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The scope of this work is to record the contributions made by these scholars and religious teachers who served the Muslim community in preserving the religious culture. This effort in no way undermines the great contributions made by others such as, Ahmed Deedat, Hajee Bhai Padia and numerous other great individuals and organizations such as, Indian Views - founded in 1914, Young Men Muslim Assocation - founded in 1942, Natal Muslim Council - founded in 1943, Arabic Study Circle - founded in 1950, and many other religious and cultural organizations.

We thank Mufti Zubayr Bayat for writing the Preface for this book and providing some names of the early *ulama*.

We wish to place on record our sincere thanks to Darul Ihsan for kindly publishing this book.

Introduction

This work is an attempt to highlight the individual scholars and Ulama who came with the indenture work force or business people (passenger Indians) since 1860, who lived in Kwazulu Natal (KZN),¹ and who were instrumental in contributing to the Islamic education and religious needs of the community.

Together with the arrival of Muslims in Durban² were the *ulama*,³ *huffaaz*⁴ and *imams*⁵, and unfortunately their contributions have not been recorded. Many names of these great individuals who served the community are forgotten or unheard of, by the children and grandchildren of those who benefitted from them.

In our endeavor to gather information, we consulted with several friends from the Ulama fraternity, family members of these scholars and many elders from the Muslim community. We were surprised that not much was remembered or

¹ A province in the Republic of South Africa

² A port city in the province of Kwa Zulu Natal

³ Those Scholars who have acquired higher Islamic education

⁴ Those who have memorized the Holy Quran

⁵ Those who lead the five time daily Muslim prayers

recorded about these early scholars. We took upon this task to compile this work, not realizing the difficulties we would encounter.

We consulted libraries, trust-board records and history of masajid. We also conducted many interviews with elders from the province, including children and grandchildren of some of these Ulama. Though many were willing to meet us, there were also many who did not take this seriously, and refused to meet or mail information about their fathers or relatives. We were surprised that some children of these early scholars and people who knew some of these scholars, were alive and were themselves old, their ages ranging from 75 to 92 years.

We have information on Muslim professionals and businesses but no account of the *ulama* who arrived on the shores of KZN⁶. These Ulama have left an indelible mark on the lives of Muslims not only in KZN but throughout the country. They have defended the Islamic precepts and teachings and also kept alive the spirit of Islamic education. These scholars were unable to work outside their contractual duties due to constant threat of being deported, thus their great potentials were not realized. In portraying the biographical sketches of these personalities, light has been shed on the intellectual, cultural and academic temperament of the times. This work also generated within the families of these scholars, an interest in the greatness of their fathers. Unfortunately, we could not include much details of every Alim for various reasons but hope to, in a future edition when more information is available.

The education policy imposed by the British since 1803, in India and other Muslim countries under their rule, was totally alien to Muslims. Their institutions were established with the aim of imposing western culture and values on their occupied subjects, which in turn aimed at promoting a kind of secularization. Fearing that future Muslim generations would be totally alienated from their rich intellectual legacy and culture, Muslims, wherever they migrated, brought with them scholars and teachers to continue guiding and educating them in every facet of their religious life.

⁶ Short for Kwa Zulu Natal

Indians numbered around a hundred thousand of Natal's population of one million in 1904. Ten percent were Muslim, 87 percent Hindu, and 3 percent Christian.

Initially, wherever Muslims lived, the masjid⁷ was not only a place of worship, but its extensive open space also served as a school where the young and old learnt how to recite the *Quran* from the Ulama. The Ulama concentrated their efforts to the establishment of madaris and independent schools, to impart education in the various Islamic disciplines.

Masajid⁸ occupy important positions in the lives of Muslims. When the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, one of his first acts was to locate a suitable site for a masjid. Muslims construe this as a sign that masajid are vital cornerstones for building communities. Muslim migrants set about creating their religious and cultural values almost immediately after settlement. Traders with financial resources and know-how usually led the way in establishing places for collective *salah*.⁹ The masjid was more than a house of prayer. The process of building masajid was simultaneously a process of constructing communities because they became places where Muslim males met. The masajid dominated the skyline in most urban centres and became the most visible symbol of Muslim presence.

Islamic Education for Muslims in a predominantly non-Islamic society presents a seemingly insoluble problem. The two facets of the problem are:

1. to entrench the fundamentals of Islamic theory and practice by means of an educational programme that fills the gaps adequately in the secular system
2. to come to terms with the secular system which the Muslims as a minority have to follow not by choice but by necessity.

Thus, in this secular system there are elements which are perfectly acceptable by Western norms but are not compatible with the Islamic way of life.

About 200 years after the first Muslims had landed at the Cape, the Muslims from India arrived with other Indians for the first time in Natal to work on the

⁷ Place of worship for the Muslims

⁸ Plural of Masjid

⁹ Prayer

canefields. Indian labour was introduced to the colony of Natal by the British Government, after having proved successful in the canefields of Mauritius.

Over the last 150 years, several attempts have been made to adapt Islamic Education within a secular system. As early as 1880, Muslims from this province invited scholars to assist in addressing this issue. Independent madaris were established for imparting only religious sciences and scholars from India were employed to teach and guide the Muslims. Another plan was to get Islamic education integrated into the secular system. This was granted to the Muslims by the Natal Education Department at a few selected schools, namely, Anjuman Islam, Orient, Ahmadia and South Coast Madressah. Ml Abdul Aleem Siddiqui was invited in 1937 and again in 1952, Prof Ishrat Hussain in 1950, and others were also invited to help in formulating a syllabus to incorporate it in the secular system. Thus, establishments to impart Islamic education always progressed at different levels by Muslims in KZN since their arrival. Great religious scholars like Ml Muhammad Ebrahim Randeri¹⁰, Allama Yusuf Binori¹¹, Mufti Shafi¹²

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¹¹ He was born on Thursday, 6th Rabi-uth-Thaani, 1326 Hijri, corresponding to the year 1908 in a village, "Mahabat Abad", lying to the west of Sheikh Maltoon Town, in the district of Mardan. He received his preliminary education from his father and maternal uncle. Thereafter, he studied in Peshawar, Kabul and in the suburbs of these two cities to complete his middle class education. He then went to Darul Uloom Deoband, India, for pursuit of higher Islamic education where he stayed for about two years and had the honour of being the student of prominent teachers of this Madrasah. He completed his "Dora-e-Hadeeth" at Jamiah Islaamia, Dhabel, under Hadhrat Allaamah Sayyid Muhammad Anwar Shah Kashmiri and Maulana Shabeer Ahmed Usmani (Rahimahumallaah). Shortly after completing his studies in the fields of metaphysics and narrative arts (Prophetic traditions), he visited Egypt in 1937 where he was blessed with the opportunity to supervise the publication of high-ranking scholarly research-based books, such "Nasb-ur-Raayah" and "Faidh-ul-Baari". During this trip, he also visited the "Haarmain Shareefain" and met the Ulama and Muhadditheen of these places and seized these opportunities to benefit from them. After his return from Egypt, he joined the Madrasah Jamiah Islamia at Dhabel on the post of "Sheikh-ul-Hadeeth" and served it up to the time of the partition of India and Pakistan. He opted to settle in Pakistan and joined Darul Uloom at Tando Allaahyar, Sindh, as "Sheikh-ut-Tafseer" and dedicated his life to spreading the knowledge of the Quraan and Hadeeth. After many years serving here he established a Madrassah on Jamshed Road, Karachi along with the help and support of some of his friends. Soon, this small madrasah became famous worldwide as "Jamia-tul-Uloom-il-Islaamia, Banori Town".

He passed away on the 15th of October, 1977, and lies buried in the compound of his institute.

¹² He was born on the 25 January 1897 in Deoband, a village in India and became famously know as Mufi Shafi Uthmani Saheb. He completed his Alim Fadhil in the world famous Institute in Deoband under great scholars in 1917 under the superviosin of the great Hadith Scholar Allamh Anwar Shah Kashmiri. In 1919 started teaching

and Qari Tayob were invited to further guide the Muslims of KZN in their religious needs and requirements. Also, many others, who were rectors and heads of highly reputable institutions in India and Pakistan were invited. Some of these scholars were Ml Adul Aleem Siddiqui, Ml Mukhtar Siddiqui and Dr. Fazlur Rahman Ansari. Thus, the following systems evolved.

1. masajid and madaris,
2. secular schools with Islamic education,
3. Islamic education at a tertiary level (University of Durban-Westville)
4. Darul Uloom for religious studies.

Muslims, since their arrival, established masajid and madaris wherever they settled. They invited scholars from the Indian subcontinent to lead the prayers, teach the children and take care of the religious needs of the community. Later,

students were sent from KZN to India to study Islam and when they returned, they took over the religious responsibilities. Ml Sheikh Ahmed Muslim Afriki (d.1966), went to Madrasah Aminia in Delhi in 1910, and Ml Abdul Qadir (d.1998), went to Saharanpur in 1919, (he was sponsored by the Omar family - Ml Ahmed Omar). In the 1970's, institutions for higher learning were established in South Africa, thereafter students from these institutions served the Muslim community. The first such institution was established in Newcastle, KZN, by Ml Cassim Sema, who had qualified in India in the late 1930's.

Early events - establishment of masajid, madaris and organisations

1858

By 1858, the labour situation (with regard to sugar farming) was so serious in Natal that the Umzinto Sugar Company brought from Java some Chinese and Malay labourers. The first Muslims to be brought to Natal were probably, "among the fine body of Chinese and Malays brought from Java in February 1858, to work for the Umzinto Sugar Company [on the south coast of Natal].

at the same institute. After leaving Darul Uloom Deoband, he taught Sahih al-Bukhari for three months at Jamiah Islamiyah Dabhel, filling in for Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani.

This introduction marked the beginning of the importation of Eastern labour to Natal" - (Natal Mercury , Durban).

1860

The first batch of indentured labourers arrived on board the *S.S. Truro* which left Madras on 13th October 1860. The voyage took 34 days and the ship dropped anchor off South Beach, Port Natal (Durban) on the 6th November 1860, and ten days later on 16th November, the *S. S. Belvedere* arrived. Records indicate that of the 342 indentured labourers, only 24 were Muslims. Of the 24, only nine remained in the Colony after completing their indenture. Among the 9 to remain were, Syed Abdollah and Mariam Bee (parents of Deen Fakir Yusuf who founded the Anjuman Eshatul Islam in 1899), Moosa Kareem, and Sheik Allie Vulle Ahmed (b.1820 in Madras), who is known as the *sufi*, Badsha Peer (d.1894). He lies buried at the Brook Street cemetery in Durban. His grave was located by Sheikh Soofie Saheb, on his return to South Africa in 1895, and he built the first *mazar* on the grave in the same year. Between 1860 and 1861, five more ships with indentured labourers arrived in Durban from India. They consisted of 1360 men and women and approximately 12% were Muslims.

1869

Muslims from the Indian States of Gujarat and Kathiawar arrived in South Africa and were referred to as Passenger Indians. These immigrants paid their own travel expenses and came with the specific purpose for trading and commerce.

1871

Aboobakr Amod Jhavery (b.1850 in Porbandar), settled in Verulam on the North Coast and was the first Muslim merchant to arrive in Natal. He purchased a site for a masjid in Verulam. A simple structure was built to accommodate those who came for *salah*. Ml Sayyed ul Haq served as an early Imam. This was the first masjid in KZN. Today, the **Verulam Mohammedan masjid** stands on this site.

1873

The British Consul-General of Zanzibar, John Kerk, suggested in a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, that a temporary arrangement could be made whereby the emancipated slaves from Zanzibar could be brought to Natal and be

apprenticed to the White sugar planters. Thus, the first group of freed Zanzibaris arrived at Port Natal (later, Durban) on board *H M S Briton* from Zanzibar on 4 August 1873. They numbered 113, a large majority of whom were Muslims. These Zanzibaris, being Muslims, erected a wood and iron room to be used for their daily prayers. This room was constructed into a masjid proper in 1899

1880

In 1880, a small house on Grey Street, 20 ft by 13 ft, belonging to Mr K Moonsamy was used as a place for daily *salah*. On 5 August 1881, it was purchased by Mr Aboobakr Amod Jhavery, who had now settled in Durban. In 1884, he rebuilt the simple building into a proper masjid by enlarging it to 68ft by 23ft. Thus, the **Jumma masjid of Grey Street** was born and became the first fully functional masjid in Natal, and its first Imam was Mianjee Elahi Bux.

