

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

JAHAN -E- QAMAR

Articles on the Life and Services of Huzoor Mufakkir-e-Islam
Hazrat Allama **Maulana Qamaruzzaman** Sahab Azmi

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Allama Azmi: A Great Islamic Thinker of the 21st Century

By Maulana Mohammad Shahid Raza OBE,

Chairman of UK's Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB)

While the 21st Century has witnessed many Muslim thinkers who have turned out to be controversial, Allama Azmi has the significance of being a thinker without controversy. He was nurtured in Islamic education from an early age and received much of his religious education at Al Jamia-tul-Ashrafia (a prestigious University in Islamic Sciences) in Mubarakpur, India and the famous Nadwat-ul-Ulema in Lucknow, India.

He is renowned and admired for his public lectures which have inspired millions of young and old Muslims in the subcontinent, Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. But he is also a great thinker and religious teacher who speaks with incredible intellectual energy. His lectures are extraordinary in terms of topics covered. No wonder the Times of India recently wrote on 2nd November 2010:

"There are two kinds of Sunni Muslims in the world: those who have met or heard Allama Qamaruzzaman Khan Azmi and those who haven't. His lucid speeches peppered with repeated references to Quranic commandments and the life of the Prophet and his companions have a charismatic effect; they go straight to the heart. Unlike many rabble-rousing parochial preachers and Islam-supremacist televangelists, Azmi uses words to calm nerves, close breaches and salve wounds. As Secretary General of the UK-headquartered World Islamic Mission, an organisation which inspires Muslims to anchor their lives around the Quran and Sunnah, Azmi is uniquely placed and is undoubtedly most sought-after preacher of Ahle Sunnat wa Jamat, the major sect in Islam".

In his speeches Allama Azmi successfully combines the thoughts of Muslim reformers, jurists, philosophers and Sufis. His primary concern is the revival of Islamic attitude. He believes that the future of the Ummah is in the hands of Muslims themselves rather than in the hands of Western scientific and technological arenas. Poverty and humiliation of Muslims in the contemporary world has always been a

prime concern for him, however he considers that Muslims themselves are largely responsible for this downfall due to a lack of education, activism and an aspiring soul.

Allama Azmi believes that the Seerah and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him and His family) is the ultimate role model (Uswah) for the Muslim community and that profound respect and love for the Prophet (Peace be upon Him and His family) is the blueprint for a perfect Islamic society.

Importantly, and like many other thinkers and scholars, Allama Azmi believes that Muslims cannot be the followers of a static ideology. Although he refuses the idea of reopening the gates of Ijtihad, he accepts the organic process of change and progress while remaining firmly embedded in the fundamental principles of the Quran, Sunnah and theological authority of the Four Imams of Sunni jurisprudence.

He is evidently influenced by the teachings and thoughts of Aala Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Qadri (1856-1921) and his charismatic and learned son Mufti-e-Azam of India, Hazrat Maulana Mustafa Raza Khan Qadri (1892-1981) who was also his spiritual guide (Pir). He passionately advocates their teachings and guidance (Maslak) as a creative and dynamic force for the moral and spiritual development of the Muslim community.

Allama Azmi's importance lies primarily in his awareness of the problems faced by Muslims when confronted with modernity. His familiarity with western philosophical and cultural ideas coupled with his vast knowledge of the Islamic sciences and orthodox as well as modern trends in Islamic thought has resulted in him being a figure of intellectual force in the field of a revival of Islamic environment.

He argues, along with many Islamic scholars, that Islam is neither irrational nor non scientific. That the growth in science and knowledge more generally does not come at the expense of religion but rather that they work together in helping us understand religion and its proper place in our society.

He also argues, as Phillip Lewis (1994) quotes Allama Azmi in his acclaimed book 'Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics and Identity among British Muslims', that Islam and secular society can co-exist and are not incompatible.

Phillip Lewis (1994) writes that Allama Azmi:

"considers that the widely shared perception that secular necessarily implies irreligion is simply wrong. In India, he contends, a secular state can offer security to Muslims since it is compatible with acknowledging that religion is important and, that in a religiously plural environment the state does not allow believers in one religious tradition to enjoy a privileged status. All are citizens with equal rights. Indeed, in India, Muslims are allowed to conform to their own Muslim family law." (see Phillip Lewis (1994) *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics and Identity among British Muslims* (p.127. London: I.B. Tauris).

Allama Azmi has travelled widely and has engaged in direct and meaningful dialogue with a variety of faith leaders, professionals and representatives of many organisations and institutions. He has always impressed his counterparts through his thoughts and inspired them in their respective work. This practice remains active and on-going and we hope and pray to Allah Almighty that in the coming days and years he will continue his unique work of Dawah all over the world (Ameen).



Allama Aazmi: A Great Religious Leader of the 21st Century

By Sayyid Helal Shahid LLB, MBA

Chief Executive, Warwickshire Racial Equality Partnership

"All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership." [John Kenneth Galbraith]

"Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations." [Peter F. Drucker]

"He is greatest whose strength carries up the most hearts by the attraction of his own." [Henry Ward Beecher]

His Eminence Allama Qamaruzzaman Azmi is one of the world's best-known and most widely influential Islamic thinkers, orators and writers. His work has inspired millions of people across India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Middle East, South Africa, UK, France, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Holland, America and Canada raising their vision to higher sights and higher standards and the building of a Muslim personality that goes beyond the status quo. Maulana Shahid Raze OBE, Chairman of UK's Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) explains that it is his willingness to confront without fear or favour the major issues and challenges facing Muslims in the 21st century that draws people to him as well as his intellectuality, selflessness, simplicity, purity of heart, integrity and deep convictions. Maulana Shahid Raze OBE states:

"Allama Azmi's primary concern is the revival of Islamic attitude. He believes that the future of the Ummah is in the hands of Muslims themselves rather than in the hands of Western scientific and technological arenas. Poverty and humiliation of Muslims in the contemporary world has always been a prime concern for him, however he considers that Muslims themselves are largely responsible for this downfall due to a lack of education, activism and an aspiring soul".

Allama Azmi is the Khalifa of His Holiness Mufti-e-Azam-e-Hind Hazrat Maulana Mustafa Raza Khan (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) as well as Sarkar-e-Kalaa'n Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Muhammed Mukhtar Ashraf, Sajjada Nasheen of Kichaw-chah Shareef (May Allah shower his mercy upon him).

A lot has already been written about him throughout the world. Saut-ul-Azhar, the Egyptian newspaper recently carried an extensive piece on his life, contributions and scholarly orations. Elsewhere, newspapers and journals in India, Pakistan, Middle East, South Africa, Europe, America and Canada have written hundreds of articles on him.

A collection of his spell-bounding extraordinary scholarly speeches have already been published in three volumes. Volume one was put together by Maulana Mohammed Rehan Raza Misbahi and Maulana Abdullah Azmi in a 376 page book consisting of twelve great speeches entitled Khutbaat-e-Muffakir-e-Islam (Speeches of the Great Thinker of Islam) published by Maktaba Taiba, Mumbai, India.

Volume two was put together by Maulana Mohammed Sajid Hussain Qadri in a 512 page book consisting of nineteen speeches entitled Khutbaat-e-Muffakir-e-Islam (Speeches of the Great Thinker of Islam) and published by Maktaba Taiba, Hyderabad. This was launched by Tajush-Shari'a Hazrat Maulana Mufti Akhtar Raza Khan and Mohaddith-e-Kabir Hazrat Allama Zia-ul-Mustafa Sahib Qibla (see the Daily Munsif, 20th February 2004 and, Daily Siyaasat, 20th February 2004). Volume three was put together by Imran Hussain Chaudhary in a 240 page book consisting of eleven speeches entitled Ilmi taqreeray'n (scholarly speeches) and published by the Sunni Foundation in 2008 in Pakistan.

His collection of poetry Khayabaan-e-Midhat volume one was published in 2007 by Maktaba Taiba, Mumbai, India and volume two in 2011 by the Sunni Foundation in Pakistan. These publications have been acclaimed by newspaper critics, scholars and intellectuals all over the world. He has written more than 200 articles which are currently being collated and published in volumes under the title Maqaalat-e-Muffakir-e-Islam. His books like Jamaal-e-Mustafa are already under circulation within India.

