has passed away also. MI Sema said, "You know what... okay, write me a letter."

I still remember Moulana's words, "Write me a letter and then we will see." But it was after he initially told me there was no vacancy.

I got hold of one *crook* [decrepit, worn-out] typewriter somewhere and sent a letter, posted it, to Moulana Sema Saheb.

In January, around the 17th, 18th or something, I started panicking. At that time, the schools, madrassahs were reopening and people were coming to me. I still remember, this Jamaat and that jamaat came and told me, "Please, we need an Imam".

Now, I didn't want to make Imamat, I didn't want to teach children, I wanted to get into the Darul Uloom. There was no other Darul Uloom in South Africa at that time, only Newcastle.

Then, one Saturday afternoon, I was gone somewhere. When I returned, my father, Ismail Hoosen Ra, told me, "This Moulana phoned from Newcastle, his name is this and you must phone him."

I phoned immediately.

Hazrat Moulana Qasim Sema *marhum* told me, "Okay, your job is there; come, but don't bring your wife, there are no houses here."

I said, "No problem."

On Monday morning, I went. I used to stay there, in the hostel, because the other teachers – MI Mansurul Haq and MI Mumtazal Haq – were gone home to Pakistan. I used to eat with Moulana Sema Saheb *marhum* for that week.

Later, I arranged a house and brought Fathima to stay. And that is how my memorable 20 years of golden experience started. I always tell people, whatever we do on Channel Islam, I'm really indebted to MI Sema Saheb for the opportunity to teach and learn at his Darul Uloom.

When Moulana Ra was alive, I would make sure I went to his house whenever I used to go to Newcastle.

We must never forget the people who are our *muhsineen* and did us big, big favours.

In 1981, I taught Hifdh class for one year.

In 1982, I taught the second- and third-year students in Darul Uloom.

And in 1983, for the first time in South Africa, Ulama were qualifying and Moulana told me, "You must start teaching the final students, as well".

Normally, that doesn't happen, that in two or three years you already start teaching final year students. At that time, we still taught all the kitabs: almost 90 percent Bukhari Shareef, we taught five, six times; Tirmidhi Shareef, 10, 12 years; Mishkaat Shareef, about 15 years.

Like that, with Allah's Help, we went through so many books and Moulana used to always tell me, "This is a new book we want to introduce, who will teach it?"

I would say, "Give it to me, I will."

I never heard of the book but I always used to study, with Allah's Help. Everything happens with Allah's Help.

Another unique feature of Darul Uloom Newcastle was, we had mostly students from the Shafi'i School, from Cape Town, Western Province. The Hanafis were a minority and that was an excellent thing for us, so that we could learn and master the other Fiqh – of the Shafi'is, Malikis and Hambalis – which was unique to Newcastle and a tremendous contribution. Today, we see the fruits of it when we visit different parts of South Africa.

Moulana was a fatherly figure. The day he passed away, I paid tribute to him on Channel Islam. His children were so impressed and overcome, they were crying themselves. They told me this personally – that they all got the CD [recording of the tribute]. We can never forget Hazrat Moulana, his contribution to South Africa has been vital, substantial and outstanding, Alhamdulillah.

Zahid: Alhamdulillah, Muftisaheb. Your contribution, like you were saying, out of Darul Uloom Newcastle, many students had come through under your tutelage as well. If you have to name three of your finest, who would they be?

Mufti Saheb: Alhamdulillah, from 1981, January, I started teaching right till 2000 – 20 years I was in Newcastle, with the Help and Mercy of Almighty Allah. Some students, you don't even remember their names, and some are...MashAllah...but, obviously, as you mentioned, some of them were real giants and, MashAllah, their contribution is so impressive. When I see them – like when I went to Cape Town last week – I made sure that I visited the masjid of three students:

- MI Dawood Sampson's Masjidus Sabr in Parkwood,
 - MI Abdurrahman Hendricks' Masjidus Salaam in Athlone, where Sheikh Saliegh Dien Ra, one of the giants of South Africa, was appointed Imam in 1959. He had returned from Egypt in 1956 after nine years of studying Islam.
- MI Abdurrahman Hendricks has been Imam there for 20 years, so I made sure we had a programme there and also paid tribute to Sheikh Saliegh Dien,
- and then MI Farouk Rylands in Waterloo Road Masjid, Kenwyn.

