

A short summary of

The History of Darul-Ulūm Deoband



بنت مسأمة عفیت عنها

July 14th, 2017

The knowledge of dīn

Before going deep into the history of Darul Ulūm Deoband, I feel it's very much required to mention a little about how this authentic knowledge (*ilm-e-haqq*) has reached us from Nabi ﷺ. I would also like to mention the importance of seeking knowledge because Darul Ulūm Deoband was, with Allah's mercy, a rise for our ummah and a source that helped in preserving the true knowledge and keeping it clean and pure from all the innovations and doubts.

Allah ﷻ has sent prophets to this world in many different ways. At times, Allah ﷻ sends one prophet to a specific place for a specific period of time. Sometimes, He ﷻ sends two prophets to two different nations at the same period of time. At times, He sends two prophets together to one nation at one time and lastly sometimes Allah ﷻ sends various prophets to various places at the same time. However, when it comes to our ummah and our Nabi ﷺ, Allah ﷻ has sent him as the last messenger and prophet to all of mankind until The Day of Qiyāmah.¹ That is why our ummah is in a constant need of reminders and that is why Allah ﷻ has blessed our ummah with grand and devoted scholars who were responsible enough to tackle the responsibility of reminding, benefiting, and teaching our ummah. Allah ﷻ has also blessed our ummah with a chain of revivers (*mujaddids*) who have come one after the other to purify dīn from innovations and alterations as Prophet ﷺ mentions that at the turn of every century, Allah ﷻ rises someone from this ummah who will revive dīn and get rid of any dust that it has gathered over the period of time and restore it to its originality.² On the other hand, our Prophet ﷺ is An-nabiyul ummi. He is the unlettered and illiterate prophet who, in fact, came to teach the people as Prophet ﷺ himself has said, "Indeed I am sent as a teacher".³ The importance of seeking knowledge can be understood from various Qur'anic verses and from the sayings of Rasulullah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ says, "And say, Oh Lord increase me in knowledge" (20:114) and He ﷻ says, "Say, can the people who know be equal with the people who don't know?" (39:9). He ﷻ also says, "Allah raises those amongst you who believe, and those who acquire knowledge to higher ranks" (58:11). Rasulullah ﷺ has said, "Seeking knowledge is compulsory upon every Muslim"⁴ and has also said, "The best amongst you is

¹ Usuae Nabie Haq aur hamari zindagi

² Sunan Abi Dawūd ; Kitāb al-Malāhim ; Bāb ma yuzkar fī qarnil miati ; Sulaymān bin Dawūd

³ Sunan Ibn Mājāh ; Muqaddamah ; Bāb fadhāilil ‘ulamāi wa hathi ‘ala talabil ‘ilmi ; Bishr bin Hilāl

⁴ Riyadhus Salihīn ; Kitāb al-‘Ilm ; PG 408

⁵ Sunan Ibn Mājāh ; Bāb fadhāilil ‘ulamāi wa hathi ‘ala talabil ‘ilmi ; Hishām bin Amār

⁶ Sahīh al-Bukhari ; Kitāb Fadhāil al-Qurān ; Bāb khairukum man ta’alamal qur’āna wa ‘alamahu ; Hajāj bin Minhāl

the one who learns the Qurān and teaches it to others".⁶ Those who engage in seeking knowledge, especially the knowledge of dīn, will be given special attention in the Ākhirah. On The Day of Qiyāmah, it will be said to the hāfidh of the Qurān, "Read and recite and rise in the stages of paradise, because undoubtedly your abode will be in the last place you recite the last verse".⁷

It is sufficient for a person to seek knowledge to the extent that he understands Allah ﷻ 's commandments. Prophet ﷺ has said that, "A single learned person (who has solid understanding of deen) is more powerful on Shaitān than a thousand worshippers".⁸ ‘Allamah Tībī *Rahimahullah* has commented on this hadith stating, the reason for this is because Shaitān is always trying to defeat mankind through his carnal desires – and a *Faqīh* is someone who's knowledgeable and can understand the trickery of Shaitān, and therefore is less likely to fall into his traps. As for an *Ābid*, a worshipper, (who doesn't have much knowledge) he's more ill-equipped and as a result, is more likely to fall into the traps of Shaitān.⁹ Allah ﷻ gives the solid understanding of dīn to those who He wants to favour as Prophet ﷺ says, "Whoever Allah wants to favour, he grants him *faqāhat* (solid understanding) in deen".¹⁰