1. Mianjee Elahi Bux.
2. Moulana Fateh Mohammed
3. Chootoo Mia (served as an *imam* for a while)

Other scholars who served as Imams:

1. MI Ghulam Mustafa
2. Imam Abdus Samad ibn Abdul Qadir.
3. Shaikh Yusuf Booley
4. MI Aboobakr Khateeb
5. Shaikh Salih Abbadi
6. Hafiz Ahmed Saeed
7. Mufti Sajid Makki.

1885

In 1885, the Anjuman Islam Juma masjid was built and later became well known as the **West Street masjid**. The first Imam was an Arab. Later, he was succeeded by Chotoo Mia, who was educated at the madrassa that was in this masjid.

1. Arab *alim*- no details available
2. Hajee Chotoo Mia was from Surat and not a qualified Alim, but he was a highly educated and intelligent person.
3. Imam Hafejee Nazimmuddin was an assistant Imam with Hajee Chotoo Mia, who returned to India in 1916.
4. Ml Hoosain Tajammul came from Mozambique in June 1916, with his deputy Hajee Dos Mohammad, and returned to India in 1917.
5. Mobeenu Haq and Sheikh Saeed Najjar from Cape Town, served as Imams for a while.

Others who served as Imams

1. Mufti Ebrahim Sanjalvi (for a short period in 1935)
2. Hafiz Ebrahim Hafeje (1936-1940) - not much information could be obtained as his son, Prof. Ismail Ebrahim Hafejee, age 81, was unable to meet or mail any information, although several attempts were made.
3. Imam Sayed Sarfuddin Vaizie (1940- 1944)
4. Sayed Tayob Aleemiya Vaizie, brother of Safuddin, served as the *muazzin* at the West Street masjid. He was a highly respected and pious person who was educated in Rander as well, and he returned to India where he passed away in 1945.
5. Ml Qari NurulHaq Farooqi (1944-1955)
6. Ml Abdur Rahman Ansari (1955-1986)

The first *muazzin* was Hoosen Moolla, father of Ahmed Moolla, founder of Moollah's Café in Durban. *Taraweeh* during Ramadan was performed by Hafez Ahmed Hafejee Moosa (grandfather of Ebrahim Moosa- b.1924- interviewed him at age 91- on 28 October 2014) for several years in the early 1900s.

Hafez Yusuf Ismail Mohammedy (Aug 1913- 11Nov 1977), completed his *hifz* under Hafez Ebrahim Hafejee in 1923, and from 1925, performed *taraweeh* for 37 years. He perfected his *tajweed* under Qari Nurul Haq Farooqi

1895

Shah Ghulam Habibi or Mahomed Ebrahim Soofie, well known as Soofie Saheb returned in 1895, with his son Abdul Aziz and brother in law Abdul Latiff, and settled in Riverside where he founded a small masjid and a *khanqah*. During his life in KZN, he established several institutions in Durban and other areas. Namely:

1. 1896 - The Habibiya Soofie Saheb complex, consisting of a masjid and a madressa - Riverside
2. 1901 – A masjid and madressa - Athlone, Cape Town.
3. 1904- A masjid , madrasah and Imam’s quarter – Springfield, Durban
4. 1904 – A masjid, madrasah, cemetery and Imam’s quarter – Westville, Durban
5. 1905 – a masjid in Glenearn Road - Overport, Durban
6. 1905 – a masjid in Sherwood 45th Cutting - Durban
7. 1906 – a masjid in Sea Cow Lake - Durban
8. 1907-1910 Tongaat, Pmburg, Colenso, Ladysmith, Verulam and Lesotho.

All these masajid and madressa had Imams and Ulama

1899

1. The Mohammedan Trust Kings Rest was formed and the trustees constructed a small wood and iron masjid and a madressa for the Zanzibari Muslim community, who had settled at Kings Rest. The first Imam was Mustafa Osman from Comoros Island in the late 1880’s. This was known as the **Kings Rest** masjid and now known as the **Bluff Rd** masjid.

1. Mustaf Osman
2. Hajee Mohammed Ally Metedad who arrived on board a slave carrying ship from Zanzibar in 1890
3. Yohib Mohammed (1925-1970), son of Metedad, who was born in the Bluff, Durban

4. Haji Eghsaan Aysen renovated the old structure - he served as the Imam from 1973 until his death.

1899

Since 1880, the first settlements of Indian indentured labourers were established in Clairwood. This area had the largest Indian population outside India at that time and was nicknamed “ Little India. ”

The **Junction masjid** in South Coast Road was established and several scholars served as Imams as mentioned later in the biography. The masjid was one of the most beautiful and outstanding building in the area at that time. Its admired feature was its large pond with beautiful gold fish which was used as the ablution area. Ml Abdul Kareem was one of the early Imams and he was instrumental in establishing the Flower Road madressa in the early 1900s, which served as a community centre for the local Muslims. The land was purchased from the Durban Council, using donations from the community and its cemetery also served the greater Durban area. The first teacher was Hajee Habibullah Khan who later returned to India where he passed away.

Later, the **Flower Road masjid** was built in the 1940's with Ml Hanif Khan and Ml Aboojee as the early Imams of the masjid.

1900

The **Queensbridge masjid** was established and the first Imam was Amir Miajee and later, Hafiz Ebrahim Kathrada (father of Ml Ismail Kathrada), then Imam Khan, (father of Dr Ebrahim Khan - IMA) and later, Imam Hasan Miajee, a close associate and *mureed* of Soofie Saheb. Ml Mukhtar Siddiqui played an important role in teaching and giving talks in this masjid . Hazratuddin Sahib (father of Ml Nasim of Verulam) spent many Ramadans providing spiritual guidance to the *musalles* in the 1930's. The present Edwardian achitectural style masjid was built in 1937.

1901

The **Tongaat Anjuman Islam masjid** and madressa was established and the early Imams were Ml Mohammad Yusuf, Ml Mohammed Mulla (1969-1972) and later Ml Ismail Dawood Maiter (1972-1990).

1903

The **Stanger masjid** and madressa was built in Rood Street and the madressa was relocated to Lindsley Road in 1930.

The **Surti Sunni masjid** and madressa (Top End masjid - Pmburg) was founded by Amod Bayat (d.1931).

1904

There were 40 schools for Indians in KZN, of which ten were privately administered by the Muslim community.

1914

In 1914, *The Indian Views* was founded in Durban by Mahomed Cassim Angalia (d 1952). He was opposed to Gandhi's passive resistance stance as a weapon of struggle against oppressive and unjust government policy. He felt it was provocative and counter-productive and he preferred direct negotiation and first-hand consultation. It covered news and views of special interest to the Muslim community in both English and Gujarati.

1917

The **Madressa Anjuman Islam Trust** madressa was officially established in Durban in 1917. Earlier, with the establishment of the Anjuman Islam Juma Masjid Trust (West Street Masjid) in 1885, it had been an integral part of the Masjid Trust. Later as the student enrollment increased, it was moved to 379 Pine Street, Durban as the first independent madressa. In 1918, Molvi Mateenullah Amanullah from Baheshli madrassah, Mumbai and Molvi Ahmed Vahed were given permission from the government to teach Farsi, (Persian) Urdu and Gujrati for one year. In March 1920, Molvi Abdul Gafoor from Zakariya madrassah, Mumbai, Molvi Abdul Jabbar from Madrassa Ashrafiya, Rander and Molvi Abdul Sattar from Mohammediyya Madrasa, Rander served as teachers. In 1923, Molvi Abdul Hay Ismail from Nausari, India served as a teacher. Later, MI Basher Siddiqui served as principal for several years. This building, now considerably renovated, is used to this day to house an Islamic kindergarten school.

1920

The **May Street masjid** in Durban was established in 1920. For many years this small masjid, situated on the corner of May and Fynn Street, stood alone in the

wilderness as hundreds of homes and other buildings in Block AK were demolished by the Department of Community Development through the Group Areas Act. The masjid was considered for demolition but according to Islamic tenets no masjid may be demolished or the land sold for any other purpose. Thus, the National Monument Council declared the masjid as a National Monument. The first imam was Imam Musthan.

1934

Ml Mukhtar Siddiqui of Durban felt the need for a children's home where shelter and care could be provided to Muslim orphans, the homeless and destitute. Thus the **Muslim Darul Yatama Wal Masakeen** was established with him as chairman.

1943

The **Natal Muslim Council** was founded in Durban in April 1943, with a gathering of over 750 Muslims, representing some 22 organisations from all over the province. The meeting was convened by a provisional committee appointed by a conference held earlier under the auspices of the **Young Men's Muslim Association**, which was founded in Durban in 1942. Ml Mohammed Bashir Siddiqui (d.1967 at age 84) served as a member on the committee.

1947

In June 1947, the **Ahmedia State-Aided Indian School** in Mayville, Durban, was opened with Ml Abubakr Khatib appointed as principal of the madrasah section of the school.

In the same year, the **South Coast Madrasah State-Aided Indian School** was established by Muslims in Clairwood, Durban, using Muslim trust funds. It admitted all Indian pupils, irrespective of religion. There was, once again, official opposition from the Natal Indian Teachers Society, especially regarding the introduction of Islam being taught during school hours. Despite all oppositions, within the next two years, these two schools proved very popular among the Muslim community of Durban, who then saw a greater need for such schools.

1950

The **Jamiatul Ulama Natal** was founded in the 1950's with some of the following members:

1. MI Abdur Rahman Ansari
2. MI Abdul Qadir
3. MI Sayed Mohammed Loot
4. MI Subhanullah
5. MI Goolam Mohammed
6. M Abubakr Khateeb
7. MI Bashir Siddiqui
8. MI CassimSema
9. MI Adam Bhayat
10. MI Abdul Haq Omarjee
11. MI Ahmed Desai
12. MI Mohammed Yusuf Omarwadi

1953

With the proven success and popularity of the Ahmedia and the South Coast Madressa state-aided schools in the integrated system of education, the Muslim community of Durban felt the need to establish another school on similar lines. Thus came into existence in 1953, the **Anjuman Islam State-Aided Indian School** in Leopold Street, Durban.

1959

The **Orient Islamic State-Aided** primary and secondary school was opened in January 1959, with MI Sheikh Ahmed Muslim Afriki as the first Imam and principal until his death in 1966. MI Abdur Rahman Ansari served as the first religious supervisor of this school and other Islamic schools in the region.

Very early Madaris established in Durban

Jumma Masjid madressa (1880)

West Street masjid madressa (1885)

Habibiya madressa - Riverside Soofie Centre (1895)

Cathedral Road madressa (1904)

Anjuman madressa - 379 Pine Street (1917)

Bond Street madressa - Imam Sayed SarfuddinVaizie (1931)

Madressa Shawkatul Islam - Essendene Road, Sydenham (1943)

Madressa Mazaahiru Uloom - Villa Road, Sydenham (1940)

Biographies

1860

Shaykh Ahmed Badsha Peer was born in 1820 (1237a h) in Madras. Very little is known of his early childhood although it is certain that he was given the basic elementary Islamic teachings. He was a descendant of Hazrath Ali (r a)

He had the option of either going back to India or doing farming on his own. He chose to settle in central Durban and people hardly paid any attention to him; most probably because of his shabby looks, or poor dressing, or maybe they were too engrossed in the commercial hubbub of the growing city.

He would go to the Jumma masjid and after *salah*, often talk on Islam to a small gathering. Those who knew him listened while others paid no attention. He did not have a permanent home, neither did he have a family nor any relatives, and friends were few and far between. He would often sleep in the sheltered yard of the masjid and at times he would sleep in the homes of his few friends.