On the south coast, there's Moulana Imran Khamissa doing excellent work – he transformed Port Shepstone and the south coast. These are remarkable achievements.

In the Western and Eastern Cape, you will find so many of our students that you won't be able to remember everybody's name and, amongst the indigenous African students also, there are several whose names stand out for the pivotal role they played in their contribution towards Islam in South Africa. May Almighty Allah... the main thing is that Almighty Allah accepts it, Aameen.

قال الإمام البخاري للإمام الترمذي: لا أظن أنك استفدت مني أكثر كما استفدت منك

Qal-al-Imam al-Bukhari lil-Imam al-Tirmidhi: La athunn annaka istafadt minni akthar kama istafadt minka

Once Imam Bukhari, Imam Tirmidhi Ra's teacher, told him: I don't think that you benefited more from me compared to how much I benefited from you.

Sometimes, as a teacher, you benefit much more from your students because they ask stimulating questions and you have to prepare the lesson accordingly. There are so many things you have to do because you know these are intelligent students, MashAllah. We make du'a Almighty Allah Jalla wa 'Alaa gives all the students who are studying – even now – and those who graduated in the past, that Ikhlāas, that sincerity, that wisdom that will benefit them and the Deen, Aameen.

I was at UCT¹⁰ and there you see the *barakat* of it. The Moulanas today are there at UCT, offering Jumuah and interacting with the students. They invited me last year, Ramadhan, and again this year. Once more, you see the *barakat* of Darul Uloom Newcastle.

During my tenure, Mufti Abdul Wahab Saheb, one of our Muftis, passed away in an accident. Moulana Qasim Sema and others were returning from Cape Town after the ijtimā. Of the eight who were travelling in the Kombi, four passed away, including Mufti Abdul Wahab Saheb. Subsequently, Ml Qasim Sema Saheb called me and said, “Now you have to run the whole Darul Ifta, the Fatwa department, of Newcastle”. It was another immense favour upon me that Moulana had such confidence that he put me in charge of the whole Fatwa department for ten years. Today, when I look back and think about all the books we are writing – Ramadan Q&A, Hajj and Umrah Q&A, Contemporary Q&A, Du'a (The Weapon of a Believer) – it's all due to the experience we accumulated at Newcastle, with the Mercy of Allah. We thought, “Let us try and leave some legacy for the Ummah.”

We are deeply indebted to brother Dr Yunus Moosa of Kroonstad [for publishing the books]. That is how... I always tell Fathima, with the Help of Allah, I don't feel I wasted a year in my life as, every year something good is coming up, with the Mercy of Almighty Allah Jalla wa 'Alaa.

Zahid: We are running out of time, Muftisaheb, but still lots to talk to you about and I want to go on to the start at Channel Islam when you were first spoken to, to come and join the radio station. No radio experience whatsoever. I don't think you ever sat in a studio before that. What was your first reaction to all of that?

Mufti Saheb: What happened was, Ziyad Muhammad, Fathima's nephew – he was one of the founders of Channel Islam – he approached me and told me we got a radio station. I told him, “What am I going to do on the radio? Come off it, man, I'm not a radio man!”

He said, “No, you call this a digital satellite receiver.” Some big name. I still wasn't keen but I wanted to come to Lens [Lenasia]. There, in a small shop, ISV, I met brother Ashraf Seedat and Umar Farooq. Hamza, I don't think was there so I didn't meet him, but I spoke to the others. Afterwards, I still wasn't convinced. I had America in my head; I wanted to migrate and go to America.