To cover the life of such a great world religious personality and

leader of the 21st century whose work spans forty-five years requires many volumes. However, for the purpose of this short article I will attempt to highlight few key points from his life to give us a flavour of the diverse and broad ranging work and the huge impact he has made in bringing about tangible change to the lives of many across the world.

Early life and work in India

Allama Azmi was born on 23rd March 1946 in the district of Azamgarh in the State of Uttar Pardesh, India to a deeply religious and educated family. He was given the name Muhammad Qamaruz-zaman Khan. His illustrious father was Molvi Abdul Hameed Khan who was the son of Molvi Abdus Samad Khan (May Allah shower his mercy upon them). He learnt Persian and Urdu from his father and grandfather and obtained initial Islamic education from a local institution called Anwar-ul-Uloom.

Allama Azmi became known for his piety and the great intellectual and scholarly abilities from an early age. No wonder he was admitted into one of India's best Islamic Institutes, Ashrafia, Azamgarh at the age of twelve. From there he went onto to the famous Nadwat-ul-Ulema University at the age of eighteen where he completed his Aalim degree and then returned to Ashrafia University where he was awarded the Dastar-e-Fazilat (Turban of Honour) and the Sanad (Islamic degree) by the hands of the very founder of that University, His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat Hazrat Maulana Abdul Aziz Muhaddith-e-Muradabadi (May Allah shower his mercy upon him).

He was then commissioned in 1966 at the age of eighteen by His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat Hazrat Maulana Abdul Aziz Muhaddith-e-Muradabadi (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) to go to Faizabad (near Lucknow) to start his missionary work. There at that tender age of eighteen years he established the Islamiya University which is now recognised as one of India's top Islamic Universities. Several thousand scholars have obtained their degrees from this highly respected institution and are working all over India as well as in the UK, USA, Holland and Canada.

Whilst in Faizabad his powerful writings, orations and contemporary thinking spread across India like wildfire. His speaking schedules began filling up so much so that people had to book him six

months to a year in advance for their major conferences. Millions of Indians began benefitting from his intellectually powerful lectures. He became a distinctive brand name and people would travel for miles just to hear his lectures. Each speech could attract a crowd of 150,000 - 250,000 people. Along with religious topics he made it a point to include in his speeches contemporary issues that the Muslim Ummah, especially the poor Muslims of India faced. He would speak without notes yet his two-three hour long lectures are always full of quotes, credible sources and intellectual depth. Listeners include professionals, academics and political personalities as well as the general public who are all captivated by his style of oration and his heartfelt concerns about the religious-political issues that Muslims face.

It would be appropriate to mention that audio cassettes and CDs containing his spell-bounding extraordinary scholarly speeches are being circulated by the millions all over the world and a collection of some of these, as mentioned earlier, have recently been published in Pakistan and India.

Migration and work in the UK

1973 witnessed the creation of the first Sunni global organisation in the Holy City of Makkah, The World Islamic Mission. One of the key founders, Ra'ees-ut-Tahrir Hazrat Allama Arshad-ul-Qadri felt that the organisation needed an exceptionally top heavyweight scholar with not only integrity, sincerity and a track record of successful leadership skills but the intellectual depth and breadth of the religious-political landscape across Europe & America. Hazrat Allama Azmi was chosen from amongst many across the world and in 1974 he joined the World Islamic Mission as its Joint-Secretary-General and moved to Bradford, UK. By doing so, he became one of the first to begin missionary work in Europe, America and Canada.

The letter of His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat to Allama Azmi is worth quoting:

"No doubt that Islam is a global religion and that is why there has always been a need for an international organisation. Al-Jamiatul Ashrafia with all its staff and influence fully supports the World Islamic Mission" (see letter, 1974).

However, within a short period of his presence in the UK India felt

a huge gap of this great intellectual personality. This became particularly acute following the departure from this world of His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) who was overseeing the prestigious Ashrafia University. The pressure on Hazrat Allama Azmi to return to India grew and it is worth quoting a letter amongst many, of Haji Abdus-sattar Sahib, Chairman of the Ashrafia University Board who wrote to Allama on 15th October 1980 requesting him to return and oversee the prestigious University as His Holiness did:

"Your departure to the UK has left India with a major gap that can not be filled. You are no doubt playing a significant and important role in the UK but we the mainstream Sunni majority Muslims are deeply missing your presence here in India".

"The unanimous decision of our Board is that we can not think of another person in the Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaah as great as you to lead this prestigious institution. We implore to you to accept and hope that you will not disappoint us".

However, within a year of his arrival to the UK Allama Azmi had developed the work so much so that it became a 'point of no return'.

By 1975 he had accomplished the following which is an example of his selflessness, tirelessness, resilience and dynamic leadership:

1) establishment of the Headquarters of the World Islamic Mission (WIM)

Whilst the decision to establish the World Islamic Mission took place in Holy Makkah, no developmental work was done. Therefore, Allama Azmi together with Allama Arshad-ul-Qadri worked tirelessly to establish quickly the support required to enable the headquarters of the organisation as well as the delivery of its work programme.

2) establishment of the Islamic Missionary College (IMC)

This was the first Islamic college in the UK that was established. The idea was that entrance exams would be held in different parts of the world to select the 'cream' of the newly qualified ulema each year. The top high calibre selected ulema would be funded to come to the UK for further training in English language, Western culture and values, democracy, engaging with communities, building effective media and institutional relations etc so that they could then serve effectively their and the wider communities in Europe.

Allama Azmi worked to gain recognition of this important institution which was eventually given by the Government. This marked a watershed in the history of minority ethnic communities as no other minority ethnic religious institution had received such type of recognition from the Government at that time. This not only reflects the high standards of work being carried out by Allama Azmi but his foresightedness, broad mindedness and great strategic leadership.

The IMC was an institution that promoted inclusivity by involving people of different ethnic groups and nationalities at all levels. The Chair of the IMC Governing Body was Dr Hanif Fatmi, Professor at University of Kuwait. (Note: Dr H. Fatmi is one of the first to translate the Quran (Kanz-ul-Imaan) in English with Professor Muhammad John Patrick, an American Professor who accepted Islam at his hands).

The IMC student community was also inclusive with Pakistanis, Indians, White, and Dutch scholars applying for the entrance exam and if successful, enrolling at the IMC. Adverts for the entrance exam for a fully funded scholarship at the IMC were placed in national newspapers in different countries. For example the advert in Pakistan stated:

"If you are aged between 18-25 years and have completed your Dars-e-Nizami or Dars-e-Ali'a, you may qualify for a fully funded scholarship in English language course at the Islamic Missionary College, UK (to work in Europe, America and Canada). You will need to apply and if shortlisted, attend an assessment. If successful then you will be eligible for scholarship to join the Islamic Missionary College. To apply please contact Hazrat Maulana Qari Raza-ul-Mustafa, Convenor of the World Islamic Mission Pakistan, New Memon Masjid, Bolton Market, Karachi 2" (see Daily Sa'aadat 7th August 1974).

3) establishment of an international Dar-ul-Iftaa (Centre for Islamic Decrees)

Allama Azmi recognised the critical need to establish a centre that could translate Islamic shari'a (laws) to new settings and contexts in order to avoid confusions, myths and potential conflicts. Allama Azmi realised that the post-World War Two economic climate had created labour shortages that made the British Government encourage migrants from the commonwealth to Britain. This was because under the Commonwealth rules, Commonwealth citizens had free entry to Britain.

And, although Enoch Powell had made his "Rivers of Blood" speech in 1968 criticizing Commonwealth immigration and successive Governments were implementing restrictive measures, immigration through blood relations, family re-unions and marriages were continuing. There was a similar phenomenon taking place elsewhere in Holland, Germany, Belgium, France, Norway, America and Canada and what was needed was an international centre to help integrate the growing Muslim population in these countries by finding solutions, interpreting and re-defining rules within the context of the Shari'a.

Therefore, the International Dar-ul-Iftaa was established which included a Board made up of leading scholars from around the world.