He passed away on 6th Rabi ul Awwal in 1894, while the *adhaan* for Jumma *salah* was being called. He was buried in the Brook Street cemetery in Durban. In 1895, Shaykh Soofie Saheb located his grave.

1864

Sayed Ghulam Rasool Ahmed was born in a village called Ranepat, Chitoor in India in 1837. He had signed a labourer's contract to work in South Africa and arrived on 21 August 1864, on a ship called *Saxon*. He was assigned to a Mr L J Polkinghorne in Cottonlands, North Coast. His employer allowed him to preach to the people in the surrounding areas because of his piety and his knowledge on Islam, and did not register him in his farm. He established a madressa whereby many adults and children benefitted and unfortunately, there is no record of his madressa. His work is still continued by his two great grandsons. He passed away on 9 September 1890, at the age of 53 yrs and was buried in an area that is now known as Hazelmere in Verulam.

1890

Molvi Fateh Mahomed (1867-1929) was a pivotal figure in the Jumma masjid during the first three decades of the 20th century. He was the Imam from the mid-1890s until his death in September 1929.

He was born in Surat in 1867, to Cassim and Karimbibi Mahomed. He was brought to Natal in the mid-1890s by the trustees of the Grey Street masjid to perform the duties of Imam. He married Zaithunbee, the daughter of indentured migrants M Sahib(3914) and Moideen Bee(2762) in 1910. He was highly respected among the Muslim masses and was involved in many aspects of community life. For example, he helped set up the Durban Abbatoir to ensure that animals were slaughtered according to *Shariah* and gave evidence on Muslim marriages to the Solomon Commission in 1914. *The Indian Opinion* reported on his death as follows:

The late Moulvi Sahib was for many years a high priest of the Grey Street Mosque and there was hardly any public function in which he was not present. The learned Moulvi was held in high esteem by his co-religionists and had won the respect of the community by his amiability. As a mark of respect, the Muslims of Durban closed their businesses for half day on Friday. The service at the Grey Street Mosque at 10 a.m. on that day was most impressively conducted by Moulvi Chotoo Mia and the funeral procession which was representative of every section of the community was the largest of its kind known in the past few years. The gap left by the late Moulvi Fateh Mahomed will perhaps be filled but that familiar face with the flowing white beard and headed by a snowy white

turban will be long missed. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the bereaved family and the Muslim community in the great loss they have sustained.

Despite not being paid by trustees for many years, Fateh Mahomed did very well from "gifts" from supporters and those for whom he performed religious services. At the time of his death he owned three large properties in Durban and Clairwood, whose value was a considerable £3,400.

Imam Hafiz Abdul Majid (b.1894) was a very pious religious man who lived in Clairwood. He served as voluntary Imam at the Junction masjid. as he was a *hafiz* and a good reciter of the *Quran*. He taught *Quran* to the young and elderly in the masjid and a few became *hufaz* under his guardianship. He was involved in a business opposite the masjid, thus he led a very independent life. The family business was destroyed during the 1949 riots, and thereafter he settled in Ladysmith.

1895

Shaykh Hajee Shah Goolam Mohamed Soofie Siddique Habibi was born in 1848 (1267a h) in Ratnagir, about 200km from Bombay, in India. He was the eldest son of Shaykh Ibrahim Siddique who was a direct descendant of Hazrath Abu Bakr Siddique (r a). His mother's name was Rabia.

After returning from Baghdad, where he stayed with spiritual leaders for several years, he set off for Kalyan to resume duties as a teacher in the madressa and as Imam in the masjid, succeeding his father. After 20 years of service, he resigned as Imam and teacher in Kalyan and returned to his home in Ratnagir. Thereafter, he went to Hyderabad to serve his spiritual mentor. In 1895, he travelled to Durban and after a few months returned to India.

He was advised by his mentor to return to South Africa to propagate Islam. Members of his family were very supportive and his mother readily gave him permission and her blessing. He arrived on the *SS Hoosen* and made his way to the Jumma masjid, where he had stayed during his previous trip. After *Fajr salah*, on learning that he was from Ratnagir, Hajee Rooknoodeen (1875-1962), Ghoolam Hussain Fazloodeen and a Mr Jhetam who were from the same district, took a greater interest in him. He explained to them that he was sent by his mentor to propagate Islam. They offered him accommodation and to be their guest, but Imam Molvi Fateh Mohammed refused to let him go. After a short

consultation with both parties, he decided to sleep at the house of the Imam but eat at the homes of the *musallees*.

The next morning after breakfast at the Rooknoodeen home, where others were also present, he inquired about the grave of Shaykh Ahmed Badsha Peer. He was directed to the grave in Brook Street cemetery. He spent most of his time seated either in the vicinity of the Jumma masjid or at the Brook Street cemetery. In the same year that he had arrived, he bought a piece of land on the northern banks of the Umgeni River in Riverside. The deed of sale was prepared by Mr M Ghandi and he built a simple wood and iron house. On this land he chose a spot, where the present masjid stands, and laid the foundation immediately after Jumma *salah*. A few members from the community, including Sayed Fakroodeen, Rooknoodeen and Jhetam were present. The main builder was an Italian. When the masjid was completed, it was also used as a madressa until 1903, when a Parsee by the name of Mr Rustomjee, at his own expense, built a madressa. An orphanage was then built to house the orphans and destitute. A portion of the north end of the land was used as a cemetery, and adjoining this piece of ground, an old age home was built. Next to the orphanage was a kitchen and a place with ablution facilities. At the entrance of this compound (*darbar*), a dormitory (musafir-khana) was built to cater for travellers and wayfarers.

Later, in close proximity to the *darbar*, a piece of ground was bought in Prospect Hall Road for burial purpose. A portion of the land on the western side was used for residential purpose for those who wanted to live near him. A wood and iron building, which served as a rehabilitation centre (mawalee-khana), was between the present *mazaar* and the cemetery. Alcoholic and drug-related cases were personally attended by him. The kitchen (babarchikhana) was situated next to his house. Here, food was prepared for the entire occupants of the *darbar*. Some of the early cooks were Ismail and Abdul, assisted by Zainab Bibi and Haniffa Bibi, the wives of Shaykh Soofie Saheb. The last cook for the *darbar* was Abdul Rahim in 1968.

The clinic (dawa-khana) was situated in a room next to the main dormitory of the orphanage. Every Thursday, people of all races and religions were attended to, by a qualified *hakim* and free medicine was dispensed to all. With Riverside as the centre, he expanded his missionary work around Durban and its districts (Westville, Overport, 45th Cutting, Springfield, Kenville) and then to other parts of the country (Cape Town, Tongaat, Ladysmith, Colenso, Butha Buthe in Lesotho and Pmburg). It is remarkable that all these institutions founded at the

turn of the century are still in existence, in spite of the number of government changes in the country, carrying out the duties for which they were originally instituted. In early 1911, he made a trip to India which proved to be his last. On Thursday, 29 June 1911 (2 Rajab 1329), at about noon, this humble son of Islam breathed his last. He was 63 years of age. His *mureed*, Hassan Miajee, who was requested by him a few days earlier to perform the ghusal and janaza, carried out the wishes accordingly. His funeral took place the next day in accordance with the wishes of the people, to enable them to attend. He was buried in Riverside. He had seven sons and three daughters.

He used members of his family and *mureeds* to share the responsibilities by allotting the following duties:

Feeding - Shah Abdul Aziz Soofie

Feeding of animals - Shah Abdul Kadir Soofie

Hoisting of flag - Shah Mohamed Habib Soofie

Imam - Hafiz Husain

Muezzin - Moulana Chacha (Ismail) Bayat from Verulam

Horse Wagon drivers - Haroon Ally and Abdur Rahman

The construction of the beautiful entrance to the *darbar*, known as the Buland Darwaza and reminiscent of the Moghul architecture in India, began in the early 1920's and was completed in the 1930's with the help of the community, especially, one Baseerun, who was the wife of Busawan Mia of Sea Cow Lake. Minor extensions and renovations took place from time to time to the various buildings in the *darbar*. However in 1968, tragedy struck the *darbar* as it was destroyed by bulldozers as a result of the Group Areas Act, in order to make way for the "White" population group. Only the masjid, mazaar and cemetery survived. The *darbar* had to be re-located to Kenville in order to continue with its activities in the service of the community.

Shah Ibrahim Mohamed Soofie was the eldest child of Shaykh Soofie Sahib and was born in Ibrahim Pattan, India in 1880. He joined his father in Durban in 1897. He returned to India after a short stay. He made many trips to South Africa

and passed away at the age of 75, on 12 June 1955 (18 Ramadan 1375) in Ajmer where he lies buried.

Shah Abdul Aziz Soofie was the second son of Shaykh Soofie Saheb and was born in Ibrahim Pattan, India in 1885. He came to South Africa in 1897, with his mother, brothers and sisters to join his father. He came to be popularly known as Shaykh Dadajan. He made a trip to India in 1906, to get married to Sara Bi, the daughter of Abdul Latif. He was appointed trustee to a “vast empire” of twelve Khanqahs, from Durban to Cape Town, including Butha Buthe in Lesotho.

In the late 1920's and early 1930's, the population of Durban was growing at an increasing rate and there was much more calls at the various Khanqahs. When he experienced difficulty in the administration of these various institutions, he wrote to Shaykh Shah Saheb in Ajmer about the problems, recommending that his younger brothers be placed at these Khanqahs. He then discussed the matter with his younger brothers and placed them at the following centres in 1935:

1. Springfield - Shah Mohamed Habib Soofie (d.1969) Buried at Riverside.
2. Overport - Shah Goolam Fareed Soofie (d.1974) Buried at Riverside.
3. 45th Cutting - Shah Goolam Hafiz Bhaijaan Soofie (d.1953) Buried at Sherwood.
4. Pietermaritzburg - Shah Abdul Kadir Soofie (d.1940) and is buried in Riverside.

This also brought an end to the era of the joint family system of the original Soofie family.

In keeping with the policy of his honoured father of expanding the message of Islam, Shah Abdul Aziz bought land next to the darbar at Riverside in 1913. A piece of land was also bought in Prospect Hall Road (Riverside) next to the Soofie Saheb Trust land, which was used as a cemetery. Land was also bought adjacent to the Soofie Saheb Trust land in Kenville. All these lands that were purchased were known as the Shah Abdul Aziz Soofie Trust. All the properties were *waqf* (foundation for public charity) He passed away on 25 May 1947, (2 Rajab 1367). The janaza was performed by Imam Abdus Samad Qazi , his brother-in-law. His son, Shah Goolam Mohamed Soofie Sani, also known as

Shaykh Bhaimia Soofie (1947-1978) succeeded him in managing the affairs of the Soofie Trust.

The greatest upheaval to befall the Soofie Family to date was when part of the darbar at Riverside was destroyed by the then "White government" in 1968, under the Group Areas Act. However, Shah Goolam Mohamed Soofie Sani built a masjid, madressa, an orphanage and a residence on Trust land in Kenville, which was lying vacant after the madressa building was expropriated by the government in 1963, for road widening. He was thus able to continue uninterruptedly with the mission of his grandfather that was initiated in 1895. He passed away suddenly on Friday, 13 January 1978 (3 Safar 1398). He is buried in the cemetery behind the mazaar. He was in charge of the darbar from 1947 to 1978.

1890

Imam Sayed Sarfuddin Vaizie was born in Rander, India in 1865. He arrived in the late 1880's and served as Imam at the Church Street masjid in Pmburg. Thereafter he served in Verulam and Queensborough masjid, and from 1920, at the Junction masjid in Clairwood. In 1927, he settled in Victoria Street, Durban and established a madressa in Bond Street. He also voluntarily assisted MI Goolam Mustafa in performing the *fajr salah* at the Grey St masjid. In the latter part of his life, he served as Imam of the West St masjid and passed away in 1948. He is buried in Brook Street cemetery, near the mazar of Badsha Peer, whom he had met in Durban. He was very religious and was also consulted for *tawiz* by people

1896

Shaikh Ahmed Muslim (MI Afriki) was born on 20 May 1896, in Victoria Street, to Ismail Mahomed Muslim (indentured no: 17002) and Zinch Be (daughter of Mohideen Kader who had arrived in Durban on 9 May 1878, from Decan, India). Maulana's mother was put to work at Sezala Canefields, South Coast and discharged in 1915.