This knowledge of dīn has reached us today through a very beautiful and sublime chain and one must appreciate its value. The Sahābah *RadhiAllahu Anhum* learned dīn directly from Rasulullah ﷺ and they passed it on to *Tabēīn* and *Tab' Tabēīn* (successors), then to the *Aimmā Mujtahidīn*¹¹ and *Salf-e-salihīn*.¹² Generation after generation, Allah ﷻ has blessed this ummah with pious and prominent ulamah. We can see how much Allah ﷻ has constantly emphasized the importance of spreading and acquiring knowledge. Often times, Allah ﷻ mentions that the learned people are granted higher ranks and that's because they learn the dīn of Allah, the things that please and displease Allah ﷻ, and then they live their lives accordingly.

⁷ Sunan Abi Dawūd ; Kitāb as-Salāh ; Bāb kaifa yastahibbut tartīla fil qirā'ah ; Musaddad bin Musarhad

⁸ Sunan ibn Mājah ; Muqaddamah ; Bāb fadhāilil 'ulamāi wa hathi 'ala talabil 'ilmi ; Hishām bin Amār

⁹ Tawdhīhāt Mishkāt

¹⁰ Sunan Ibn Mājah ; Muqaddamah ; Bāb fadhāilil 'ulamāi wa hathi 'ala talabil 'ilmi ; Bakr bin Khalaf

¹¹ Scholars who are accepted as original authority in Islamic law. A mujtahid is someone who's qualified enough to do 'ijtihād', to infer expert legal rulings from fundamental proofs.

¹² The pious predecessors of the past three generation of Muslims

إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ هُمْ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

The Prophet ﷺ says, "Indeed, the ulamāh are the inheritors of the prophets, for the prophets do not leave behind dinār nor dirham for inheritance, but rather, they leave behind knowledge. So whoever takes hold of it, has acquired a large share (i.e. of inheritance)" ¹³

Our Ummah, Ummat e Muhammadiyyah, has always regarded teaching and learning as one of its fundamental responsibilities. In the early centuries of Islam, people would simply teach in their localities. Instead of them going out, people would come to their place and learn from them. Abdullah bin Mas'ūd *Radhiallāhu Anh* would have his own circles of teaching and learning, which were initially in Madīnah, and then he went to Kūfa and based himself there and would have his *ilmi* circles there afterwards. The students of Abdullah bin Mas'ūd had a lot of respect for him, so much that they wouldn't give preference to anyone over him. This was as a result of Allah ﷻ's acceptance and that he had been blessed him with great 'ilm.¹⁴ Abu Dardā *Radhiallāhu Anh* would also hold his *ilmi* circles in Dimashq. Atā ibn Abi Rabah was the mufti of Makkah and would have his circles of learning there. Abu Hanīfah *Rahimahullah* and Sufyān Thawri *Rahimahullah* both would have classes in Kūfa and Awza'ā *Rahimahullah*, would have his circles of learning in Shām, and many others.*

Institutions

With the passage of time, Muslims started establishing institutions for learning. Jāmi'atul Azhar was one of the early institutions established during the Fatimid dynasty in the year 970 in Cairo, Egypt. The Isma'ilīs hold Fatima *RadhiallāhuAnha* in a very high esteem and consider her to be the most noble in Allah's creation so they dedicated the institution after her name and called it *Jāmi'atul Azhar*. Then, when Salāhud Din al-Ayubi (d.1193) conquered Africa, the jāmi'ah came into the control of the Sunnīs. Other *Khulafāh* also established other institutions. Nizamiyyah was established in Baghdād by Nizām-ul-Mulūk (d.1092 CE) in the 5th century AH (1065 CE). This is where Imām Ghazālī *Rahimahullah* studied and became its headmaster when he was no more than 34 years of age.¹⁵

However, these were all the institutions which were established, funded, and supported by the state. When Muslims first conquered India at the time of the *Umawi Caliphate* with the leadership of Muhammad bin Qāsim Thaqafi (d.715), they conquered it from the northern side of what is today known as Pakistan and previously was known as Sindh. At first, Sultān

¹³ Tirmīdhi, Abu Dawūd and Ibn Mājah Sharīf

¹⁴ Tazkiratul Huffaz ; 'Allamah Zahabi

¹⁵ Saviours of Islamic Spirit Part 1, Imām Ghazālī, PG 113

*Refer to 'A Summary of the Biography of Imam 'Azam Abu Hanifah'

Mahmūd Ghaznavi (d.1030) from Afghanistan took over the west side of Hind in the 5th century. Then in the end, Ghori took over India as an Islamic State.¹⁶ As time passed, Muslims underwent difficulties as the Prophet ﷺ says "No time will come upon you except that which comes after it will be more evil until you meet your lord".¹⁷ Especially throughout these last 100 years, Western powers have spread their wings and colonized many parts of the world. The French went more towards North West Africa while the British colonized more of the Eastern part of the world especially the Indian subcontinent.