4) establishment of the World Islamic Mission Press

George Bernard Shaw said that 'the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place'.

In other words, to assume that the immigrant communities understood their religion, knew their responsibilities in the new environment and were familiar with how to deal with everyday challenges would be to assume wrong. And that is why a Publication House was necessary to encourage continuous research and dissemination. The World Islamic Mission Press published a number of books and was seen as the main centre for publication and dissemination at that time.

5) establishment of Al-Falah, UK's first organisation for young people

Immigration brings with it huge challenges in not only gaining a foothold in the new country but adjusting to the new environment, making friends and raising a family. Such problems are further compounded if you're a young person because you find yourself trapped between two cultures, living with two identities, facing racism and discrimination in the wider society and, not having anyone to help you make sense of everything. Al-Falaah was established by Allama Azmi to do just that - to help young people feel confident in their identities; understand the dangers of drugs, guns or gangs; and, the importance of good citizenship, morality and religion.

Al-Falaah became one of the most important and influential organizations for young people in Bradford with its own building and

employees.

6) a Monthly Journal, Al-Dawat-ul-Islamia

Allama Azmi established a monthly journal, Al-Dawat-ul-Islamia as its chief editor which became a highly respected and hugely popular monthly journal for Muslims living in Europe, America and Canada. This was one of the very few journals available at the time. Al-Dawa-ul-Islamia contained articles on contemporary issues and allowed a safe space for academics and scholars to debate pertinent issues.

Witnessing such outstanding accomplishments within a year the World Islamic Mission Executive Council unanimously appointed Allama Azmi as its Secretary-General, a position which he still holds today.

In 1979 Allama Azmi moved from Bradford to Manchester. Within a very short period of time he built a huge Mosque with capacity to hold 2,500 worshippers with the cost of £1.5 million. Another project costing £1 million established the College of Islamic Studies. He also established another monthly journal as its chief editor, Hijaz London which became a very popular monthly journal.

Under his leadership and contributions the World Islamic Mission has gone from strength to strength and till this day continues to spread the message of Islam all over the world. It has built many large institutions (Mosques and Islamic Institutes) in the UK, USA, Canada, Holland, Norway, Germany, France, Belgium, Surinam, India, Pakistan and Mauritius.

In the words of Khalid Athar, the famous Pakistani journalist of the Pakistan Press Association (PPA) Allama Azmi is the "soul" of the World Islamic Mission.

It would not be controversial or unfair to say that the flourishing Muslim institutions that we see today in Europe, America and Canada; the increased awareness of people about their faith; and the increasingly mature community that is being realised in these countries is due to the tireless work of selfless key figures like Allama Azmi. This was also achieved through the organisation of several major international conferences. These included:

" World Islamic Mission Conference, Bradford 1974

" World Islamic Mission Conference, St Georges Hall 1978

" World Islamic Mission Conference Holland, 1980

" World Islamic Mission Hijaz Conference, Wembley, 1985

Each conference was significant for two reasons. Firstly, it brought together key religious figures under one platform attracting audience in their thousands. Secondly, it debated key issues of the day and passed agreed resolutions which helped shape the national and international policy framework. For example, the 1974 conference debated issues like:

" the need to establish Mosques particularly, in UK, Europe, America and Canada

" the need to establish Madaaris and Islamic institutes particularly in UK, Europe, America and Canada

" the need for local authorities to consider Muslim graveyards in towns and cities

" the need for schools, hospitals and public institutions to cater halal food

" the need to work towards the elimination of discrimination against Muslims

" the need to establish a Muslim Shari'a Council (to settle disputes and divorce cases)

" the need to create self-regulating halal authorities

These conferences were attended by key local Muslim leaders from Holland, Belgium, Germany, France, Norway, and UK. Speakers would be renowned figures from the world. For example the 1978 conferences speakers included: Professor Ghulam Nabi Saaqib, King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah; Professor Sajjad Hussain, former Vice-Chancellor Dhaka University; Professor Saffa Al-Khulusi, Baghdad; Dr Mustafa Mabrook, Libya; Sheikh Basillia of the Embassy of Libya; and, Mufti Mustafa Riffat, Mufti of Cyprus.

The impact of these conferences were huge in raising awareness of Muslims, inspiring positive action and bringing about change for the better. For example, following the 1974 Conference Allama Azmi pursued the key resolutions such as:

" "The conference of the World Islamic Mission appeals to the peace loving nations of the world that Israel should be forced to abide by the resolutions of the United Nations and vacate the occupied Holy Land

of Palestine and Arab Territory. This conference also condemns Israel's aggressive policies" (see Press Release, 1974).

"The conference demands a personal consideration from the Prime Minister that Muslim girls should be provided the facilities of education in an all girls school retaining the present such schools" (see letter to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education, 1974)

On the issue of eliminating discrimination against Muslim, Allama Azmi engaged the Government of the day. The Conservative and Unionist Central Office Letter dated 4th December 1978 to Allama Azmi states:

"Ian Percival MP has asked me to put forward a request for specific details of cases where people have suffered whilst trying to practice their religion in schools, employment etc., and he would be grateful if you would bring such information along to the meeting [which will take place in Interview Room W6 in the House of Commons, commencing at 7.30 p.m." (see Letter by Mervyn Kohler to Allama Sahib dated 4th December 1978).

Similarly, the British Epilepsy Association published an article in which it falsely claimed that the Prophet Muhammad's (Peace Be Upon Him) behaviour during the receiving of 'Wahee' was not due to 'Wahee' itself but that he was suffering from epilepsy and used to have regular epileptic attacks. Allama Azmi took up this issue and on 17th December 1976 a letter from the Rt. Hon. Lord Cohen of Birkenhead stated:

"We are, of course, very sorry to have caused distress to the many Muslims" (see letter dated 17th December 1976).

In 1979 the Associated Television Network screened a programme which insulted the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Allama Azmi's constructive engagement with them resulted in the following reply to Allama Azmi by A.R. Lucas, Group Legal adviser and copied to Sir Lew Grade:

"In a recent episode of this Series entitled 'The Quick One' one of the characters made derogatory remarks concerning the Holy Prophet of Islam. It is much regretted by ATV Network that those remarks have apparently been considered blasphemous, even within a work of fiction, and have accordingly caused offence in certain quarters. For this we apologise and would like to make clear that neither the script writer nor

ATV Network had any intention of insulting Muslims"

In addition, the 1985 Hejaz Conference at the Wembley Conference Centre marked a watershed for Sunni Muslims. It brought together key religious leaders from around the world with an audience that filled the Wembley Conference Centre to discuss the barbaric treatment of Wahabi police and officials of the mainstream sunni pilgrims when visiting the Holy places in Saudi Arabia as well as the ban on Kanzul Imaan the translation of the Holy Quran by Imam Ahmed Raza.

This conference made a huge global impact and the Guardian ran a story on Tuesday 7th May 1985 in which it stated:

"King Fahd of Saudi Arabia is to meet an international delegation of Islamic Scholars who claim that hundreds of Muslim pilgrims on the way to Mecca have been tortured and harassed by his government because they were carrying an Urdu translation of the Quran. The meeting announced yesterday in London by the World Islamic Mission will bring to a head a 70-year old theological dispute. On Sunday 3000 people attended a conference in London where a number of international scholars claimed that their traditional collegiate authority had effectively been hijacked by Saudi Arabia through the influence of the minority Wahabi sect.

This is said to represent fewer than 2 per cent of the world's 700 million Muslims but its influence is detected behind many current grievances. These include allegations that pilgrims have had their Quran and other holy books confiscated by the Saudi authorities", (see the Guardian Tuesday May 7th 1985, page 4).

Two years later the Dawn newspapers, amongst many others, reported the result of this meeting and the Hejaz Conference:

"King Fahd of Saudi Arabia is reported to have agreed to allow the Muslims of all sects to perform the religious rituals in Makkah and Medina, according to their respective beliefs" (see Dawn Karachi, Sunday March 20, 1987; also, The Nation, Lahore, 29th March 1987, and Pukaar, Islamabad, 29th March 1987; and Daily Jang, Lahore, 29th March 1987).