MI Afriki left Durban in 1910, at the age of 14 years for Delhi on the *S.S.Karanja* and enrolled at Madrasah Aminia. He qualified as an *alim* and *hakeem* and returned to Durban. He married Fatima Khan (daughter of Bhooray and Beema Khan) from Clairwood on the 12 Novemebr 1921. Since he was from Africa, it was in Delhi that he was given the title "Afriki". He served as a *dawah*

worker in Washbank, Dundee, Glencoe, Colenso, Pmburg, Mooi River, and finally after 38 years, settled in Durban in 1959. He was appointed as principal, teacher and Imam (assisted by Sayed Hamid) at the Orient Islamic school. He served there until his death on 26 November 1966, and is buried in the Brook St cemetery. He studied under great scholars at Madrasah Aminia in Delhi and was known for his strict adherence to the teachings of Islam and never compromised his principles.

1900

Molvi Qari Noorul Haq Farooqi was from Lucknow and studied at Deoband. He was one of the early Imams of West St masjid. He was gifted with a beautiful voice and was famous for his recitation of the *Quran*. He was also responsible for establishing the *hifz* classes at the West St masjid. One of his well known student was Hafiz Yusuf Ismail Mahomedy.

Mufti Erahim Sanjalwi was born in 1900, in Sanjala, India. After his basic studies in the village, he studied at various institutions in Rander, Deoband, Aminiyyah (Delhi) etc. under great scholars such as Allamah Kashmiri and Mufti Kifayatullah. He arrived in Durban in 1930, as Imam of West St masjid. He left in 1936, for the then known Transvaal, as Imam of the first masjid there in Kerk Street. He passed away in 1983.

MI Abubakr Khateeb was from Arab descent and born in 1900 (13 Rabi ul Awwal 1320) in Damman, a village in India. He was about 6 months old when his father passed away. His paternal grandfather, Hajee Ismail, took custody of him. At the age of 5 years, he became a *hafiz*. He also obtained his primary Islamic education from his paternal aunt. He studied at the famous Madrasah Imdaad-ul-Islam in Sadr Bazaar, Meerat and at Madrasah Qawmiyyah in Khair Nagar. He studied later at Madrasah Islamiyyah Firangee in Lucknow to specialise under the guardianship of MI Ahmad Mukhtar Siddiqui and MI Abdul Aleem Siddiqui.

After staying in different countries, he finally arrived in Durban in 1944, from Mozambique and became an Imam at Ahmadiyya masjid in Mayville, Durban until 1957. He was appointed Imam of Grey St masjid from 1958 to 1975. Many students memorized the *Quran* under his guidance. In 1956, he started publishing his monthly magazine and the annual Islamic calendar under the name of *Al hadil Ameen*. From 1975 to 1978, he served as an educator at the

Soofie Sahib masjid and at the madressa in Alpine Rd, Springfield. He passed away on the 8 January 1979, and was buried in Damman, near the tomb of his mentor MI Mukhtar Siddiqui.

1904

Qari Shaikh Abdul Qadir was one of the oldest Islamic Scholar in South Africa. He passed away on Saturday 23 August 1998 (30 Rabi ul Akhir 1419), at his residence in Woodhurst, Chatsworth, at the age of 94 years. He was born in Durban on 20 April 1904, and lost his parents at an early age. Being orphaned at such an early age, he was fortunate to have found care at the Soofie Sahib Centre in Riverside under the guardianship of Dada Jaan, the elder son of Shaykh Soofie Sahib. At an early age he had shown great keenness in Islamic education and was encouraged to pursue higher Islamic studies. In the early days of Muslims in Durban, the Soofie Sahib centre in Riverside was the hub of all Islamic activities.

At the age of 15, he completed the study of great Persian works like the Gulistaan, Bustaan and Kareema, that was then regarded as a pre-requisite for higher Islamic studies overseas. Due to this and other academic achievements, he was sponsored by the generous people of Durban to further his studies at the Darul Uloom in India. In 1919, he left the shores of South Africa via ship to study in India. He first studied at Madrasah Mazaahirul Uloom in Saharanpur, and thereafter at the famous Madrasah Ameeniyah in Delhi, under the Grand Mufti of India at that time, Mufti Kifaayatullah. After having completed most of his early studies at these two institutions in 1928, he was advised to carry out his final course at the Darul Uloom in Daabhel, Surat where great luminaries and doyens of Islamic scholarship had settled. He graduated there in 1930.

Among his tutors were intellectual giants such as Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Shaikh Shabbeer Ahmad Usmani and Shaikh Mufti Azizur Rahman. Amongst his fellow student were, Shaikh ul Hadith, Muhammad Zakariyya and Shaikh Yusuf Binnori. During his study in India, he learnt many languages and was very conversant with Arabic, Urdu, Persian, Gujerati and Hindi. During his years of study in Delhi, he made *bayah* at the hands of Shaikh Karamatullah Khan and entered the Chistiyyah-Saabiriyyah, Qaadiyyah, Imdaadiyyah *silsilas* (sufi orders). He studied the writings of Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani in great depth and always inspired people with his spiritual teachings. During his third hajj in 1968, he made *bayah* at the hands of Shaikh Abdul Ghafoor Sahib in Madinah, and was then brought into the fold of the

Naqshabandiyya *silsila*. He was greatly influenced by the mathnavi of Shaikh Jalaluddin Rumi.

After his graduation, he returned to South Africa in 1931, and took on his first assignment in Stanger as Imam and teacher. A year later, he then moved to Verulam where he was also an Imam and teacher. He moved to Durban in 1943, as the principal of Madrasah Shawkatul Islam in Essendene Road, Sydenham and thereafter at Madrasah Mazaahirul Uloom in Villa Road, Sydenham. In the early fifties and up to the to mid-seventies, for twenty five years, he was Imam of the Muhammadiyyah masjid, Overport. He laid the foundation stone of this masjid and also named it. During this time he was admitted to the great Al Azhar University in Cairo, at his own cost. He achieved the highest diploma from the Kulliyatul Lughah (Dept of Arabic), that was equivalent to a PhD degree in Arabic.

He then finally relocated to the suburb of Chatsworth and was the Imam of Masjid An Noor in Unit 7 for seven years. He was also one of the founding members of the Jamiatul Ulama Natal. During the last part of his life, he was in great demand as guest Imam at various masajid in Durban and other major cities in South Africa. He passed away on Saturday 23 August 1998 (30 Rabi-ul-Akhir 1419).

Amongst his mourners were hundreds of his students and members of the Muslim community whom he had served for many years. Though they all had expressed great joy to be either taught by him or had their marriage officiated by him, they all expressed great sorrow to be present at his funeral which they admitted was one of the largest ever witnessed in Durban. After the funeral prayers at the Grey St masjid, he was laid to rest at the Flower Road cemetery in Clairwood. He had left behind 6 sons and four daughters, and a host of grand and great grandchildren.

1905

MI Mohammed Hanif Ameen Afriqi was born in Durban on the 15 December 1905, and at the age of 15 in 1920, he travelled to Rander to study. He was a class mate of Mufti Abdur Rahim Lajpuri and MI Ahmedullah in Rander. He later travelled to Delhi where he furthered his studies at Madrasah Aminia. He was closely associated during his stay with Mufti Kifayatullah (d.1952). He

completed his *alim* course at the famous Darul Uloom in Deoband and was a special student of MI Husayn Ahmed Madani and Shaikhul Adab MI Ijaz Ali. He studied *tafsir* of the *Quran* under the famous MI Shabbir Ahmed Uthmani and MI Ali Mohammed Lahori. One of his students, Ayub Peerbhai of Port Elizabeth was rated the best *qari* who had recited in the presence of the famous *qari* Shaykh Abdul Basit of Cairo, during his trip to South Africa in the 1960's. He was also a famous linguist with great interest in Urdu poetry. He returned to South Africa in 1939, after 19 years of studying at different institutions in India. He mastered several sciences such as calligraphy, *tibb* (medicine), Arabic, Urdu, *tafsir*, *qiraah*, etc. Although he was very closely associated with MI Husayn Ahmed Madani, he took *bayt* for spiritual guidance with MI Ashraf Ali Thanvi. Upon his return, he was appointed as Imam of the Top End Surti Sunni Masjid in Church St, Pmburg, which was built in 1903. He served there for one year and was then appointed Imam of East St masjid for 14 years until his retirement, due to ill health.

On 16 April 1941, he married a pious woman from the Badruddin Family who were originally from Luchnow. He was the first appointed Muslim Marriage officer in the region. In 1947, he was part of a Muslim delegation to meet General Smuts, the then leader of the country, to discuss religious affairs. He was responsible for establishing the Nizamia madressa, infact the plaque states Nizamiya College. We were informed that his ambition was to establish an Islamic institution for higher learning, in close proximity to the East St masjid. He had physically taken part in its construction. His objective was to eventually establish a Darul Uloom.

MI Omarjee and MI Hathurani had mentioned several times to his son of the great educational benefits they had derived from his father, thus referring him to be their teacher. Mufti Sanjalwi and MI Sema and many other senior Ulama consulted him regularly on several matters. MI Baizid was once present in the company of MI Madani when he was writing a letter to MI Afriqi in which he mentioned that his services was needed more in India than in Africa, thus recognizing his great abilities. He was a great historian, orator and a great poet. He had great interest in Urdu poetry and some of his hand written manuscripts are still with his son. It was his encouragement to the Ulama of the region that attributed to the formation of the Jamiatul Ulama of Natal. Informal meetings were held in his home in East St. The first official meeting resulted in the formation of the organization under his guardianship at the old building of the

Nizamia madressa where his son Ml Zubayr read the *qirat*. Ml Salot was appointed as assistant Imam in 1954, when he became ill. He passed away on 17 July 1956 (9 Zil Haj) and was the first *alim* to be buried in the Mountain Rise cemetery.

Ustad Sayed Abdul Hamied was born in Surat, India in 1903 and arrived in South Africa with his family as an infant in 1905. As a child, he lived and studied at the Riverside madressa under Shaykh Soofi Sahib and later under other teachers. Ghulam Farid Soofi, son of Soofie Saheb (father of Nizam Bhai of Glenearn Rd masjid) was his contemporary. After completing their studies, both got involved in sharing the responsibilities of the masjid and madressa at Glenearn Rd from the early 1930's. He continued as an imam and teacher at the same place until his death in 1967. He also conducted a *hifz* class and the famous Qari Noorbhai was one of his student.

He was an expert in Urdu calligraphy and poetry and all the urdu writing and calligraphical work in the Al Hadil Ameen publication was attributed to him. His son Sayed Mohammed Basheer (1923-1996), who was educated under him, served at the Alpine Rd masjid and later at the Glenearn Rd masjid and madressa, until his death in 1996. He too was very good in Arabic calligraphy and the 99 names of Allah written on walls of the Soofi masjid in Ladysmith are his work of art.

1907

Imam Yusuf Mia Abdool Majid was born on 27 November 1907, in Durban. His father was *hafiz* Mia Abdool Majid, originally from India. He completed his *hifz* in his teenage years under his father in the Clairwood area. He was involved in the family business in Clairwood which was across the Junction masjid until the riots of 1949. He settled in Ladysmith in 1950, as Imam of the Ladysmith Central masjid until his retirement in 1990, thereafter he relocated to Durban. He kept himself busy with the continuous recitation of the *Quran*, completing it a few times every month. He passed away in 2002 and is buried in Brooke St cemetery. His parents are also buried in the same cemetery and according to legend, his father's body is still intact and the grave is now sealed.