The Power of the British

Darul Ulūm Deoband was, from one aspect, established in order to preserve Islamic knowledge and culture from the teaching that the British had introduced. Therefore, it is vital to efficiently understand the history of India prior to the establishment of Darul Ulūm Deoband before understanding what compelled and motivated to the establishment of the madrasah. The British had first came to India in 1601 CE. During that time, there were roughly a thousand Islamic Institutes in Delhi alone. By 1740, Shah Waliyullah Dehlavi (d.1762 CE) realized the British seizing authority and aimed to propagate Islamic knowledge through writing and translating the Quran, for the first time, in Persian. After the demise of Shah Waliyullah, his son, Shah Abd al-Aziz Dehlavi (d.1823) succeeded his father and was the first person to pass on the *fatwa* on the validity of *ji-hād* against the British and their supporters. Fatah Ali Sultān Tipu was an outstanding personality who fought against the British. 'On 4th May, 1799 Tipu Sultān was martyred in the battle of *Srirangapatnam*.'¹⁸ The oppression of the British reached Ray Breli, where two pious servants Sayyid Ahmad Shah Shahīd (d.1831) and Shah Ismail Shahīd (d.1831), with their armies, stood up and fought against the British. Many warriors assembled and fought several decisive battles against the British. In 1856, the ulmah gathered in Delhi and decided that they had to stand up against the British once and for all and avoid them from taking over their country - which led to the battle of 1857.¹⁹

By 1857, The British were able to take complete control of the Indian subcontinent at the time of the Mughal Emperor Jahāngir. They dealt very severely and heavy handedly with Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindūs. A multitude of *ulamah* were massacred. Out of approximately 200,000 people martyred during the revolt, more than 51,200 were *ulamah*. Edward Timus

¹⁶ Anar ka Darakht Tale

¹⁷ Sahīh al-Bukhāri ; Kitāb al-Fitan ; Bāb la yati zamānun illal lazi ba'dahu sharum minhu ; Muhammad bin Yusuf

¹⁸ Biography of Tipu Sultān p. 343.

¹⁹ Ulema of Deoband PG 8-10

²⁰ 150 Years on: The first War of India's Independence; Recounting untold Story; By Maulana Burhanuddin Qasmi

mentioned that in Delhi alone, 500 Ulama were hanged to death.²⁰ Also, many *madāris* were destroyed. The British would send out missionaries to go and preach Christianity. So in place of the *madāris*, many bible societies and missionary hospitals were established. They would debate with not only the Muslims, but with Sikhs and Hindus also, about their religion and it turned out to be a very bitter time for them all.

The British wanted to create a nation who looked Indian, spoke Indian, but thought and acted Christian. Now the whole society and environment was drastically changed and unturned. The colleges and institutes were under the control of Christian missionaries and anybody who came through these missionary colleges, Christianity was indoctrinated in them. People were only employed well if they went to an institute or college established by these Christian missionaries. They had left no stone unturned to plunder and obliterate the Islamic arts and science, Muslim culture, and civilization. So as a result, it turned out to be a rough time as the people of India were cornered and pressurized into accepting Christianity.

In this battle of 1857, also known as the battle of Shāmli, the Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindūs thought it was their responsibility to stand up for themselves and their rights. The Muslims united under Hāji Imdad Ullah Muhājir Makki (d.1896) and they chose him as their leader (*ameer*). Maulana Qāsim Nanotvī (d.1880) was appointed as the commander (*hākim*), and Maulana Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi (d.1905) as the judge (*qāzi*). Maulana Ashraf Ali Thānvi (d. 1943) and many others united and started their mission to push back the British from Thanabhawan. They spread out conquering the areas until they reached Shāmli where they suffered defeat and they had to disperse. They had to go into hiding because the police had put a reward for their arrest and called their action an act of rebellion. The *ulamah* went into hiding and it was at that time when Hāji Imdad Ullah went into hiding and left for Makkatul Mukarramah where he spent the last 45 years of his life and that is why he is known as '*Muhaajir Makki*'.²¹

Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi and Maulana Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi both wanted to go with Hāji Imdād Ullah to Makkah, but Hāji sahib told them to remain in India since he had divine inspiration* (*kashf*) that Allah ﷻ will take special work from them. Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi went into hiding for 3 days then came out into the open. People urged him to hide since he was a wanted man but his reply to the people was, "I can't hide longer than how much my Nabi ﷺ hid for in the cave of Thor". He was referring to the time Prophet ﷺ and Hadhrat Abubakr Siddique hid in the cave of Thor waiting for the *Kuffār* to move far enough for them to continue their journey to Madīnah. Someone informed the authorities of Maulana Qāsim's whereabouts so when they came to his house looking for him as they wanted to arrest him, he

²¹ Hadhrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi aur unke khulafa' PG 46; By Dr. Hafiz Qari Fuyud al-Rahman

came out himself and greeted them. This confused them as they weren't expecting the wanted man himself to come out and greet them so they didn't think it was Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi himself, and they also weren't aware of his appearance. When they asked him where Maulana Qāsim is, he took a few steps back and said, "he was here just a few moments ago". From this statement of his, they assumed that he meant that Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi was in that area a few moments ago and they thought now he had left.²² Allah ﷻ had saved Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi through his power and wanted to take special work from him.

Maulana Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi also went into hiding but was later captured and imprisoned for 6 months. At that time Hāji Imdad Ullah was already in Makkah. One day he was with one of his friends when he suddenly stopped and said to his friend, "something very bad happened". His friend asked what had occurred and Hadhrat replied, "Today it has been decided that Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi will be hanged". After a few days Hāji Imdad Ullah Muhājir Makki was sitting amongst his friends, he smiled and said that the decision that Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi be hanged has been cancelled.²³ This was as a result of divine inspiration* (*kashf*) that Hāji Imdad Ullah would receive. After some time, it was announced that all the people who had taken part in the uprising were granted amnesty. After being freed from prison, Maulana Rashīd Ahmad returned to Gangoh and continued teaching there. Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi would spend most of his time travelling from one town to another town and he secretly went to hajj in 1860. He was employed in Meerut and he was born in Nanota, but he was married and based in Deoband.

Darul Ulūm Deoband

Darul Ulūm Deoband is located in the city of Deoband in India. Prior to the construction of the madrasah, Deoband only had a small masjid known as the *Chatte Wala Masjid*. The community would often get together in that masjid and discuss amongst themselves that they had to find a way to help the future generations from the teachings that the British had introduced. By this time, the British had eliminated almost all Islamic institutes.²⁴ For this very reason, after several meetings, in 1866, they finally came to the conclusion that they had to establish a madrasah. They were, however, unsure on how to do that because throughout the history of India, every institution that was established prior to that, was established and funded by the support of the government. Now they were in a situation where non-Muslims

²² Baani Darul Ulum Deoband

²³ Roshni ke Minar ; By: Zia Tasneem Bilgrami

²⁴ Ulema of Deoband

* Note that '*divine inspiration*' does not refer to '*Wahi*' as *Wahi* is only special to the Ambiyā

were ruling over them so it couldn't be expected that the government would sponsor and fund the madrasah. They decided that they should collect the money themselves.

Sayyid Muhammad Ābid (d. 1912) was the first individual who took out his scarf on which he placed four Rupees then passed it on to every other person and through this process, they were able to collect 300 Rupees. They finally had enough money to start the madrasah. Sayyid Muhammad Ābid wrote to Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi, who was at that time in Meerut, and asked him to return and start the work of the madrasah. Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi had a very humble personality and he didn't want to be the one to come to the forefront so instead he asked Mulla Mahmūd, who was one of his friends, if he was interested to teach Islamic knowledge in Deoband and if he can return to Deoband and start the work of the madrasah. Mulla Mahmūd happily accepted and started the madrasah. Maulana Zulfiqār Ali was the one who presented his son Mahmūd al-Hasan (d.1920) to attend the madrasah when he was 15 years old as the first student.

When Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi was a young boy, he saw a dream that he was standing on the ka'bah and streams were flowing from him to all parts of the world. When he enquired about this from his father, Maulana Mamlūk Ali, (d.1851), he told him that Allah ﷻ will take great work from you ²⁵. We then later witnessed that Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi's dream and his father's prophecy ²⁶ proved its reality.