Last night, in my own *Taraweesh*, I finished the 17th juz, with Allah's help. Two nights ago, in the 15th para, I read Surah Kahf. Now, when I read Surah Kahf one day in America, I made six mistakes and that just settled the whole thing for me.

The next day I sent an email to Ziyad and told him I'm starting with Channel Islam. When I told Fathima today, “Surah Kahf”, she told me, “Your favourite Surah of America” (*laughing*) because that was what tipped the scales in favour of Channel Islam. So, yes, it was 15th of January, 2001 when I left Newcastle and, on the 16th January, I came here to Lens, in the house where I am staying currently. When Ashraf and them saw that the whole house needed attention, they fixed up everything, because it needed painting and other maintenance. That was exceedingly good of them.

¹⁰ University of Cape Town

Ashraf told me, “You start on Monday, the 22nd”.

When I arrived, they told me, “There’s the studio. Start.”

Surprised, I asked, “But, mustn’t I go for training?”

They said, “There’s no time for training, nothing. The people are complaining one way, they’re just listening to nasheeds and nazms.”

First, I made 2 rakaats namaaz and du’a. I’m sure I made du’a; the namaaz I’m not 100 percent sure but I think so. And then I started, “A’oothu billahi... and Bismillah...”. Last year, you remember Ramadhan time, we completed the Tafseer, *hatha min Fadhli Rabbi*.¹¹

So, yes, a tremendous experience for me... no experience... till now I know nothing about radio, you know that, Zahid (*both laugh*). I just go there and they tell me, “Start”, and I start. “Press this button, that button...”. I press no button; just now I’ll press the wrong button then I’ll fly out. I simply speak – I don’t know anything about the radio – and I ask Allah to accept it.

Zahid: MashAllah, Muftisaheb, you’ve had a decidedly blessed and privileged life. Allah Subhanahu Ta’ala has done so much for you and we’re so appreciative of this. You’ve been a giant of giants known across the world and, Alhamdulillah Rabbal ‘Alameen, we praise Allah Subhanahu Ta’ala for having you. Just very quickly, I want to touch on two things: one is the challenges for the Muslim community in South Africa. What do you think would be our greatest challenges now?

Mufti Saheb: The greatest challenge... on a deeply serious note, this morning I read one email. It brought tears to my eyes. One person wrote a letter against an Alim and it’s going public now; people are circulating it. I need to make a strong appeal and I mentioned this to so many Ulama and in Ulama forums. Till we, the Ulama, who say we are Ulama, if we are not united then, remember, we are causing an enormous disservice to this Ummah. We can have differences of opinion on issues but once the difference of opinion goes into personal attacks and what-and-what type of language is used, that definitely does not behove the Alim and the Ulama fraternity so, I beg, I appeal, I beseech the Ulama: think about what we are doing. This cannot be allowed to continue in South Africa. Whatever the issue is, we need to think: Are we causing harm to this Ummah or are we making khidmat of this Ummah? Read *Ummata Wahdat* of Mufti Shafi Saheb Ra. Every Alim should read that.

I met Mufti Shafi Saheb, Hazrat Allama Binnoori – we performed umrah, hajj – Hazratji MI Maseehullah Khan Saheb, Sheikh Albani, Sheikh bin Baz – we met the giants of our time. They *never* behaved in this manner; there was so much respect therefore, I appeal first to the Ulama.

Second, to the parents, Ulama and the Muslim leaders: children and the youth – there are so many challenges for them and they can so easily go off the track – whether it’s because of girlfriends/boyfriends, because of bad company, drugs and what-have-you. If we do not make effort on them then I fear for what might happen to the future of South Africa.

These are my two major concerns: how we Ulama behave with one another and second, our new generation: will they contribute and appreciate this significant legacy in South Africa, given to them on a plate or, Allah forbid, will they just leave it?