1908

MI Mukhtar Siddiqui was the eldest son of MI Abdul Hakeem Siddiqui (d.1905). He was born in Meerat in 1879, as the eldest brother of MI Abdul Aleem Siddiqui and Moulana Basheer Siddiqui. He arrived in South Africa from Maputo (old Lorenzo Marques) in 1908, as a Muslim missionary. In 1910, he started a newspaper in Gujerati in Durban, called Al Islam (later known as Indian Views). He also formed the Madressa Anjuman Islam organisation in Durban which is still active. In 1914, he left for Reunion and travelled extensively to other countries and returned to India. He came back to South Africa in 1934, and established the Muslim Darul Yatama Walmasakeen, the Buzme Ikhwanus Safa and Madressa Banatul Islam for girls (later known as Jummah Masjid madressa and school) On 10th July 1938 (12 Jammadul Awal), he passed away at the age of 61. He was laid to rest at Damman. A tomb has been erected over his grave which stands till today near the shoreline of Damman in India. He was a descendant of Hazrath Abu Bakr Siddique (r a)

MI Basheer Siddiqui was born in Meerat in 1883, as a younger brother of MI Mukhtar Siddiqui and had accompanied him to South Africa. He stayed here for the propagation of Islam and lived in Dundee and Pretoria for a while. Later, he was an Imam at the West St masjid for nine months and served as chairman of the Natal Muslim Council. He was the principal of Pine Street madressa and school for 15 years. He was also the first Muslim marriage officer. He passed away on the 26 January 1967, and lies buried in the Brook St cemetery. He had three sons, the late Safi who was a famous Urdu poet, Yunus and Mohammad Yahya who served the Orient Islamic school in the 1950's for 17 years.

1910

Imam Abdus Samad ibn Abdul Qadir was born in Ratnagiri, India in 1892. He came to South Africa as a young man with his uncle, MI Qadi Abdul Latief (Khalifa of Shaykh Soofie Saheb) and stayed with him in Cape Town. He studied under Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks (Azawwiya masjid - Cape Town) who was a student of Shaykh Umar Bajuniad and Sayyid Husain al Hibshi, who in turn narrated directly from the great Sayyid Ahmad Dahlan. He travelled with his uncle to Makkah and studied in Madrasah as Sawlatiyah and also under great scholars of the Hijaz such as Shaykh Mansur and Ahmad Hamza Rifai in Madinah.

He also benefited from MI Mukhtar Siddiqui and Shah Goolam Hafiz Soofie (son of Shaykh Soofie Saheb). He was an excellent *qari* who recited at several

gatherings during Ulama visits, notably the visit by Ml Abdul Alim Siddiqui, Ml Qari Tayyab Saheb (Rector Darul Uloom), Qari Abdul Basit of Cairo. He served at the Wynburg and Soofie masjid in Cape Town, Juma Masjid in Durban for 25 years, and the Soofie masjid at Kenville, Durban. He was married to Shaykh Soofie Saheb's youngest daughter, Khawaja Bee (d.1967). He passed away in 1967, at the age of 75, and is buried at the Riverside cemetery. The well-known murshid and spiritual guide, Goolam Mohiyudeen Kazi is his only son, and he had three daughters.

Hafez Ebrahim Kathrada was born in Verulam in 1910 and served as an Imam in the Queensbridge masjid. He passed away in 2002 and lies buried in Tongaat.

1911

Hajee Musthan Kader was born on 31 December 1911, in Bluff, Durban. His father was highly educated. He studied religious science at the Hamidiya Madrasah and College. He was one of the early teachers at the South Coast madressa which was established in the late 1890's. Later, he served as an Imam for many years at the May St masjid and thereafter, at the Iqbaliya madressa in Unit 7, Chatsworth until his demise in February 1996. He was well known for his lectures and also served as a marriage officer. It is possible that his father could have been the first Imam of May St masjid which was established in 1920.

Shaikh Salih Abbadi

The Shaikh's late father, Muhammad Sulayman Abadi had emigrated to South Africa from Taiz, a town in Yemen. He married Rufiah Adams of Constantia and settled in the Wynberg area. Sheikh Abadi was born in 1911, and is one of five children born of this marriage. Due to the Shaikh's love for teaching the *Quran*, he was not resident Imam for long periods. Thus, he served as Imam at the Grey St masjid for a short period and during that time he taught several students the *Quran* and many became *hafiz* under him.

1913

Hafiz Yusuf Ismail Mahomedy (1913-1977), (father of Ml Ahmed Mahomedy). He completed his memorizing of the *Quran* at a young age of 13 under Imam Haffejee (father of Prof. Hafiz Ismail Haffejee), before enrolling with Qari Noorul Haq. He performed the *taraweeh salah* for 37 years at the West St Masjid.

1916

MI MuhammadAbid Mia Uthmani was born in Dabhel in 1898, he studied under his father during his early life and completed his studies in Dehli. He came to South Africa from Lourenco Marques in 1916 and settled in Washbank, Northern Natal where served the community for four years. He was brought to Ladysmith by Mr Nanabawa Chacha in 1920. He was an alim, calligrapher and a prolific writer of Urdu literature. Some of his works include the following:

Bustan ul Arifin - 1922; Anwar al Arifin - 1936; Miraj ul Muminin - 1940; Nijat al Mumin. He was also a *hakem* of note and was responsible for the famous *Unani Mixture*. He passed away on 1 November 1945 and was buried in Ladysmith Town cemetery.

1917

MI Moosa Amajee was born in 1917, in a village called Taraj, in Surat, India. He became a *hafiz* under MI Ali Muhammad Tarajwi (the first Gujarat alim and the contemporary of Qari Tayob Saab). He completed his *alim* course and the *Mishkaat al Masabih* under him at the Darul Uloom in Dhabell. He studied under great scholars such as MI Idris Khandelwi, MI Yusuf Binori, MI Badre Alam and MI Shabeer Ahmed Uthsmani.

He served in Bodhan, Gujarat for 11 years as principal of the *hifz* classes and as Imam of the institution. He also taught Farsi (Persian) and 23 pupils completed their *hifz* under him. In 1942, he married Sarah, a pious woman from the same village and had 18 children (11 boys & 7 girls) of which 4 passed away in infancy.

He was invited to South Africa in 1949, and was appointed Imam of the Jami masjid in Stanger, where he also served for 14 years as principal of the madressa. He conducted a *hifz* class as well where 11 students completed *hifz* under him. Some of his well known students are MI Vahed of Shakaskraal, Hafiz Ismail Omarjee, Hafiz Ahmed Saeed Desai .

In 1953, he was appointed Imam of the Verulam masjid and continued *hifz* classes voluntarily where 7 students completed their *hifz* under him, including MI Yunoos Osman, who is one of the authors of this book. The local community benefited from his services for 18 years and due to illness, he retired and settled with his son in Pmburg. He suffered a heart attack and was hospitalised for 13

days and he passed away in August 1986 . His last meal was dates from Madina and zam- zam water presented to him by Hajee Bhai Padia (Ameer of the Tabligh jamaat), who had just returned from Haj. He passed away upon the completion of *Surah Yasin* by his brother in law, Ml Khalil Ahmed Patel of Nelspruit and lies buried in the Pmburg cemetery.

Ml Qasim Amajee who is imam of Musjid e Noor in Benoni and a teacher of *hifz*, and Ml Abu Bakr Amajee who is a teacher of *hifz* in Port Shepstone, are two of his sons; and amongst his progeny, he leaves behind 12 *huffaz* and 4 *alims*. His spiritual guide and mentor was Ml Maseehullah Khan who had great qualities and was an excellent *hafiz* who performed *taraweeh* during his stay in Stanger and Verulam.

He should read the Quran constantly, even whilst walking 2 km to the graveyard He is known not to have missed a single *salah* with jamaat besides his few days in hospital. He never owned more than four sets of clothing and 2 pairs of shoes at any given time and was very content with his meagre possessions. Every 27 night of Ramadan he would read the entire *Quran* and continuously fasted during the year. His famous words to be remembered are, "if you cannot benefit someone, then do them no harm "

1920

Haji Ibrahim Ahmed Soofi (father of Chota Mota Desai - Umzinto) was born in India and arrived in South Africa in the early 1920's. He served the Paddock Muslim community as Imam of the masjid and as a teacher at the madressa. He settled in Umzinto after a few years as Imam and teacher until his death in 1963.

After his demise, his son Haji Shabbir Ahmed (Chota Mota) succeeded him as Imam and served the community for several years. Due to ill health he resigned as Imam and established the Dawatul Haq institution to serve the Islamic educational needs of the community of this area in the south coast of KZN. He would identify intelligent and capable learners and would send them to Waterval Islamic Institution for further studies and to India.

Ml Cassim Mohammed Sema (12 May 1920 - 9 June 2007) was the founder of the first Darul Uloom in South Africa and possibly the first Darul Uloom that used English as its medium of instruction. He also played an immense role in the establishment of *dawah* among the non-Muslims in South Africa. He was born in Newcastle, a town in KZN. At the age of five, he commenced his education at

Oswald school in Newcastle. However, his education was terminated after the completion of standard six.

He completed his *hifz* and studied Urdu under Ml Hafiz Shamsuddin. Thereafter, he completed seven *ajza* under *hafiz* Aminuddin and two more *ajza* under Ml Ali Ahmad Ansari. Ml Mia of Watervaal Institute was an inspiration to him when he visited Newcastle in 1935, and told him to either study medicine or become an *alim* abroad. He chose to become an *alim* and departed for India on 23 October 1935. He enrolled for the *alim* course at Jamia Islamiyya in Dabhel and graduated in August 1942, at the age of twenty-two. He decided to return to South Africa where a teaching post awaited him in Mia's Farm. Unfortunately, World War II started and the operation of passenger ships terminated due to the risk of Japanese attacks. However, due to demand, a steamboat called *Tilaawa* was arranged to transport passengers to Africa. On 23 November 1942, it departed from Bombay with 1 000 passengers and 300 crew members. En route, it was attacked by Japanese torpedoes and sank. He and 124 passengers were the only survivors. They were transported back to Bombay. He was then employed by Majlis e Ilmi in Simlak, where he taught *athar al sunan*. He spent a year in Simlak, preparing his own meals and occasionally leading *salah* at the masjid. He left India and arrived in South Africa on 5 February 1944. He received a number of job offers but accepted the offer from Wasbank. He taught there and spent two years formulating a madressa syllabus.

In 1949, he started to propagate Islam within the African communities of the Msinga Reserve. Over a period of ten years, nine hundred people accepted Islam. On 30 October 1960, the first *dawah ijtima* was held in Wasbank. Thereafter, a building that housed a masjid and madressa was built in the Makhakhane area. He was part of the first *Tablighi* jamaat of South Africa. In 1961, they travelled to Malawi for the first Southern Africa *ijtima*. He was instrumental in organising the first South African *ijtima* in Ladysmith later in 1961. A few months later, he travelled with the first South African jamaat to India for four months. On his return, he was arrested at the Makhakhane masjid because he had broken an apartheid law which stated that Indians were not allowed into African areas. He was fined and for the next ten years fought for the protection of the Makhakhane masjid, which the government wanted to destroy. During this period, *dawah* and nightly madressa classes continued secretly. Later, a masjid was established in Tugela Ferry, which the government also wanted to demolish. However, the masjid survived. Despite the oppressive laws of apartheid, he regularly preached Islam at the Msinga Reserve. After 23 years of service in Wasbank, he returned to Newcastle in 1968, becoming the

principal of its madressa. He lectured every Friday in Urdu, but shifted to English as the younger generation increased. In 1967, the Jamiatul Ulama KZN met to devise a single madressa syllabus for the entire province and his syllabus was chosen. Thereafter, he worked with the Jamiatul Ulama for a year. He then established a furniture manufacturing store in Alcockspruit, which was eventually closed due to new industrial laws.

He spent a few months as principal of the madressa and Imam of the masjid in Glencoe while negotiations for the purchase of land for a madressa were being finalised. He was trying to establish a madressa with boarding facilities since 1946. Eventually, in 1969, the building that housed St Dominics Academy (a Roman Catholic convent) which had been vacant for fifteen years, was bought for R 83 000. Thus, Darul Uloom Newcastle was established on 13 May 1973.