It was on the 15th of Muharram, May 31st, 1866 CE in Deoband, on the forecourt of the Chatte Wala Masjid that a teacher and a student, both named Mahmūd, sat under a pomegranate tree and started seeking knowledge. That's the beautiful day when Darul Ulūm Deoband started. ²⁷ The *mashāikh* then established another madrasah in the month of Shawwāl in Saharanpūr by a friend of Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi, Maulana Mazhar Nanotvi (d.1885). He had also taken part in the struggle of 1857 and was a student of Sheikh Ahmad Ali Saharanpūri (d.1880) who was one of the teachers of Maulana Qāsim and the teacher (*mudarris*) of Mazahirul Ulūm. As time went by, very soon, with the mercy of Allah and the inspiration of Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi, a network of *madaris* were established throughout India.

Darul Ulūm Deoband was the first institute in the Islamic history that was funded by the people and not by the government and was able to keep up until today. Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi would advise his associates to not form any permanent source of income as the madrasah will continue to progress as long as there isn't any permanent source of income. Through this way, he wanted the management to keep their faith in Allah ﷻ and trust Allah ﷻ collectively.

²⁵ Baani Darul Ulum Deoband PG 9

²⁶ 'Prophecy' refers to 'peshangoī' in Urdu.

²⁷ Anar ka Darakht Tale PG 23

When people assist in something, they regard it as their own. He wanted the people to regard the *madaris* as their own by providing and giving Sadaqāe-Jariyah.

Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi then asked Maulana Yaqūb Nanotvi (d.1886) *Rahimahullah*, who would at the time receive 100 Rupees in his job, if he wanted to come and teach in Darul Ulūm Deoband at only 15 Rupees a month. Maulana Yaqūb Nanotvi happily agreed and came to Deoband, giving up his job and agreeing on 15% of what he would work before. Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi would often spend time in Meerut and return to Darul Ulūm Deoband to check on things. He would sometimes take some of the students with him and keep them under his *tarbiyah* so they are able to gain knowledge from Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi as well. When students started to graduate, they became teachers in other *madaris* and soon, a whole network was established.

Then in 1868, Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi decided to go for hajj a second time. When he got there, he asked Hāji Imdad Ullah to make dua for the prosperity of the madrasah. Hāji Imdad Ullah told him that you can't even imagine how many eyes have cried throughout the nights and how many individuals have made dua for this madrasah to be established in order to provide a means for the safety of the Muslims,²⁸ including that Haji Imdad Ullah himself had also wept for years in front of Baitullah to provide a means for the Muslims to keep the correct knowledge safe and pass it to the coming generations.

Fifty years Prior to Darul Uloom Deoband being established, Sayyid Ahmad shahīd the disciple of Shah Abd al-Aziz Dehlavi, and Sayyid Ismāil shahīd happened to pass through Deoband. Upon arriving at the place where the madrasah was to be built years later, Sayyid Ahmad sahīb looked at that land and said, "*Allahu Akbar!* I smell the fragrance of knowledge from here".²⁹ How impressive is this? This madrasah that was established not only enlighten India, but enlightened the whole world.

The Building

As the number of students increased, the *shuyūkh* felt as though they had to build a proper building for the madrasah - since the students were still learning in the small musjid. That's when they decided to construct a building in 1871³⁰. The day the construction had to be done, Maulana Rafiud-dīn sahib saw a dream. In his dream, he saw Prophet ﷺ outlining the

²⁸ Anar ka Darakht Tale

²⁹ Authenticity not verified

³⁰ Anar ka Darakht PG 23

boundary of where he wanted the madrasah foundations to be built. In the morning when he woke up, he saw the same outline that he had seen in his dream, in real life.³¹

The first one to place the first stone of the building was Maulana Ahmad Ali Sahapanpūri, then Maulana Qāsim Nanotvi himself, then Maulana Molvī Muhammad Mazhar.³² Just as how Darul Ulūm Deoband was established without government support, they made another building for Dora-e-Hadith³³ through the funds of the public. It's been said that only in the lower level of the madrasah alone, there were 109 rooms. The higher levels were especially constructed for learning and teaching hadith.

From those levels, the highest one where there is a round dome (*gunbad*), that level of the building is for Dora e Tafseer,³⁴ which was established in 1939. Dar al-Mashwara was established in 1899.

Dar al-Hadith was established in 1912 and the whole bottom part of the was finally complete in 1980. So overall, the whole madrasah was divided into various sections for students to learn.