Another international matter where Allama Azmi played a key role was the bloody war between Iran-Iraq. Allama Azmi was invited to visit

Iraq in 1983, 1985, 1988 and May 1990 and Iran in 1983 at their Governmental conferences held to negotiate peace and bring end to the conflict between the two countries. In 1983 Allama Azmi put the resolution forward calling for an end to the Iran-Iraq war before the month of Ramadaan and if this fails, then for all key delegates to pressurise their respective Governments to intervene to help bring an end to this bloody war.

At a domestic level, Allama Azmi continued to contribute to both the self-development of communities at the grassroots levels as well as the development of key policy and legislative frameworks. For example, the creation of the Central Milaad Committee established the first national Milaad procession from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square bringing 20,000 people from all parts of the country to London to celebrate peace and unity by marking the birth of the Prophet. This national annual procession set the trend for towns and cities to hold their own processions which we now witness each year during the holy month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

In terms of policy and legislative frameworks, in 1999 the UK Government established a Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords following The Queen's Speech on 24th November 1998 under the Chairmanship of the Right Honourable Lord Wakeham. The terms of the Royal Commission were:

"to consider and make recommendations on the role and functions of a second chamber;

"to make recommendations on the methods or combination of methods of composition required to constitute a second chamber fit for that role and those functions.

Allama Azmi was invited by the Right Honourable Lord Wakeham to give oral evidence to the Royal Commission. Allama Azmi in his oral evidence argued:

"The existing structures of the House of Lords can be termed as unrepresentative of the changes that have occurred within our society over the last half a century. The current form of representation in the House of Lords based on selection and hereditary peers differs quite dramatically from the House of Commons and shows a double standard approach which is not suitable for a democratic society. If the future of

the House of Lords is to be as an elected body it will be open to all people providing an opportunity to be involved through the democratic processes. If the futures to be as a body based on selection then it is important to ensure that the House reflects the diversity of the country, which it serves".

"Whatever changes the Royal Commission is to propose I believe it should also take account of representation of faiths other than the Church of England. Appropriate mechanisms should be developed to ensure that the diversity of faiths in our country are not marginalised or ignored. This is not only a pre-requisite for any democracy but also important in ensuring that rules of democracy are not abused, side-stepped or religious and moral issues are not swept under the carpet".

More recently, following 9/11 and 7/7, Allama Azmi has passionately and powerfully argued against violent extremism and terrorism and has influenced millions across the world. As a result, the Times of India called him "The Pacemaker" and captured his views on 2nd November 2010:

"What about the Muslims who claim to have grown up amid Islamic traditions but in the name of Islam create terror and sanction suicide bombings? Azmi whose followers have given him the honorific Allama explains: Those who use the name of Islam to terrorise are enemies of Allah and Islam. No injustice or assault real or imagined can be an excuse for resorting to violence and maiming innocents"

Activities abroad

Allama Azmi's tireless work has helped develop great Islamic institutions such as Islamic University Faizabad (India); Madinat-ul-Islam College, Holland; Taibah Mosque, Amsterdam, Holland; Jamia Mosque, Oslo, Norway; Al-Noor Mosque, Houston, USA; Noor-ul-Haram Mosque, Toronto, Canada.

Jim Karygiannis M.P., House of Commons, Canada on 13th July 2002 awarded a certificate of commendation to Allama Azmi for his services and wrote: "In my capacity as Member of Parliament it gives me great pleasure to commend the renowned Islamic scholar Maulana Qamaruzzaman Azmi".

In Holland where the immigrant community is mainly from

Surinam, Allama Sahib's work is commendable. The Surinami Muslims immigrated to Holland following independence on 25th November 1975. This is because as a plantation colony Suriname was dependent on manual labour and to make up for the shortfall, the Dutch post-1667 brought in contract labourers from the Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia) and India (through an arrangement with the British). The Surinami community in Holland themselves describe how life on the plantation colony over generations diminished their religious, cultural and ethnic identities but Allama Sahib's work linked them to their roots, religion and culture.

Holland now has not just a thriving Muslim community of Surinami-Indian ethnic origin but has established the largest and most beautiful Mosque, Taibah Masjid, several Mosques in different cities, two Muslim schools and a large Madinat-ul-Islam College for Islamic studies. Many scholars have studied and graduating from this University to serve communities in Holland as well as Europe.

In conclusion, who better to end than a quote from no other than the great Ra'ees-ut-Tahrir Hazrat Allama Arshad-ul-Qadri (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) who in a letter to Allama Azmi wrote:

"You are an incomparable personality and your work and achievements are also incomparable" (see letter dated 7th December 1997)



Allama Azmi in the Eyes of Leaders & Critics

By **Maulana Farogh-ul-Quadri,**

Secretary-General, The World Islamic Mission Scotland & Chief Imam,
Khazra Central Mosque, Glasgow, Scotland (U.K)

Allama Qamaruzzaman Azmi is one of the greatest scholars of the 21st Century in the Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaah. Millions of people across the Indian Sub-Continent, Middle East, Europe, America and Canada revere him and are inspired by him. His lectures attract crowds of 150,000-200,000 people regularly in the Indian sub-continent which is unthinkable in Europe and America. Most of his audiences are professionals, policy-makers, political, religious and the academic elite. He is covered by the media and press extensively and well recognised by the mainstream Sunni majority.

He is an intellectual giant who is highly revered by both leaders and critics across the world. Here are some examples:

His Holiness Mufti-e-Azam-e-Hind:

His Holiness Mufti-e-Azam-e-Hind Hazrat Maulana Mustafa Raza Khan (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) who was the holy son of Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilvi (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) would wish to be present to listen to Allama Azmi's speech. He was so fond of Allama's speech that during Raipur's Ijtimah, whilst being fragile with old age, he said to the organisers to bring him to the stage before Allama Azmi's speech so that he could listen to it. On this occasion, however, he wasn't brought on time and, therefore, was very upset that he missed Allama's speech. At another Ijtimah in Jabalpur Allama Azmi cut his speech short since there were many other great scholars and speakers present, however, His Holiness asked him to continue and complete his speech.

His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat:

His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat Allama Abdul Aziz Muradabadi, Founder of Al Jamiatul Ashrafia Mubarakpur (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) was present at an Ijtimah in Mubarakpur listening to Allama Sahib's speech on 'Namaaz' (Salaah). Allama Sahib spoke for

three hours leaving the audience in awe. His Holiness stood up and asked: "O people, there are many of you who like me are over the age of seventy in this audience. Can you tell me if you have ever heard a greater speech than this. The audience replied: "No". Then His Holiness said: "From this day on I award him the title of "Khateeb-e-Azam" (the Great Orator). Please note that in the audience the current Shaikh-ul-Hadith of Al-Jamiat-ul-Ashrafia, Hazrat Allama Mohammad Ahmed Misbahi was also present.

The Great Scholars Allama Abul Wafa Faseehi Ghazipuri and Hazrat Allama Mushtaq Ahmed Nizami:

Allama Abul Wafa Faseehi Ghazipuri (who was such a great scholar of his time that people gave him the title Sahbaan-ul-Hind after the great orator of Iran) would be in awe when Allama Sahib spoke.

Another great famous scholar, Hazrat Allama Mushtaq Ahmed Nizami said: "This is the good fortune of the Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaah that a great scholar like Allama Qamaruzzaman is amongst us".

Ra'ees-ut-Tahrir Hazrat Allama Arshadul Qadri:

The famous Ra'ees-ut-Tahrir Hazrat Allama Arshadul Qadri said: "In the line up of Ulema there are few who have achieved greatness in both writing and oratory skills and can answer the challenges of the modern world with such mastery. He is unique in the Ahle Sunnah wal Jamaah".

Bahr-ul-Uloom Hazrat Allama Mufti Abdul Mannan Sahib:

Bahr-ul-Uloom Hazrat Allama Mufti Abdul Mannan Sahib wrote in one of his articles that Maulana Qamaruzzaman's greatness is such that he could prepare a speech for hours just on one or two words of Hafiz-e-Millat. In his introductory remarks at a programme at Al-Jamiat-ul-Ashrafia he said: "The most difficult subjects that can only be taught by great scholars are brought to life with ease by Allama Azmi Sahib in an inspiring and beautiful way".