He then decided to travel to the Indian subcontinent for a 40-day *jamaah* before officially establishing the madressa. In Pakistan, he met his former teacher, MI Yusuf Binnori, who devised the curriculum of Darul Uloom Newcastle. He then travelled to India and returned to South Africa thereafter. Tuition at Darul Uloom Newcastle started on 9 September 1973 with nine boarding students. For the first three years, he taught alone whilst his wife cooked the students' food and washed their clothes. The first *jalsa* was held on 4 December 1977, in which the first batch of students graduated from a three-year *alim* course. However, in 1983, the students completed the new six-year course. He taught until the last year of his life. He passed away on 9 June 2007, at the age of eighty-seven and his funeral was attended by almost 4 000 people.

1921

MI Ismail Sulaiman Kadwa was born in Durban on 17 October 1921. His father had a shop in Field St and at the age of 9, he was sent to India on the *S S Kandala* to study. He enrolled at Jamia Husayniyah, Rander in 1930, to do *hifz* and then did the *alim* course. He qualified in 1942, under great scholars such as MI Muhammad Ebrahim, MI Mahmood Hasan, MI Muhammad Yaaseen al Azhari, MI Zuhoorul Hasan, MI Ahmadullah, MI Ismail Randeri, MI Muhammad Saeed Randeri, MI Sulaiman Ismail Patel, MI Muhibullah, a professor of Persian, MI Habeebullah, a professor of Arabic, Hafiz Yaar Khan, MI Ajmeri (shaikhul hadith) and MI Ebrahim Manjoo (his supervisor).

He spent his time very profitably with his books or in writing. He did not engage himself in other activities like sport, etc. He rarely left the premises of the

madressa inspite of the difficult conditions there. He stayed in India for 13 years without leaving its shores. After qualifying, he met the likes of Ml Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Ml Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani and others at the Darul Uloom Deoband. He returned to Durban on board the *SS Karanja* with 3 senior *ulama* as his fellow- travellers. They were Ml Qari Noorul Haq who was coming as Imam of West St masjid, Ml Khateeb as Imam in Mayville and a third *alim*.

Being a qualified *alim* and coming home to where the laws of *Shariah* were not being observed strictly, presented a huge challenge for him. He began teaching *hifz* at the Pine St madressa with a salary of 10 pounds and was very strict with his students. He became very close to Sayyid Abdul Hameed, commonly known as Sayyid Saheb, who was a sufi. He would often walk long distances to meet him and sit in his company. He also learnt some calligraphy from him. He got married on 15 June 1946. Ml Muhammad Ebrahim, the principal of Jamia Husayniyah, who was at that time visiting South Africa, performed his nikah. He had 3 sons and 2 daughters. Ml Abdul Haq Omarjee, Ml Ansari, Ml Nomani of Piet Retief and Ml Ahmad Hathurani of Johannesburg were his close friends throughout his life.

Later, he went to Richmond for approximately 2 years, then to Greytown for approximately 3 years, then to Port Shepstone for 2 years and finally back to Durban as Imam of Junction masjid, Clairwood. He remained Imam for approximately 5 years and then took up a post in Newcastle and remained there till the end of his life. He stayed for approximately 50 years in Newcastle. During that period, he spent some time teaching in Ermelo, Breyten, Kliptown, Nylstroom, Wasbank and Glencoe. Although he was a very strict person, he was also very humourous. He had the ability of narrating incidents of the pious predecessors and quoting poetry which endeared him to the people and they would enjoy his company. He performed the full *taraweeh* several times in different masajid in Overport, Verulam and Pietermartizburg.

Ml Mohamed Ebrahim of Rander gave him permission to assist people with *taweedh*. Many people used to come to him for assistance and he would give them *taweedh* without taking any remuneration. He also had a favourite hobby of mixing his own perfumes. Special perfumes used to be sent to him from Rander. He learnt this art from the Imam at Rander during his study days. People used to say that they knew when he had walked past because of the beautiful fragrance he left behind. He had a special liking for Urdu and Persian poetry and

his note-books used to have beautiful verses inscribed. He was also an expert calligrapher and his writings in the form of *duas* and *surahs* can still be found in many homes and shops. He should assist his madressa and its teachers in India by regularly sending funds to them. When a teacher passed away, he would assist the widow. Another good habit of his was that whenever anyone gave him a gift, he would immediately recompense the giver in some form or the other. In most places he did not earn more than R100 per month as his salary. Only in Newcastle did his salary increase and he began earning R200. In spite of such a meagre wage, he never gave up teaching and serving the community, in order to become involved in some worldly business, where he could have earned a much better salary.

His means of travelling from place to place was either by taxi or train. When he travelled from Durban to Newcastle for instance, he departed at 2 am and reached Newcastle at 11am. Some of the homes he stayed in were very modest. In Greytown for instance, his wife used a primus stove. In Port Shepstone, there was no hot water in his house. In Newcastle, his house did not have a bathroom, therefore a small area in the kitchen was cordoned off for bathing and water had to be heated on a coal stove. The toilet was 10m outside the house and it was difficult at night, especially for the children to walk in the dark to reach the toilet. In spite of all these difficulties, he did not opt to go into business. He always assisted the poor financially and he was very meticulous and clean. He used to sweep his verandah and yard. Infact, the day that he had a stroke, he was busy in the garden around 5 am and due to the stroke, he fell down. A labourer from across the road saw him falling and alerted the family. After suffering from the stroke, he was bed-ridden for 2 years. He passed away in Mayfair, Johannesburg on 31 July 1996 at the age of 75 and was buried in the Newclare cemetery.

1925

MI Abdul Haq Omarjee was born in Umzinto in the south coast of KZN on 17 October 1925, and named after his father's teacher. His father, Hajee Ismail was a disciple of MI Ashraf Ali Thanwi, and he had educated himself in Kathor, India, under MI Abdul Haqq Hazarwi. MI Omarjee studied at various institutions in India from 1935 to 1951. He graduated in 1950, in Deoband and spent a year with MI Husayn Ahmad Madani. Later, he voluntarily served as Imam of West St masjid for 2 years. He was a founder member of Jamiatul Ulama KZN in

1950, and was instrumental in establishing the first Darul Uloom in Newcastle. He remained its chairman of the board until his death in 2003. He is buried in Kathor, India near the grave of the famous Ml Hazarwi, who was the teacher of his father.

1929

Moulana Ali Ahmad Ansari was born in 1889, in Rampur, India and was educated in the region of Saharanpur and qualified in Deoband. He arrived in South Africa in 1929, and served mainly in Northern Natal region and finally he settled in Newcastle for many years. In 1959, he returned to India and passed away in his village in 1968. He was the elder brother of Ml Abdur Rahman Ansari.

Imam Eghsaan Aysen was born in 1929, in Durban as a “malay”. He lost his father at the age of 2 years and because his mother had to work, he was sent to his family in Port Elizabeth where he received his early education. He married Sharieffa Aysen in 1956, and because he was classified coloured, they had to live in Sydenham, Durban. He began conducting madressa classes from his out-building every evening on a voluntary basis when he came home from work. To make ends meet, he did sewing in the evenings. His *dawah* work took him away from his family on a daily basis. His efforts assisted in keeping the youth occupied and off the streets. The S A Navy appointed him as a navy chaplain to serve the people in the navy. He restored the Kings Rest masjid in Bluff, Durban, where he became the resident Imam on a voluntary basis for sixteen years until his death in 1990, at the age of 61. This masjid became a hive of activity and he set an example of how interaction between Imam and the community should be.

1930

Sheikh Yusuf Booley was born to Achmad and Rabia Booley on 28 December 1930, in Pontac St, District Six, Cape Town. At the age of 15, he decided to become a wood-carver. It was during this time that the decision was made for him to do *Quranic* studies in Makkah. Upon his return in 1951, he started a madressa in his birth place and for the next 4 years, he performed *taraweeh* in Tongaat in KZN. In 1956, he was appointed Imam of Grey St masjid where he started his first *hifz* class. Even though he only spent five years in Durban, he

successfully taught *hifz* to forty boys and girls. This resulted in spreading the teaching of *hifz* in Durban.

MI Ismail Abdul Razak was born on the 7th August 1930, in Ladysmith, in a family of blacksmiths who had settled in Ladysmith in the early 1900's. His humble parents were Sayed Abdul and Rasool Bibi. After completing his early schooling and rudimentary Islamic education, he travelled to India at the age of 12 to further his studies. He initially studied at the Darul Uloom in Dhabel and later in Deoband, studying under renowned scholars such MI Madani, MI Balyawi and MI Izaz Ali. After graduating in Deoband, he was invited to teach Arabic at the Darul Uloom, a position rarely accorded to anyone but the distinguished of students.

After one year of teaching, he travelled to Pakistan (Karachi and Thandolayar) to benefit from the likes of MI Yusuf Binory and MI Zafar Ahmed Uthmani. He had a great interest in Arabic and Urdu poetry as well. Upon his return in 1951, and after spending a year in Ladysmith, he was appointed Imam of Queen St masjid and teacher at Struden St madressa in Pretoria, where he served for 12 years. He displayed great leadership qualities and was an excellent orator. The youth of the area were very impressed with him as an *alim* because he conducted sermons and teaching in English, which was rare in those days. In 1959, he established the Universal Truth Movement to propogate Islam to the indigenious and white population. Prof JA Naude and Prof Van Selms were introduced to Islam by him and so was the late outspoken Joe Tshabala. In 1968, he went to Cairo as a lecturer at the famous Al Azhar University. He returned to Ladysmith in 1980, and established the Darul Quran Trust at his family's small-holding (Razzack farm) at the outskirts of the town. He started the work of dawah amongst the indigenious people and he continued this work until his death on 21 September 2003, at age 73.

1933

Imam Abdool Kader Asmal (father of MI Shabbir Asmal) was born in December 1933. He studied under Munshi Yaqub of Inanda and served as Imam in Verulam, Church St (Pmburg), and 13 years as Imam at Junction Rd masjid, Clairwood. He served on the National Prison Board and was a Religious officer for hospitals. He passed away on 15 December 2000.

MI Ismail Mohammed Mayet was born in 1933 in Johannesburg. After completing his primary schooling, he went to Alipur, India, to study Islamic

studies, Urdu and Gujrati under his father MI Moosa Master Mayet. He returned to South Africa in 1956, and served as a madressa teacher in Standerton where he founded the Parkview Hostel for muslim boys from the surrounding towns. In 1965, he moved to Cape Town and established the Darul Ashraf Madressa. He went to India in the late 1960's and upon his return in 1970, he taught in Raisthorpe, Pmburg and finally settled in Greytown in 1973. He served as the Imam and madressa teacher of Greytown masjid until 1985. Thereafter, he established his own institution called Madressah Habibiya, which he managed until his death in March 2015. He is buried in Greytown. Besides being a religious scholar, he was actively involved in social work within the larger community. He published books in English, Afrikaans and Zulu. He also authored several books in Urdu and Gujrati which were published in India.

1934

MI Mohammed Qassim Bhorat was born in Stanger in 1934, in a humble and religious family. He did his basic Islamic and secular schooling in Stanger. In 1946, when his parents went for Hajj, they travelled via India and left him and his younger brother, Hassen in Naroli, India to be taken care of by their maternal grandparents. His grandfather enrolled both of them at the Falahdarain Darul Uloom in Tarkashwer, to further their studies. The well-known Qari Noorgat was one of his teachers. In 1950, he was admitted to the Jame Hoosainiya in Rander.

In 1954, he accompanied his paternal grandmother for Hajj and it was during this trip that he was introduced to MI Hussayn Ahmad Madani. He attended his daily discourses in the *haram*. MI Madani was impressed with his abilities and sought permission from his grandmother for him to become his student in India and the words he used was “he is my son as of today.” He spent four years in the house of MI Madani while studying in Deoband. In Rajab 1958, MI Madani experienced a sharp pain in the chest and clung to him, repeatedly saying, *ya Allah*. MI Madani passed away on his lap. He qualified a month after his mentor's death and returned to Stanger, where he served the community until his death in 1978. He lies buried in the Stanger Muslim cemetery.