Final struggles for Independence

With Allah Almighty's grace, the madrasah was running successfully. However, India was still under the British rule. The *ulamah* realized that now it was time for them to take an active part in the political field. They wanted to make changes and help in raising the Muslims and fighting the British rule for independence. So, they ran a campaign through India and collected thousands of Rupees in helping for independence.

In 1920, Sheikh-ul-Hind *Rahimahullah* passed away so Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani carried in the footsteps of his teacher and took on a very lead role in the struggle for independence. His proposal was that both the Hindus and the Muslims, each take take 45% of the land and leave the 10% for the other minority. He felt as though the Muslims should only obtain half of the land and try not to take over the other half because he knew that they didn't have enough resources and infrastructure for a proper economy. So, if the Muslims

³¹ Tareekh e Deoband PG 162

³² Anar ka Darakht Tale PG 23

³³ *Dora e Hadith*: A period of time dedicated for the purpose of thoroughly studying the Hadith, its translation and interpretations.

³⁴ *Dora e Tafseer*: A period of time dedicated for the purpose of thoroughly studying the Quran, its translation and interpretations.

were to leave India altogether, it would have left the rest of the Muslims vulnerable, leaving them in a real minority.

Finally in 1947, they were able to gain independence and that also led to the formation of Pakistan. When Pakistan was formed, Muhammad Ali Jinnah founder of Pakistan gave Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani³⁵ the honour of raising the flag for Pakistan of its independence.

Deoband's Name

Initially, Darul Uloom Deoband was called '*Madrasah Arbi-Islaami*' but later acquired its name 'Darul Ulum Deoband'. In the Persian language, '*deo*' means '*jinn*' and '*band*' means an 'enclosure'. They say at the time of Hadhrat Sulaiman *Alayhissalaam*, he imprisoned some jinn in that same area hence it's called Deo-band 'the enclosure of *jinnat*'. Others say that in the Indian language the word '*devi*' means an idol so due to an extensive worship of idols there, it acquired its name initially 'Devi-band' then Deoband and this is the actual meaning of its name. Some people make this a point of criticism and say that Deoband started from idol-worshipping, but they don't realize that in Baitullah itself there was idol worshipping. We are aware that during the time of ignorance there were 360 idols placed in and around the Ka'bah. Just because there were idols prior to the establishment of the madrasah, it doesn't necessarily mean the place cannot contain guidance later on. From darkness, Allah can raise light. And Allah ﷻ is most capable.

Darul-Ulūm Deoband was the center of attention for the whole world and students would come from many different parts of the world. Darul-Ulūm Deoband was the benchmark of all *madāris*. It was the mother of all *madāris*. There would be students coming from Afghanistan, Iran, China, Thailand and many other parts of the world. When Pakistan gained its independence in 1947, people like Maulana Yūsof Binnori, Maulana Muhammad Shafi' Uthmani established a madrasah in Karachi, Pakistan. Salimullah Khan sahib *Rahimahullah* established Jamia Farūqia also in Karachi, Pakistan. Only in Pakistan, more than 16,000 madaris were established and more than 2 million students were learning.

In England, in the 1960s, it was Maulana Yūsof Motala *Hafizahullah* who first established a madrasah in Bury. This was the first madrasah in Bury. Then from there Hadhrat Salīm Dho-

³⁵ Maulana Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmani had 2 brothers. One was Habibur-Rahman 'Uthmani who was the principal of Darul Ulūm Deoband, and the other was Azizur-Rahman who was the grand *mufti* of Darul Ulūm Deoband.

rat *Hafizahullah* established a madrasah in Leicester and so many other *madāris* were established. In America, Doctor Isma'īl Memon established a madrasah in New York. Then *madāris* were established in Canada, Africa, and *madāris* were established in Zambia which are run by Sheikh Abd al-Raheem *Hafizahullah*. At this point, the sons of Deoband had established *madaris* around the world. In 1998, a madrasah was established in Bangladesh. Since 1880, more than 130 Ulama of Deoband have been teaching in Makkatul Mukarramah. In 1921, the elder brother of Husain Ahmad Madani established a madrasah in Makkah Mukarramah. The madrasah was called *Madrasah Shariyyah* and it had more than 600 students learning in it.