Syed Shahabuddin, Indian Foreign Services (IFS) and Leader of the Insaaf Party:

Syed Shahabuddin, the famous Indian politician after hearing Allama Sahib's speech said: "This is the first speech after one of the great

founding fathers of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the great orator, Maulana Azad Subhani that I have been so overwhelmed by". Please note that this programme was held in Gaya and Hazrat Maulana Syed Shah Sirajul Huda (May Allah shower his mercy upon him) and Hazrat Maulana Qamaruzzaman Gayani were present.

Iftikhar Arif, famous poet and writer, Pakistan:

Iftikhar Arif, the famous author, poet and Chairman of Muqtadra, Pakistan wrote in the Jang newspaper: "Qamaruzzaman is a great faqee'h, poet and writer and this is unique as the three don't come together in one".

Iftikhar Azmi, famous writer, India:

Iftikhar Azmi, the famous writer used to attend regularly the 'Dars' given by Allama Sahib in Bradford and in one of his articles he commented on the 'magical way' of Allama Sahib's Tafseer".

Professor Giyassuddin Qureshi, Newcastle University:

A famous Urdu poet and writer, Professor Giyassuddin Qureshi of Newcastle University used to attend Allama Sahib's Dars in Leeds regularly. That's where he learnt about Imam Ahmed Raza and fell so much in love that he translated the 'Salaam-e-Raza' in English poetry as well as 'Al-Daulatul Makkiya'.

Allama Shahid Raza OBE, Chairman of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board:

Allama Shahid Raza OBE, Chairman of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board said: "Allama Azmi is not only the 'Imam' of oration admired for his public lectures which have inspired millions of young and old Muslims in the subcontinent, Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America but he is also a great Islamic Thinker of the 21st Century".

Sahibzada Sayyid Hamid Saeed Kazmi, Cabinet Minister for Religious Affairs, Government of Pakistan:

Sahibzada Sayyid Hamid Saeed Kazmi, Cabinet Minister for Religious Affairs, Government of Pakistan wrote: "Hazrat Allama Azmi is not only the king of oration but as a thinker there is no one like him in modern day". He went on to write: "When I listen to his great speeches I

feel like revisiting mine; when I hear his intellectual thoughts I feel guided; when I experience his beautiful manners I feel exposed".

The Times of India:

The Times of India wrote on 2nd November 2010: "There are two kinds of Sunni Muslims in the world: those who have met or heard Allama Qamaruz-zaman Azmi and those who haven't. His lucid speeches peppered with repeated references to Quranic commandments and the life of the Prophet and his companions have a charismatic effect; they go straight to the heart. Unlike many rabble-rousing parochial preachers and Islam-supremacist televangelists, Azmi uses words to calm nerves, close breaches and salve wounds".

Munaf Solaiman, President of the World Islamic Mission, Canada:

"Canadian Muslims from coast to coast look forward to the continued presence of Muffakir-e-Azam Allama Qamar-uz-Zaman Azmi here in Canada where he has already left a legacy which only a scholar of his magnanimity and humility can hope to achieve".

Taj Mohammad Qadri, Al Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt::

Taj Mohammad Qadri of Al-Azhar University, Cairo in his article on Allama Sahib's life published in the Egyptian Newspaper 'Saut-ul-Azhar' wrote: "The great contemporary thinker for Islamic issues, a great scholar of Islam, and a great orator Allama Maulana Qamaruz-zaman Azmi is known not only all over the Indian sub-continent but all over the world".

Professor Waqar Ahmed, Chair of Nanotechnology & Advanced Manufacturing, University of Central Lancashire:

Professor Waqar Ahmed who is the Chair of Nanotechnology & Advanced Manufacturing and Head of Institute of Nanotechnology & Bioengineering as well as Leader of Nanomedicine and Nanoengineering Research Group at the University of Central Lancashire wrote:

"Allama Azmi is one of the most lucid and original thinkers of his generation. He is internationally renowned for the depth of his knowledge on all aspects of Islam. However, I have been most impressed with his interest and appreciation of science and technology and its importance in modern Islamic society. For two decades I have had the

privilege of listening to his numerous lectures and debates. His insights, guidance and love have provided the foundational pillars for my own success and happiness. His dynamic powerhouse style has inspired thousands of Muslim professionals in Manchester to live a pious life. Allama Azmi is not only a great leader but also a truly amazing and wonderful human being".

Jim Karygiannis M.P., House of Commons, Canada:

Jim Karygiannis M.P., House of Commons, Canada on 13th July 2002 awarded a certificate of commendation to Allama Azmi for his services and wrote:

"In my capacity as Member of Parliament it gives me great pleasure to commend the renowned Islamic scholar Maulana Qamaruz-zaman Azmi".

Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Founding Secretary-General, The Muslim Council of Britain:

"Just before the formation of The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), I was part of the major consultation process meeting senior leaders and scholars of the Muslim community in the UK. I had the pleasure of meeting Allama Sahib and sought his advice as one of the leading Islamic scholars in the UK. I was not only inspired but deeply impressed with his foresightedness and vision for the Muslim community in the UK. His fullest support and encouragement for the Muslim community in the UK to work together under one umbrella body was instrumental in setting up of MCB. I have valued immensely his guidance and counsel over the years."

Mohammed Sarwar, former Member of Parliament, House of Common, UK:

"Allama Azmi is a great scholar and personality of the Muslim world. His powerful orations, depth of knowledge, grip over current affairs and deep passion for driving change for the better is exceptional. His presence in Scotland over the years has had a huge positive impact on the life of Muslim communities and is highly commendable".

☆.....☆.....☆

Allama Azmi - a Great Scholar of the 21st Century

By Allama Arshad Misbahi,

Aa'lahazrat Foundation International, Manchester, UK

Great men are not born every day. Almost all human beings are influenced by their times, however, very few have the ability and calibre to influence their times. Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam Allama Qamaruzzaman Azmi is a personality of the second kind.

I have known Hazrat since February 1978. This was the first time I had the privilege of seeing this outstanding scholar and savant of Islam. Since then, I have no hesitation to say, I am a great fan of his. He is undoubtedly a man in a league of his own and a precious gem in the arena of Islamic thinkers and scholars.

After the completion of Tahfeez-ul-Quran in Bradford, I had the honour of studying various Islamic sciences including the Arabic Language with Hazrat for a year in 1987. He is not only one of the greatest orators of the present times but also a great teacher. As for his literary qualities, he is second to none. In all these three important factors and aspects of Tableegh and Dawah, Hazrat has been blessed to a great extent by Allah Ta'ala. Without doubt, Hazrat has a great talent in speechmaking which is incredibly rare and is in fact an 'Imam' in this field. He is a speaker who electrifies his listeners. He is most sincere and to the point in his sermons.

DIL KI GEHRAAIYON SE JAB NIKLE

PHAILTI JAAYE BAAT KI KHUSHBOO

Robert Southey correctly said: 'It is with words as with sunbeams, the more they are condensed, the deeper they burn'. Having listened to his lectures over 3 decades, I firmly believe, as Napoleon Bonaparte said, 'a leader is a dealer in hope'. Allama Azmi is a true image of this saying. He travels around the world teaching Muslims in the light of the Quran and Sunnah that:

Do not despair of the mercy of Allah (Surah Az-Zumar-Verse 53)

Despair not of Allah's mercy, verily none despair of the mercy of Allah but the people who disbelieve (Surah Yusuf-Verse 87)

In the present difficult situation of the Ummah we desperately need more leaders of this mentality.

The beloved of Allah, Sayyiduna Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said something along these lines:

'If you truly want to know someone, travel with them'.