He was a man of great respect, statute and highly educated in Arabic and Persian. MI Ahmed Omar who knew him, mentions that he was a man of great vision whose desire was to keep the Ummah united at all times with tolerance. As a senior member of the Jamiatul Ulama KZN, his advices were always

accepted. He was very active with Haji Bhai Padia in the early stages of the *Tablighi* movement.

MI Abdur Rahman Ansari was born in 1907, and hailed from a highly educated and religious family in Rampur, India. His father, MI Abdul Qayyum was a contemporary of MI Thanvi, MI Mahmud ul Hasan and other students of Darul Uloom Deoband. His famous grandfather, MI Abdul Kareem was a contemporary and close associate of MI Rashid Ahmad Ganghohi Ansari (1829 - 1905), who was also born in Rampur, and is the founder of Darul Uloom Deoband. His grandfather and father sat in many meetings with MI Ganghohi, MI Qasim Nanotvi and all the senior *ulama* of Ambheta, Ganghoh, Nanotwa, Jalalabad, Thanabwan and Deoband. He grew up in this surrounding and benefitted from these famous scholars.

He was educated in Rampur and Saharanpur and qualified in the 1920's in Darul Uloom Deoband. He was a student at this institution with MI Maseehullah Khan Sahib and others. After completing his studies, he served in the Saharanpur area before arriving in South Africa in 1934, at the invitation of his elder brother MI Ali Ahmad Ansari. He was appointed upon his arrival, as principal of a madressa in Pmburg. Later he moved to Dannhauser where served as Imam and teacher for 8 years and thereafter in Glencoe for 9 years. In 1955, he was appointed Imam of West St masjid. He also served as supervisor of the religious department at Orient Islamic school, Ahmediya school and Anjuman Islamic school in Leopold Street. He was a founding member of the Jamiatul Ulama KZN and served as its president for several years. He conducted *tafsir* classes at West St masjid for 25 years until his retirement. He was committed to the upliftment of the educational needs of the youth and encouraged the *ulama* to strategise ways through the use of contemporary methodologies to encourage the youth to study. He was a historian, *muffassir* and a man with great leadership qualities who believed in unity of the *ummah* and *ulama*.

He retired in 1986, due to ill health and was the longest serving Imam at the West St masjid. He was known to have attended to his duties meticulously for 31 years for which he was highly acclaimed. He passed away in 1992 and lies buried in the Brook St cemetery. His nephew, Dr Mahmood Alhaq Ansari (b.1944), says that they were related by blood to MI Ganghohi and Shaykh Zakariya of Saharanpur. They were all referred to as decendants of Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (r a)

MI Adam Bhayat was born in 1900, in Sanjali, a village in India and completed his rudimentary Islamic education at his village. He enrolled at Darul Uloom Deoband to further his studies. He stayed in Rander and qualified under Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri. He taught in his village and the nearby areas. He arrived in Durban from India with Mufti Sanjalwi in 1936, and took up an Imamate and teaching post in Greytown. Many parents realized his great teaching abilities and wanted their children to be educate under him. Therefore, many students lived in his house as boarders, and his wife did all the house work.

After 5 years, he settled in North St, Greyville, near the May St masjid where he served as Imam and taught children in his home. In the mid 1940's, he settled in Stanger and served the community as Imam and lecturer for many years until his retirement from active duties. He was invited to do the official opening of the Jame masjid after its renovation. It is remembered by many that during the dua he prayed for the town to be blessed with a visit by any great sufi. In the following year, Shaykh Zakariya spent the month of Ramadan in Stanger. In 1956, he took his elderly parents for *hajj* and it was well known that he carried his aged mother on his back during *tawaf*. His tafsir lectures that were held every Wednesday was well attended for over 25 years. His daily inspiring lectures after *asar salah* were also well attended. Both these were conducted in the Stanger Jame masjid. He was well known to quote Allama Iqbal's poetry regularly in almost all his discourses.

1936

Hafiz Muhammad Hafeji was born in Panoli, Gujraat in India in 1908. He became a *hafiz* under his father, Hafiz Moosa. He arrived in South Africa on 29 July 1936 and settled in Shakaskraal in the North Coast. He served the communities of Shakaskraal, Stanger, Pmburg, Ladysmith and Estcourt. He was fondly known as "Hafiz Sahib Estcourt" and because of his love for the *Quran*, he used to read 3 *paras* daily, whilst most of his life he should perform the 20 *rakaats* of *taraweeh* alone as Imam.

Whilst living in Shakaskraal, he would travel to Verulam by train to perform the *taraweeh salah* and return home the next morning. During his stay in Ladysmith, he would travel to Washbank by train to perform the *taraweeh salah* and return home late at night. Among his close friends were MI Qasim Sema, MI Hathurani and Munshi Sahib of Inanda. He was a mureed of MI Ashraf Ali Thanvi. He had a humble personality, was very hospitable and lived a very simple life. He fell ill

on Thursday and passed away in his *salah*. He was buried the next day in Estcourt cemetery on 26 March 1972.

Qari Mohammed Ahmed Kara was born in Taraj, in Gujrat, India. He studied in Tarkshwar where completed his *hifz* and *qari* course and was brought to South Africa in 1936. He was appointed Imam of the Stanger masjid and also as a madressa teacher. During his stay in Stanger, several students completed their *hifz* and were sent by him to further their studies in India. Several well-known Ulama are his students, namely, MI Tootla and MI Desai of Stanger, MI Ahmed Rashid Daya, MI Moniya and Qari Laher, who are from other parts of the country. He served that community for five years and after the expiry of his contract, he served in different parts of the than Transvaal. He settled in Grootmaricko in Eastern Transvaal, and continued his *hifz* classes until his death in 1971. He lies buried in Benoni. Abdul Hameed who is 82 yrs, is his youngest son.

1937

MI Sayed Mohamed Loot was born around 1890, in the district of Attock, located 70 km north of Islamabad, in a villiage called Nurpur (now in Pakistan). He studied from the age of 5 at various madaris and *ulooms* all over India, including Deoband and Khakushthi. He further graduated the *alim fadhil* course from the Punjab University in Lahore and also qualified as a *hakeem*.

He arived in South Africa in 1937, and was appointed as *muazzin* , Imam and a teacher at Richmond until 1942. He returned to India for 2 years to get married and returned in 1944, as Imam of Central masjid in Pmburg. He returned to India in 1952, but a year later he returned to Durban upon the request of the Lockhat family as Imam and teacher at Ahmedia masjid, Mayville where he served until 1980. Thereafter, he settled in Parlock for a few years before retiring in Estcourt, where he passed away on 31 october 1999, at an age of about 99 years and is buried in the Estcourt cemetery.

He authored several books but unfortunately his works are lost or out of print. His most famous work was a three volume encyclopedia on Shafism in the late 1930's. Many works on various Islamic topics were published, particularly in Urdu and Arabic on children's elementary books. He was one of the founding

members of Jamiat Ulema KZN in 1950s. He believed in sending students to India to pursue religious studies so they could establish Darul Uloom in the country. He had continuously strived to unite all Muslims irrespective of their race and beliefs.

1940

MI Ahmed Adam Sabat was born in the year 1912, in Diva, a village in Anklesvar Taluka, in Bharuch District of Gujarat, India. He had taken his basic Islamic education from the great *ulama* of that time such as MI Rahmatullah Afghani. His late father encouraged him to further his studies at the Darul Uloom Jamia Husainia, Rander, where completed his *alim* course in 1933. Among his teachers were, MI Ahmed Noor, MI Ibrahim, MI Zahur Hasan, MI Saiyed Sharfuddin, MI Abdul Rahim Borsadi and MI Hasan Ajmeri. He also spent time in Darul Uloom Deoband, where he studied *ahadith* of Bukhari from MI Hussain Ahmad Madani and other sciences under MI Azaz Ali and Haji Muhammad Ibrahim Balyawi.

After completing his studies, he was appointed head of Darul Uloom Falah al Darain in Tarkeshwar. He was concerned with the education of the people of his village in Diva, therefore he established the Madrasa Nurul Islam in 1937. He authored a few books namely, *Tanzimul Madaris*, *Fahme Islam*, *Mirasul Muslimin*, *Roza and Zakat*, etc. which were published in Urdu and Gujarati in India. His book on Women in Islam was published in South Africa.

He arrived in South Africa in 1940, on the request and insistence of several community members who knew him. He served as Imam in Glencoe, Port Shepstone and Dundee for 17 yrs and many students became *huffaz* under him. He settled in Tongaat in 1958, and served as Imam at the Top (Soofie) masjid on a voluntarily basis until his death in 1981. He was very independent and opened a small business to support himself and his family. He was responsible for establishing the Madrasa Nurul Islam in Durban. He passed away on 17 July 1981 (Friday, 15 Ramadan) in Tongaat and is buried in the Top masjid cemetery.

MI Ibrahim Sulaiman Dudhat was born on 10 August 1917, in Port Louis, Mauritius. At an early age he was sent to Madrasah Ashrafia in Rander, where he qualified in 1935. As a young *alim*, his teachers realized his potential and sent him to the village of Dewa where he taught for two years and thereafter to the

village of Kosamba. He returned to Mauritius in the early 1940's, and migrated to South Africa. He was appointed as Imam at New Hanover (35km from Pmburg) and also taught at the madressa for several years. After the demise of his father- in- law, he took over the business on a farm called Nqabeni, where he lived until his death on 14 May 1999, and was buried in Port Shepstone. He was regularly called to give the *jumuah* talk at the Port Shepstone and Harding masjid.

1945

MI Muhammad Mulla was born in Verulam on 8 July 1945. At the age of 14, he left for India in 1959, to pursue religious education. He studied at the renowned Jamia Ashrafiyya in Rander for 10 years and completed his *hifz* and *alim* course. Among his senior teachers was MI Ajmeri and MI Ashraf. He returned in 1969, and served as Imam of Tongaat Railway St masjid at age 24. He then moved to Stanger on 1 May 1973, where he served until his retirement, due to ill health. He passed away in Stanger in the early hours of Sunday, 28 October 2001, at the age of 56. He was well liked by the learned and ordinary people and was well known for his hospitality. He served the community of Stanger as chief Imam of the Jami masjid and as a teacher in the madressa for about 22 years. Besides his service to the community, he assisted many madaris, Darul Ulooms and *ulama* in India and elsewhere through arranging financial assistance for them. In this regard, he personally travelled overseas on many occasions to disburse funds and also to visit these madaris. He was a member of the Jamiatul Ulama and regularly attended the AGM.

1946

MI Yunus Patel was born in Stanger in 1946. He completed his primary schooling and in 1962, he volunteered to be in the first *tabligh jamaat* with Haji Bhai Padia in Grey St masjid. In 1962, he went to Darul Uloom Deoband to study the *alim* course. He was an outstanding student and also a confidante of many of his illustrious teachers. He studied the first volume of Sahih Bukhari under the tutorship of MI Fakhruddin and the second volume under Mufti Mahmood. In his final year of studies, he would accompany Mufti Mahmood on Thursdays and Fridays to sit in the company of Shaykul Hadith, MI Muhammad Zakariyya in Sahanpur. After completing his studies in 1969, he was advised by Mufti Mahmood to derive benefit from MI Abrarul Haq Hardoi, which he did for a few months. He returned late in 1969, as Imam and teacher in Mooi River in

KZN. He moved to Durban around 1973, and was instrumental in establishing the first office of the Jamiatul Ulama KZN in Durban. For many years he served the community under the Jamiat, later becoming the secretary general and president.