Dars-e-Nizāmi

Prior to Darse Nizāmi, the system of Muslim education was divided into four parts. In the first period – 7th Century A.H. to 9th Century A.H. – Islamic education included the following subjects; *Nahw* (Arabic grammar), *Sarf* (etymology), *Adab wa Balaghāh* (Rhetoric and literature), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Usūl-e-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence), *Mantiq* (logic), *Kalām* (cosmology), *Tasawwuf* (Sufism), *Tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis) and *Ahadīth* (traditions of Prophet Muhammad).³⁶ In that period, the subject of *fiqh* was considered to be the most significant subject. In the second period, the curriculum was further extended by Sayyid Mir Shah's students by producing commentaries of *Sharh Matali* and *Sharh Mawaqif*. Sa'd al-Din Taftazani's students embraced *Muttawil*, *Talwikh*, *Mukhtasar al-Ma'ani* and *Sharh A'qaidi al-Nasafiyyah*. Today still, the latter two have remained apart of the Dars-e-Nizāmi in the UK. *Sharh e Jāmi* and *Sharh-e-Wiqayah* were also included in the syllabus and are studied in the *madaris* of Britain.³⁷

In the third period, the logical and philosophical sciences (*Ma'qulāt*) were introduced by Emperor Akbar's vizier Mir Fath-Allah Shirāzi (d.1585). Towards the end of the third period, Shah Waliyullah introduced the teachings of the *Sihah Sittah* into the curriculum of Indian Islamic Education. Finally it was in the fourth period when Dars e Nizami was introduced by Mulla Nizām al-Deen (d.1748). This syllabus encompassed 'fifteen books on logic, and several books

on Greek philosophy, mathematics, history, medicine, and engineering, and also texts on Persian literature and Arabic grammar, rhetoric and literature'.³⁸

In certain circles of Islamic Studies, like the ones of some modernists pragmatists like Sir Syed Ahmad Khān (d.1898), weak ahadith were disrespected. They were considered to have no or very low value. It was in Deoband for the first time after a long time, that once again hadith was taught with the respect it deserved.

The curriculum of Darul Ulūm Deoband also includes many subjects of secular knowledge such as Math, Science, English etc. All of these years of learning would equal to about 10-12 years to complete. If after completing the alimiyyah course, a student decides to stay for another year and learn Tafsir Ibn al-Kathīr and Tafsir al-Baydhāwi, then he'll be awarded the diploma of a '*Fhādhil*'. If he stays for an extra two years furthering his education, he'll be awarded the diploma of a '*Kaamil*'³⁹

Ulamā-e-Deoband

The ulamah of Deoband were such ulamah that transformed millions of lives. Sheikh-ul-Hind Mahmūdul Hasan *Rahimahullah* was born in the year 1851 C.E. and was the first student of Darul Ulūm Deoband and is known to be the ustaadh of the *akabirīn* of Ulama-e-Deoband. The chain of ulamah such as Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, Mufti Kifāyatullah , Maulana Ashrah Ali Thānvi, reaches Sheikhul Hind *Rahimahullah*.

There was a time when Sheikh ul Hind Mahmūd al-Hasan was put in the prison of Malta by the British. In prison, he continued writing a simple translation of the Qurān which he had started. He then began writing the footnotes but unfortunately was unable to complete it and passed away in the year 1921 C.E.⁴⁰ The body was lifted from the residence of Hakīm Ajmal Khan who was a well-known hakīm and a disciple of Sheikh-ul-Hind Mahmūd al-Hasan *Rahimahullah*. It was brought from Delhi to Deoband. In Deoband, when the cloth was removed from his waist for washing, it appeared as there was no flesh on it. The people related this matter to Sheikh Ahmad Madani, Sheikh wept and said that Sheikh-ul-Hind had prevented him from relating this incident at that time. In the jail of Malta, the British would take

³⁶ Mahnamah e Dar al 'Ulūm Deoband , shumarah (Vol.) 5, No. 94, May 2010 ; Maulana 'Abd al-Hayy Lukhnawi. In his article 'Hindustan ka qadīm nisab-e- dars aur us ke taghayyurat

³⁷ The Dars e Nizami and the Transnational transitional Madaris in Britain; Hamid Mahmood

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ Anar ka Darakht Tale ; PG 36

^{40/42} Ulema of Deoband; PG 17; By Madrassa Arbia Islamia Azaadville, South Africa

Sheikh-ul-Hind to a separate lonely room and apply a red-hot rod to his waist and say, "*Mahmūdul Hasan! Deliver a fatwa in favour of the British*" but despite all the torture, Sheikh would reject from giving a *fatwa* in their favour and would say that even if his skin melts away, he will never give a *fatwa*.⁴¹ Sheikh ul Hind's 'tafsir' was thereafter completed by his student, Mufti Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmāni in 1932 CE.⁴²