These... and global issues obviously – Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan are all in front of us – these are all matters of grave concern. The minimum we can do is make du’a that Almighty Allah unites the Ulama and unites the Ummah, as well, Aameen.

¹¹ 28 Ramadhan 1430 ~ 18 September 2009: The broadcast of the first Tafseer was completed.

Zahid: Mufti Abdul Kader Hoosen, we've been profiling... Mufti Saheb, before I let you go, we just got a message from a sister Amina in Mauritius. She says, "We've been learning so much from Mufti Saheb. He's our teacher; he has taught us to live Islam, to love Islam and I make du'a from the bottom of my heart Allah Subhanu Ta'ala give him Izzat in his Deen, Dunya and Akhirah, Aameen."

Mufti Saheb (crying): JazakAllahu khayran. It is emails and messages like these that motivate us. We can only beg Almighty Allah to grant us Ikhlās, sincerity and Qabooliyat, acceptance. Make du'a for Channel Islam, that we go from heights to heights and that the entire team, InshAllah, can contribute towards Islam in all four corners of the globe, Inshallah. JazakAllah khayran.

Zahid: JazakAllah khayran, Mufti Abdul Kader Hoosen. Mufti Saheb, once again, JazakAllah for your time. This will be available, remember, as a podcast and, at the end of Ramadhan, on a CD – every Alim that we showcase and highlight will be recorded on that CD. By month end, InshAllah, or maybe just after Eid, InshAllah, that will be available. Lots of requests from brothers around the country and around the world for the series to be made available. It is definitely something for you to keep. Mufti Saheb, once again, JazakAllah khayr to you. All the best. May Allah Subhanahu Ta'ala keep you and Appa Fathima well, give you a long life, Inshallah, and keep you in the service of Deen for many, many years, Aameen.

Mufti Saheb: BarakAllah feekum. We conclude today's interview with the golden words of Mufti Shafee Saheb Ra:

ہر مسلمان کا مقصد صرف قرآن شریف ختم کرنا نہیں ہونا چاہیے، مقصد یہ ہونا چاہیے کہ اپنی زندگی قرآن کی خدمت میں گزاریں

har masلمان ka masad sarf qaran shareef khtam karna nihein hona chahiye. masad ya hona chahiye kah ham apani zandgion ko qaran ki khidmat min guzarin

"The aim of every Muslim should not be just to finish the Qur'an Shareef; the aim should be to finish our lives in the khidmah of the Qur'an – and Sunnah and Islam"

BarakAllah feekum. JazakAllah khayr to you, brother Zahid Asmal and the entire team.

As Salaamu alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakaatu.

Zahid: Wa alaykum Salaam wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakaatu. Another one in the series of Ulama we are showcasing.

Conclusion

During his tenure at Cii, on Saturday 1 Shabaan 1432 ~ 2 July 2011, Allahu Ta'ala favoured Mufti Saheb with entry into the Ka'bah Musharrafah, through His Grace and Benevolence. Mufti Saheb spent about 25 minutes there, completing his Qur'an and making du'a – a humbling and unforgettable experience which Mufti Saheb describes as "the greatest moment in my life, *hatha min fadhli Rabbi*".

Mufti Saheb resigned from Cii on the 13th Jumaadul Ula 1439 AH ~ 31st January 2018 CE, after dedicating 17 years to Cii and its audience.

On the 26th Rajab 1439 AH ~ 12 April 2018 CE (Thursday night), another milestone in Mufti Saheb's broadcasting career was achieved, with the Help and Mercy of Allah Jalla wa Ala, when Markaz Sahaba Online Radio was launched, officially. The Capital Group, especially the director, Muhammad Ikhlas Latib, was instrumental in establishing the radio station in a studio situated on the ground floor of Mufti Saheb's residence, owned by Boetie Ganie and his family from Ogies, Mpumalanga, to whom Mufti Saheb is greatly indebted for their generosity.

This year the station will be 8 years old, Islamically.

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