During the Qadiani dispute in Cape Town in the early 1980's, he was part of the team of expert *ulama* who prepared the evidence required in the court case. He established the first girls' madressa in Asherville, Durban in 1982. It is now a flourishing institute. He was granted *khilafah* from Mufti Mahmood Hassan Gangohi and MI Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar. The last decade of his life was spent on spiritual reformation of the community and hundreds of people became his adherents. He used to give the *jumuah* talk regularly in the Malinson Rd masjid. Many people were attracted to his talks which were practical and inspiring, thus benefitting from his practical wisdom. He passed away in the precincts of the *Kabah* on 12 July 2011. He performed *tawaaf* and after *maghrib salah* had a heart attack in front of the *Kabah* in the *mataaf* area and passed away. His *janaza salah* was performed by Shaykh Shuraim and he was buried in *jannatul mala*. This is extraordinary in itself as foreigners are not normally buried there.

Moulana Ismail Dawood Maiter was born in Verulam in 1946. After qualifying in Jalalabad, India, he served at the Tongaat Anjuman masjid and was principal of the Anjamun Tongaat madressa for 18 years. Several students completed their *hifz* under him. Thereafter, he served for 2 years in Parlock and 2 years in Verulam. He passed away on the 18 October 1994, at the age of 48 years. He was a close associate and *mureed* of MI Masehullah Khan Saheb of Jalalabad.

1947

MI Abdurrahman Yakoob Suleman was born on 01 September 1947. He acquired his elementary Islamic and secular education at the Nizamia school in Pmburg. He studied at the Deoband Darul Uloom, India from 1964 to 1971. His contemporaries and classmates were MI Yunus Patel Saheb and MI Yaseen Raheem. He taught briefly and made *imaamat* in Vryburg and then returned to take care of the family business and serve the community of Pmburg. He used to frequently deliver *Jumuah* talks at the Top End masjid in Pmburg and would

routinely give talks on auspicious occasions at different masajid in Pmburg. He was instrumental in establishing the Pmburg Jamiat office. He served as one of the first Muslim marriage officers in Pmburg. He was always concerned about the welfare of the poor and underprivileged and would personally distribute *zakaat* to needy families in the less impoverished areas. He should visit Muslim patients at the hospital as well as prisoners. He passed away on 09 August 1991

1948

MI Subhanallah Fazle Ahmed was born on the 2 January 1913, in Maneri Payan, Swabi District in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The town was and is still known as an educational centre of the region. He did his early Islamic studies in his village under the local scholars and later travelled to different institutions in India, and qualified as an *alim*. He married Fathima Bibi, the daughter of Maulvi Ghulam Muahmmad Khairullah from Baroach, India on 12 December 1943.

He was invited to serve in Howick, KZN and arrived in Durban on the *S S Aronda* on the 12 November 1948. He was appointed Imam and teacher at the Howick masjid. His wife and three sons joined him from India in 1951. He served the Howick community for 16 years and thereafter spent two years in Amersfort and two years in Ladysmith at the Soofie masjid before retiring due to ill health. He retired in Howick and passed away at the age of 57 in 1970, and was laid to rest in the Raisthorp cemetery in Pmburg. He was a very pious and religious scholar and a founder member of the Jamiatul Ulama.

MI Goolam Mohamed Salot was born in Tadkeshwer on 19 January 1922. He completed his *hifz* at a very young age and did his studies in Rander and later, under MI Badre Alam in Dhabel. He further studied in Deoband and was a contemporary of MI Omarjee, and MI Ahmed Mohamed Hathurani, a well known scholar and author from Gauteng. He arrived in South Africa at his own expense. He served as Imam at Verulam, Port Shepstone, East St masjid (18 yrs), Hamdani masjid (bottom masjid) and Top End masjid in Pmburg and finally in Isipingo Rail. After his retirement, he went for *umrah* and travelled to India, where he passed away in Mumbai. He was buried in Tadkeshwer on the 22 October 1998, at the age of 76.

1949

MI Ahmed Suleman Desai was born in the Gujerat region of India in 1914. After completing his basic education, he studied in Jamia Husseinya, Rander. Among his contemporaries was Mufti Lajpuri who made mention of him in his famous *Fatwa Rahimiya*. He was invited to South Africa and arrived in 1949, as Imam of the first masjid in Pmburg which was known as the Top masjid because it was built at the top end of Church St. This masjid is partially concealed from the street by the E C Rawat building that was built in 1903. The masjid remained open and was unaffected by the upheavals caused by the Group Areas. It is still used for the daily *salah*. It has never closed for a single day, even though people were forced to relocate, they still came to this masjid.

Due to the Group Areas, he assisted in establishing the Mountain Rise masjid in 1979, and served as Imam there until his retirement in 1992. He continued to carry out his religious duties at the Top masjid. He was also a founding member of the Jamiatul Ulama in 1955, and was instrumental from its planning. He attended its inaugural meeting at the East St madressa in Pmburg. He carried out his duties diligently and was never late for any *salah*. He passed away on the 10 Ramadaan 1418, and lies buried in the Mountain Rise cemetery

1949

MI Yusuf Mulla Omarwadi was born on 18 November 1916, in Omarwara, Gujerat, India. After studying at various centres, he qualified at Darul Uloom Deoband. He taught for many years in the village of Dewa and arrived in South Africa on 30th October 1949. He was appointed as Imam and teacher in Shakaskraal, N Coast. He settled in Richmond on the 28 February 1958, and in Pmburg in October 1964, as Imam of the Bottom end masjid where he conducted *hifz* classes. He moved to Dundee on the 15th November 1975, and then to Roshni, Gauteng, on 3 December 1977. He retired in 1986, and passed away in Roshni on the 29 August 2000. He was a highly respected scholar and a founding member of the Jamiatul Ulama KZN. He is attributed for having 68 students completing their *hifz* under him.

List of Imams, Huffaaz, Ulama and Scholars whose biography not available.

1. Mianjee Elahi Bux (First Imam Grey St masjid)

2. Molvi Chotoo Mia
3. Imam Amir Miajee (Queensbridge)
4. Hazratuddin (Stanger/Queensbridge - Father of MI Nasim)
5. Imam Hasan Miajee (Queensbridge)
6. MI Abdul Kareem (Junction Rd - South Coast)
7. MI Aboojee (Clairwood)
8. MI Hanif Khan
9. Hajee Habibullah Khan (Flower Road madressa)
10. MI Sayyed ul Haq (Verulam)
11. MI Suleman Moammad Kafletvi (Indian Views)
12. Mustafa Osman
13. Hafiz Ebrahim Hafejee (father of Dr Hafejee)
14. Munshi Joomal (father of A S K Joomal)
15. MI Ghoolam Rasool
16. Munshi Moosajee Baduli (Stanger)
17. Munshi Yacoob Sahib (Inanda)
18. Hafiz Noorbhai (May St - father of Qari Noorbhai of Lenasia)
19. MI Vahed (Chakaskraal)
20. MI Hafiz Shamsuddin (Newcastle)
21. Hafiz Aminuddin (Newcatle and Ladysmith)
22. MI Ismail Panchbhaya (Ladysmith - teacher of MI Ismail Abdul Razak)
23. MI Suliman Anandwi (Middleburg)
24. M Khoda Bux (Pmburg)
25. MI Khalil Ahmed (Professor - UKZN)
26. Moulana Abdul Vahed Punjabi (Clairwood masjid - 1940s). He was married to Fatima, the sister of Shaikh Hasan Raboobee (d.1969). He returned to India with his wife in 1943, where he passed away in 1944.

CONCLUSION

The most distinctive feature that defines the *ulama* is their knowledge in, and preoccupation with, religious, educational and legal affairs that constitute the broad ideological parameters of Islamic societies. Historically, being a member of the *ulama* establishment entailed full-time engagement with matters of scholarship and piety (learning, teaching and preaching) that left little or no time for generating an income. The lack of regular income therefore made the *ulama* reliant on the goodwill and support of the Muslim community or an influential patron. Assurance of this support appears to have been a necessary condition for the development of the *ulama* class. Therefore, when a Muslim cleric arrived in an area, a mutually beneficial alliance was naturally struck between him and the business elite leading to the gradual integration of the *ulama* into the community in these areas. In return for the necessary permission, material comforts and assurances of personal safety and protection from their benefactors, the *ulama* deployed their literacy skills and religious and judicial knowledge in the service of the Muslim community. This symbiosis between the *ulama* and the business class gave Islam and Islamic education the necessary footholds in cities and towns that subsequently became well known for Islamic scholarship at different times.

It was during our research that we realized what great scholars had lived in our midst and in our country and unfortunately we benefited very little from them academically. For instances: the two Ansari *alims* were closely related to the founders of the Darul Uloom Deoband in India; one of the greatest scholars of India was MI Husayn Ahmad Madani who passed away at the hands of MI Mohammed Bhorat; the only South African who was offered a lecture post in Deoband was MI Abdul Razzak; the foundation of the first Islamic College in KZN was laid by MI Mohammed Hanif Afriqi and MI Abdur Rahman Ansari; the only KZN student of Shaikh Ahmad Hamza Rifai was Imam Abdus Samad; MI Sabat and MI Loot were great authors; MI Moosa Amejje, who read the entire *Quran* between *tarawih* and *ilftar* every 27 night of Ramadan in private,

was greatly spiritually inclined; MI Sema initiated the first Darul Uloom in the country; MI Abdul Qadir was an expert in Persian and Arabic poetry; the only South African *alim* to be mentioned in the famous *Fatawa Rahimiya* of Mufti Lajpuri is MI Ahmed Desai of Pmburg; MI Abu Bakr Khateeb regularly published a magazine on current Islamic issues; MI Yunus Patel was a spiritual guide and a founding member of an Islamic institution and a school for girls. There may have been many other *ulama* and religious leaders of whom we have no knowledge of their achievements and contributions, and who served the religious needs of the Muslims in our country.

Due recognition must be given to those early business establishments and businessmen who made financial contributions to establish masajid, madressas and educational institutions, and also their sponsorship of bringing the overseas scholars and sending our local students to study overseas. Also, mention must be made by the important role played by female madressa teachers (Apaas) and the muezzins in serving the community.

May Allah accept the efforts of all these overseas and local *ulama, imams, religious teachers and businessmen who made great sacrifices to serve the religious needs of the Muslims in our country. May He bless them and grant them *jannatul firdous*.*

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2. Abdus Samad Abdul Qadir (son of MI Abdul Qadir 27-08-2014)
3. Yunus Siddiqui (son of MI Basheer Siddiqui 02-09-2014)
4. MI Ahmed Mohammedy (28-10-2014)

5. Ebrahim Moosa (91yrs old - chairperson Orient Islamic School 28-10-2014)
6. Mr Ansur (28-10-2014)
7. Dr I Hafejee (son of Hafiz Imam Hafejee 29-10-2014)
8. Moneim Vaizie (son of Imam Sayed Sarfuddin Vaizie 30-10-2014)
9. Interview Taha Muslim (son of MI Sheikh Ahmed Muslim Afriki 31-10-2014)
10. MI Zubayr Afriqi (son of MI Mohammed Hanif Afriqi 1-11-14)
11. Qari Saad Kazi (grandson of Imam Abdus Samad 3-11-14)
12. Iqbal Sabat (son of MI Sabat 8-11-14)
13. MI Saleem Kareem (12-11-14)
14. Dr Syed Mahmood Hosain Loot Eskcourt (12-11-14)
15. Dr Ebrahim Majeed (19-11-14)
16. Asmal Paruk (son-in-law of MI Salot 22-11-14)
- 17.Sayedullah Subhallah (son of MI Subhanallah 13-11-14)
18. MI Hassen Bhorat (78 yrs old - 14-11-14)
19. Dr. Mahmoodulhek Ansari (71yrs nephew of MI Ansari 18-11-14)
20. Hafiz M Sadek Saeed (24-11-14)
21. MI Ahmed Omar (25-11-14)
22. MI Imran Khamissa (25-11-14)
23. MI Abdul Aziz Amod (25-11-14)
24. Masehullah Asmal (27-01-15)
25. Mohamed Hajee (19-03-15)
26. Ashraf Mayet (20-03-15)

27. Sayed Mahmud al Hasan (Munir Bhai 24-03-15)

28. MI Zaahid Suleman (25-03-15)