I have travelled countless times with Hazrat not only in the UK but also internationally. Hazrat is in his 'jalwat' (gatherings) as he is in his 'khalwat' (seclusion). Tens of thousands are witness to the fact that you can sit with Hazrat for hours and not get the thought or feeling of boredom. Hazrat is always a 'sham-e-mahfil' in all gatherings whether it is a gathering of the 'awaam or khwaas' (ordinary or elite people). It is no wonder, therefore, that many of the world's leading personalities not only admire him but hold him in such high esteem. These include:

1. Allama Shah Ahmad Noorani Siddiqi
2. Allama Abdul Sattar Khan Niyazi
3. Allama Sayyid Madani Miyan
4. Allama Mufti Akhtar Raza Azhari
5. Sarkaar-e-Kalaan Allama Sayyid Mukhtar Ashraf
6. Allama Rayhaan Raza Khan
7. Allama Zia-ul-Mustafa A'zami
8. Allama Pir Karam Shah Azhari
9. Shaykh Yusuf Abu Sneina (Imam Masjid-ul-Aqsa)
10. Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rahmaan
11. Allama Shah Fareed-ul-Haq

The world of Sunniyat is highly indebted to Allama Arshad-ul-Qadri for providing the western world with such a unique and matchless gift in the form of Qibla Azmi Sahib for it is he who invited Hazrat to join him in UK as Joint Secretary-General of the World Islamic Mission. Hazrat Allama is not only a unique speaker but also an Aalim of the highest rank. He has studied all Islamic sciences in depth with his honourable teachers. His grasp on Fiqh, Hadith and Tareekh is well known. Amongst his great teachers are the likes of:

1. Hafiz-e-Millat Allama Abdul Aziz Muradabadi (Founder of Al Jamiatul Ashrafia)

2. Ustadhul Ulama Allama Hafiz Abdul Raoof Balyawi
3. Bahrul Uloom Allama Mufti Abdul Mannan Azmi
4. Ashraful Ulama Allama Sayyid Hamid Ashraf

Allama Azmi has the honour of being the Mureed and Khalifa of Huzoor Mufti A'zam-e- Hind, Allama Mustafa Raza Khan Noori Rahmatullahi Alayhi. In his many majalis, I have seen and felt that Allama Azmi has the utmost respect and love for his spiritual mentor. Innumerable students of Hazrat Allama Azmi Sahib are also preaching the golden teachings of Islam throughout the globe. In the UK, Allama Jameel Rizvi, Allama Farogh-ul-Quadri, Maulana Faisal Noorani and this humble servant are among some of his students.

May Allah Ta'ala prolong Hazrat's age and give the Ummah the ability to benefit from his great wisdom and pearls of guidance. Ameen.



Allama Azmi: The Great Enabler of Islamic Institutions

By Mohammed Khalid Razvi Nagauri,

Chief Imam of Usmani Mosque &

Director, Darul Uloom Imam Ahmed Raza , Leicester, UK.

Hazrat Muffakir-e-Islam Allama Qamaruz-zaman Azmi is great scholar of Ahlus-Sunnah. There is magnetism in his speech which is rarely found in others. He is most attractive to intellectuals as to the general public. I was with Hazrat recently at the International Milaad conference in Toronto, Canada. I remember one of the organizers telling me how the local journalists are always keen to listen to the speeches of Hazrat and cover it widely in their newspapers.

In this brief article I wish to highlight Hazrat's work as a key enabler of Islamic institutions across the world. Hazrat is a patron of many institutes, Islamic centers and Mosques in different countries. There is no doubt that it is honor for these institutes itself if such a great personality of the world was it's patron. Like someone said that in general people get to be known after their attachment with a famous institution but there are fewer such a leading world figures whose name give institutions recognition and respect. Indeed Hazrat is one of those great noble leaders of the Islamic world.

Al-jamiat-ul-Islamia (Islamiya University) Rounahi, Faizabad, India:

Hazrat had just finished in 1964, at the age of eighteen, his course at the prestigious Nadwat-ul-Ulema University and Ashrafia University. At the same time, Dr Sayyid Mahfuz-ur-Rehman had approached His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat to send a top talented scholar to promote mainstream Sunni Islam in Faizabad, Uttar Pardesh (Nothern State). His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat appointed Hazrat Muffakir-e-Islam to cultivate this undeveloped and difficult area for the betterment of Muslims living there.

Hazrat began his activities in this area immediately upon the commandment of His Holiness Hafiz-e-Millat. The area was a very small

village with few supporters. There were no facilities or any school building to teach children. Hazrat began teaching under a tree. However, Allah had bestowed him with such incredible skills that in the same year in 1964 he prepared the local people to lay the foundations for a proper Islamic Institute. This institute, the Islamiya University was established and students upon hearing Hazrat's name began coming from far provinces like Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat.

This institute affiliated to the prestigious Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt is now one of the top Islamic Universities in India and well known around the world because of its outstanding educational standards. The graduates of this University are serving not only in India but in many foreign countries like Europe, America, Europe, Africa and Middle East.

We also acknowledge and pay tribute to others who struggled with Hazrat to establish and run this University. These include Hazrat Qari Jalaluddin Sahib (who is managing the University), the Late Dr Sayyid Mahfuz-ur-Rahman; the Late Haji Ilyas Sahib and the late Haji Riyaz Sahib.

The successful establishment of the Islamiya University inspired others in the neighboring districts and Hazrat then played a significant role in supporting those neighbourhoods to establish institutes in their localities. As a result there are now Sunni institutions after every 10 to 15 miles in that region.

Aljamiat-ul-Ashrafiya (Ashrafiya University), Mubarakpur, India:

Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam has extraordinary relations with the Ashrafiya University since the beautiful era of His Holiness Huzur Hafiz-e-Millat.

When His Holiness Huzur Hafiz-e-Millat planned to convert this institutions to an Arabic University, Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam pledged his wholehearted support to make this a reality. He attended numerous gatherings with Hafiz-e-Millat to progress this.

By the time Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam came to UK in 1974 Allah Almighty had fulfilled the wish of His Holiness Huzur Hafiz-e-Millat and all the arrangements for the first Arabic University were in place. During Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam's stay in the UK, he received an offer to manage the Asharafiya University. This offer was generated from His

Holiness Huzur Hafiz-e-Millat. However, it was almost impracticable for Hazrat to leave the vital responsibilities and to make the swift move back to India.

Arrival to United Kingdom:

Hazrat came to Bradford, UK in 1974 upon the invitation of Hazrat Allama Arshadul Qadri to work along with him on the platform of World Islamic Mission. Since his arrival to the UK huge work was done in a very short period of time. These included:

1. the establishment of the Islamic Missionary College (IMC)
2. the establishment of the International Dar-ul-Iftaa
3. the establishment of Al Falah (an organisation for young people)
4. the publication of Al-dawat-ul-Islamiya - Monthly Islamic

Journal

Hazrat had begun his lectures at Shah Jalal Mosque in South Manchester in the mid-70s on a weekly basis. There were many intellectuals in the audience and the lessons in Quran created tremendous potential for promoting mainstream Islam in Manchester.

By 1979, Hazrat moved to Manchester. Allah Almighty bestowed Hazrat with great wisdom and perception that very shortly he laid the foundations of Ibad-ur-Rehaman Trust and built a huge Mosque with capacity to hold 2,500 worshippers with the cost of £1.5 million. Another great institution Kulliyat-ud-dirasatil Islamiya (Collage of Islamic studies) was formed under his supervision costing £1 million. He also established another monthly journal as its chief editor, Hijaz London which became a very popular monthly journal.

During this period Hazrat was travelling on regular basis to Leicester between 1976 to 1978 to cultivate the land there for a mainstream Sunni institution. This is before Allama Shahid Raza Naeemi came to Leicester. Hazrat chose the Southerland Mosque to deliver his lectures. However, even here he had to debate and hold 'munazara' because it was controlled by Jamaat-e-Islami. However, the speeches of Hazrat unveiled the true face of the Jamaat-e-Islami and soon the Mosque became part the Sunni mainstream.

Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam also participated in the foundation of Masjid Noor-ul-Islam Bolton along with Hazrat Sayyid Noorani Baba and Hazrat contributed with his immense support in the initial period.

Alhamdulillah this mosque now is recognized as a beautiful place of worship.

Hazrat also contributed to building of the biggest Mosque in Birmingham, Ghamkol Shareef. In one electrifying and spell bounding fund-raising speech people gave £145,000 upon his call.

Hazrat visited numerous times to Al-Khizra Mosque in Glasgow Scotland which is shaped with enormous support of World Islamic Mission. Hazrat Allama Arshadul Qadri also visited this mosque for a few times. There was sufficient support of Allama Azmi sahib to establish this centre.

There is a long list of mosques which were founded in the headship of Hazrat Allama Shah Ahmed Noorani Siddiqi (Alaihirrahmah), Hazrat Allama Arshadul Qadri (Alaihirrahmah), Hazrat Maulana Shahid Raza OBE and Hazrat Mufakkire Islam in Holland. These include:

- Jamia Masjid-e-Taibah
- Jamia Masjid-e-Quba
- Masjid Anwar-e-Madina
- Masjid Gulzar-e-Madina
- Masjid Al firdous
- Madinatul Islam College
- Al Madina Masjid

These mosque and Islamic centers were built with exceptional involvement and supervision of above named immense personalities including Hazrat Sahib. There are some other centers which were formed with the support of World Islamic Mission like Al-Suffa Public School, Al-Quba Public School etc.

Masjid-e-Al Noor, Huston, America:

This is the first purpose built mosque for Ahlus-Sunnah in entire America. This is a massive and amazing mosque with a huge vicinity. Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam has been coming to USA since 1986 and Hazrat himself laid the foundations for this great center. Recently a great scholar who studied at the Islamiya University, Hazrat Allama Qamarul Hasan Misbahi Sahib is serving as Khatib and Imam in Masjid Noor since many years.

Islamic Centre Chicago:

This centre was founded under the guidance of Hazrat Mufakkir-e-Islam and Hazrat Shaikh-ul-Islam Maulana Sayyid Madni Ashrafi.

Norway:

The first mosque in Norway was founded under the banner of World Islamic Mission in 1980 and Hazrat has given his continuous support for its development.

Masjid Noor-ul-Haram, Toronto, Canada:

Hazrat has been visiting Canada for many years. Following the departure from this world of Qaid-e-Ahle Sunnat Allama Shah Ahmed Noorani Siddiqi (Alaihirrahmah), Hazrat became the Chairman of World Islamic Mission Canada. Hazrat Qaid-e-Ahle Sunnat presided over this organization previously.

An 11 acre land has been purchased to build the biggest and most beautiful Mosque in Canada. The Masjid Noor-ul-Haram is now entering a phase when work could begin.

Sunni Dawate Islami:

The Sunni Dawat-e-Islami website describes Huzoor Mufakkir-e-Islam as the chief mentor and guide of Sunni Dawat-e-Islami. He attends the Annual International Ijtema in Mumbai which attracts 150,000-200,000 people each year.

The Sunni Dawat-e-Islami is an international organization working in India, United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Africa, Portugal and Saudi Arabia. It promotes the true beliefs of Islam under the teaching of the true Ahle-Sunnah wa Jamaah through following activities:

- " Weekly congregation (Ijtema)
- " Educational visits (Dawra)
- " Annual International Congregation (ijtema)
- " SDI publications
- " Sunni Dawate Islami On-line
- " Maktab-e-Taibah

It has established numerous large institutions including:

- " Noor-e-Madina College

- " Heera School
- " Malik bin Dinar College
- " Qadria College
- " Ismail Habib Mosque

Conclusion:

Hazrat Muffakir-e-Islam not only considers the building of Islamic centers, Darul-ulooms and Mosques in different countries as critical but also modernizing the syllabuses that are more compatible with contemporary issues. Scholars should also be trained in different languages to allow them to work in any part of the world.

The current position is outmoded and obsolete. As a result the world is misunderstanding Islam and Muslims. It is vital to deliver our message in the most constructive and significant manner around the world and this will only be possible if we have modern and reformed training systems in place within all our institutions.

I like to extend my sincere congratulations on this occasion to the entire esteemed team of Raza Academy Mumbai for their tributes to Hazrat Allama Azmi Sahib. Indeed your great work will be remembered for ever.

May Allah grant long life to our Master and leader Hazrat Allama Qamaruzzaman Khan Sahab Azmi and May Allah safe guard him from all calamities and bestow him with good health. May Allah give us the ability to adopt his ideology to spread the true message of Islam. Ameen.



Allama Azmi in the United States of America

By **Mohammad Ameen Marfani,**

Founding Member & Trustee of Al-Noor Society of Greater Houston

I was in search of a Scholar to lead Ahle-Sunnah in the United States in general, and Houston, Texas in particular. Qari Raza-ul-Mustafa A'azmi of Maktaba-e-Rizviya of Karachi, Pakistan referred me to Allama Azmi. My first correspondence with this great personality was in 1974, when he began his work for Deen-e-Islam and Maslak-e-A'ala Hazrat in the United Kingdom with Allama Arshad-ul-Quadri.

Allama Azmi has the distinction of being the first person having a paramount impact in the American Muslim community since the early 1980s.

In Houston, Texas we had the honour and privilege of having Allama Azmi as a guest speaker at our annual Milaad programme. This was a turning point in Houston's history, in which the Milaad Programme was attended by approximately 1,500 people.

In the following year in 1987 we established Al-Noor Society of Greater Houston upon Allama Azmi's recommendation, and administrative and organizational expertise. He served as an advisory board member and still serves as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Al-Noor Society of Greater Houston.

Alhamdulillah, with Allama Azmi's effort and guidance, Al-Noor Society of Greater Houston is now in its 24th year, and is the largest institution for Maslak-e-Ahle-Sunnat in Houston, the State of Texas and even in the USA. Al-Noor's new Mosque in Houston which cost \$3.5 million dollars is state of the art with facility and capacity for 2,500 people.

In commemoration of his guidance and support in the pioneering of our

institution and work, as well as strengthening our Maslak, Allama Azmi was guest of honour and host at the ground breaking ceremony to lay the foundation of Al-Noor Mosque in 2000.

Upon completion of this new state of the art building, he again was the guest of honour and host of the inauguration ceremony of the new Al-Noor Mosque, along with Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman in 2010.

Allama Azmi's dedication, support, encouragement, guidance, and enforcement of Deen-e-Islam and Maslak-e-Ahle-Sunnat in the past five decades is invaluable and comparable to none, locally and globally.

We, the Muslims of Houston, Texas, on behalf of the An-Noor Society and the rest of the Americas would like to thank him for his endless effort. We are unable to match his insurmountable contributions and no amount of praise will ever be enough. We offer supplication from the depth of our hearts that may Allah Subhaanahu-wa-Taala grant him a healthy, long, and successful life in dedication to our Deen and Maslak. He is a true representative of my Aaqa, "Mufti A'azame Hind" (Alayhir Rahmah War Ridwan).



Allama Azmi in the Middle East: My Personal Experiences

By Aqib Farid Qadri (Saudi Arabia)

[Translator of the Holy Quran in English]

Head of General Insurance

When you are writing an article on someone who is so well known and a great personality, such as Allama Qamaruzzaman Azmi Sahib, it poses a great challenge and dilemma as to what facet of the person should be presented to the world. A difficult task indeed - for it is very difficult to gauge his greatness - for even if I do try to exaggerate or embellish my words, it would actually not be an exaggeration - and it would still not do justice to the real praise that he deserves!

His relentless efforts for Islam are very well known - whether on a personal basis, speeches, establishment of institutions or through the World Islamic Mission & other organizations. So I need not dwell on these.

I, therefore, wish to write about my personal experiences during his lecture tours of the Middle East.

His tour of United Arab Emirates:

I first saw Allama Sahib in Dubai, at the residence of the Darvesh family. His appearance was not what I expected it to be. Dressed in an Achkan with a Jinnah Cap, he looked a simple man. But I knew that beneath this simple appearance was a man of exemplary qualities, yet for me to discover.

I got my first opportunity to speak to him alone at length whilst we drove to Abu Dhabi - a 90 minutes drive, during which he spoke little, and heard me much. I soon realized that he was definitely of different mettle than others who have so much to say just about themselves. Here was a 'listener' - the distinctive quality of a true scholar that comes only with humility.

His first lecture was arranged in Abu Dhabi at my residence, which could accommodate 200 persons in the hall. I had managed to get hold of

Allama Sahib's resume - about his religious activities, and circulated them to my friends. Since many knew of similar programmes being held at my home before this, the response was positive.

Alhamdolillah, the hall was full. When he started his speech we immediately knew that he was not just an excellent orator - his words were not simply embellishments to what he wanted to convey. His depth of knowledge and the amount of information that he was conveying to the listeners, was simply immense.

The message he conveyed regarding the love of the Holy Prophet, and his concern for the Muslim Ummah was heart moving to say the least. He delivered it with great passion and yearning - we could gauge from his style and tone that he was completely drowned in it - his heart was with his tongue. When we cried, his heart too was crying. He wanted us to understand not just to listen. He wanted us to believe and act upon it, not to raise slogans or shower him with praise.

And his words! Simply magic. The effect of those words will have an everlasting effect on the minds of the listeners. They were like pearls - nay rubies and emeralds - strung into a beautiful necklace; for the choice and variety of words he had at his disposal was tremendous. He spoke for more than a hour, not repeating anything what he had said earlier - with the audience spellbound, trying to absorb his eloquence; for many, I am sure, were not used to such vocabulary. It seemed that words were standing in front of him, wanting to be picked up by his grace, to be part of the oratory.

I recall the feelings expressed on the faces of the audience when the programme concluded. Each one of them was in awe, some in tears - some simply unable to express their joy and thanks for the wonderful evening. In particular, I remember the comments made by my friend, Abdul Majeed. He said that he had been the Secretary-General of the Urdu Literary Society whilst in College in Karachi, some 2 decades before, and that he prided himself on him being a poet of some sort. When he heard Allama Sahib, he said "This man is a genius - no he is God gifted: I have never met or known any person in my life who can combine such eloquence, with speed and sense of fervor, all at the same time : and yet deliver a speech that has no embellishments, just the truth from the Holy Quran and Hadith. He has made me realize what I am in

Urdu literature - just a layman."

Allama Sahib stayed with me for another 2 days, all the while increasing my knowledge in Islam and talking about the ventures that the World Islamic Mission undertakes throughout the world. He hardly ever mentioned his own role but always gave credit to the persons in charge of affairs in each of its branches.

I took the opportunity to ask him to check and verify the translation of the Holy Qur'an that I was doing from Kanzul-Imaan (Urdu) to English. He was thrilled to know that Imam Ahmed Raza's (Allah be pleased with him) masterpiece had been translated and thanked me for asking him to verify the translation. The verification had earlier been sought from various universities and scholars in Pakistan, but it had already been delayed by 2 years. He took the translation on a CD from me and gave it to his panel of learned companions in the United Kingdom. Within a few months time, I received the certificate, signed by Allama Sahib himself, stating that the translation had been checked and found true to the original text and meaning. I cannot thank him enough for this favour.

He visited the United Arab Emirates more often, and graced our home three more times with his presence and filled our hearts with the love of Allah and His Noble Prophet, with his speeches always having a different subject, topics unrepeated and the same fantastic style of delivery.

Many of my friends who considered themselves 'professionals' or 'highly educated' but had a negative image about the Ahle-Sunnah beliefs, quickly succumbed to the truth, and wanted to become his disciples (Mureeds), but he never took on the role of a Shaykh (Peer), modestly saying, "I am not fit for it" : although, I knew that he had been blessed with the Khilaafah and Ijazah from none other than his Shaykh His Holiness Huzoor Mufti-e-Azam-e-Hind Maulana Mustafa Raza Khan (May Allah be pleased with him).

His love for his Shaykh is immense, as many a times I saw tears welling up in his eyes when speaking about him. He also mentioned to me that his guidance and his eloquence is not but due to the prayers of his illustrious Shaykh.

During his stay at my home (I wish it had been more), his most

striking traits were his humility, steadfastness in beliefs and the love of knowledge. He never wished good food, never the best seat in the gathering, never more attention to himself, never his clothes to be ironed, never to ask for any favour - trying to attend to his personal needs all by himself. In his spare time, I saw him picking up books from my shelf, going through them with passion. When I took him to the library in Cultural Center in Abu Dhabi, he promptly made his way to the Arabic Islamic books section, searching for any rare books he could find. At Fajr, he would be on the prayer mat much before me, engrossed in reading the Holy Qur'an or with his head bowed and hands raised in prayer.

Several programmes were arranged for him in the UAE in Mosques, in people's homes, auditoriums and within the gatherings of the World Memon Organization. As expected, people from all walks of life, the poor and the rich, from whichever corner of the world they had come from used to gather around him, eager for his attention.

His Visits to the Haramain

Allama Azmi came to the Haramain with his family in Ramadan 1431 (in 2010), and I made a point to meet them in Medina Munawwarah. It was my good fortune to show them some rare places of Ziyarah (visit) which are blessed by the presence and usage of the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him). I would offer some historical data of these places, while he would promptly quote from the Hadith about its importance. He thanked me profusely for the visits, while I could not thank him enough for his companionship. We spent some wonderful moments together in the Haram and in Masjid-e-Quba, and paid our respects to the Holy Prophet (Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him). His modesty had reached new heights: he used to ask me to pray so that he could say Ameen!

We met for a brief period in Mina when he came for Hajj (1431 - November 2010). He was again his normal self, totally unassuming, modest and humble. I listened to one more of his impromptu lectures on 8th ZilHajj to be enthralled once more.

We met again in Medina Munawwarah on the 10th of Muharram 1431 (December 2010). He had been giving speeches, guiding Muslims

all day long and was tired. But when I asked him to attend one more gathering, he immediately agreed, although he had to walk back half a mile late at night towards his hotel.

In all my meetings I requested him to pray for me and out of sheer modesty, this great man would always accede my request and in turn ask me to pray for him. I am sure his prayers for me will soon be granted by the Most Generous.

May Allah keep him healthy and active and grant him a long life. May Allah grant him success in all his endeavors and immensely reward him for his persevering efforts and personal sacrifices for Islam. May Allah also guide us to learn from him. Ameen.

☆.....☆.....☆

ALLAMA AZMI IN CANADA

By **Munaf Solaiman,**

President of the World Islamic Mission, Canada

Islam is a new religion in Canada. Up until 1990, the presence of Ahl-e-Sunnah wal Jamaah was missing in Canada. The person who has made the most contribution in changing the landscape of Islam in Canada was Qaid-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani Siddiqui Rahmatullahi Alaih. After a number of visits, he successfully consolidated Sunni Muslims into a recognizable community mainly by his presence at the annual Milaad-un-Nabi conferences held in Toronto.

The result of this activity was the formation of the Canadian branch of the World Islamic Mission and then the subsequent establishment of several Sunni organizations and mosques across Canada, in cities such as Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

Muffakir-e-Azam Allama Qamaruzzaman Azmi first visited Canada in 1999. He has since delivered several keynote lectures in which his masterful oration has inspired Muslims to establish a community based on the proper understanding of Islam. Through his participation in various conferences he continues to address the challenges Muslims face in West. One of his most famous statements he mentioned: "the challenge we face as a community in Canada is to save the next generation."

Being a scholar who has dedicated his entire life to the education of our young people in order to safeguard Islam, his presence in Canada continues to inspire Canadian Muslims to establish Islam based on the acquiring of knowledge. Muffakir-e-Azam once said: "the proper establishment of Islam is based on whether we can impart the knowledge of our forefathers to the next generation".

Since the demise of Qaid-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat in 2003, Muffakir-e-Azam currently holds the position of Chairman of World Islamic Mission Canada. Under his leadership, this leading Sunni

organization continues to play the dominant role of establishing the Ahl-e-Sunnah wal Jamaah here in Canada. This organization is also the first to launch a Hifz and Alim Programme for the training of young Canadian Muslims.

This organization was also able to acquire a large 11 acre land in Toronto and will soon establish the first purpose built Ahl-e-Sunnah Islamic Centre in Canada. Muffakir-e-Azam is leading the building of this great centre through his support, supervision and guidance.

Canadian Muslims from coast to coast to coast, look forward to the continued presence of Muffakir-e-Azam Allama Qamaruzzaman Azmi here in Canada where he has already left a legacy which only a scholar of his magnanimity and humility can hope to achieve.

We all pray to Allah Subhaanahu wa Talaa for his continued good health. Ameen.