Someone once said to Sheikh ul Hind Mahmūd al-Hasan, "Show me some of your works as I haven't come across much". Sheikh ul Hind replies saying, "What works of mine do you want to see? I have many works! If you want to see my works on Tafseer, look at my student Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmāni! If you want to see my works on the knowledge of hadith, look at my student Anwar Shah Kashmīri! If you want to see my works on Fiqh, look at my student Aziz al-Rahman! If you want to see my works on Politics, look at my student Ubaydullah Sindhi! If you want to see my works on Tasawwuf, look at my student Ashraf Ali Thānvī! If you want to see my works on Dawah and Tableegh, look at my student Ilyās Kandhelvi!" This is what a successful teacher Sheikh ul Hind was.

Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmīri *Rahimahullah* came to study in Darul Uloom Deoband since 1890-1891 CE at the age of 18-19 and completed in 1895 CE. After completing his studies in Darul Ulūm Deoband, he was appointed as the *mudarris* of Darul Uloom and spend a long time teaching Sunan Abi Dawūd and Sahih Muslim Sharif in Darul Uloom Deoband.⁴³ They would say about Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmīri, that he was Imam Bukhāri and Ibn hajar, both in one. He was called a walking library. This was due to the blessed memory he had that when he would read a book, he was able to remember what he read several years after.

Mufti Taqī 'Uthmāni *Hafzahullah* mentions that his father, Mufti Shafi' 'Uthmāni *Rahimahullah* had related an incident to him that while he was studying, he once went to 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī and asked him about a *masala*. 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī told him to go to such and such book, to such and such page, on the right side, he'll find the details about that *masala* (issue). Mufti Shafi' 'Uthmāni says that he thought that 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī has probably read the kitaab recently but when he asked him regarding when he had read the kitaab, 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī replied that he had read it 25 years ago. SubhānAllah, Allah had blessed his memory. Amongst his students were Maulana Idrīs Kandhelvi (d.1974) Maulana Yūsuf Binnōri, Ashraf Ali Thānvī *Rahimahumullahu Taala Ajma'een*.

Maulana Khalīl Ahmad Saharanpūri *Rahimahullah*, born in the year 1852 CE, is another prominent scholar of Darul Ulūm who has written a commentary on Abu Dawūd called *Bazlul-Majhūd*. When he heard of Darul Ulūm Deoband in 1867 and found out that his uncle Maulana Yaqūb Nanotvī was also there as the head teacher, he went to study in Darul Ulūm

⁴¹ <https://zakariyya.wordpress.com/2007/04/25/shaykh-al-hind-a-prisoner-of-malta/>

⁴³ Bees Ulama e Haq

Deoband. After studying there for six months, he decided to go learn in Mazāhir-ul-Ulūm in Saharanpūr instead. He finished his Dars e Nizāmi at the age of 19 and continued his *Uloom e Adabiyya* after that. After teaching for some time in both Deoband and Saharanpūr, Hadhrat intended hijrah and went to Madīnah Munawwarah and stayed there for a while until he passed away on a Wednesday after Asr prayer in 1928 CE.⁴⁴

Amongst his students was Maulana Muhammad Zakariyyah Kāndhelvi *Rahimahullah* who has written a commentary on Muwatta Imām Mālik called *Awjazul-Masālik* in many volumes. When the Māliki ulamah become aware of this commentary, they were astonished on how a Non-Māliki can have such in-depth knowledge about Maaliki fiqh.

Maulana Muhammad Zakariyyah Kāndhelvi has also authored *Fadhaail-e-A'maal*. Many criticize this kitaab not realizing that in numerous Muslim homes, it's a highly frequently read book after the Qurān. They claim that Maulana Zakariyyah Kāndhelvi has used several *dhaeef ahadith* (weak narrations) but what they don't realise is that the book of *Fadhaail-e-A'maal* is only a book to encourage good deeds, and not to prove any juristic ruling. Therefore, the book should not be frowned upon since using weak narrations to motivate good actions has been permitted.

Husain Ahmad Madani *Rahimahullah* was born in 1879 in Bangarmau District Unnao, India. He is from amongst the students of Hadhrat Sheikh ul Hind and was someone who taught hadith for almost 18 years in Madīnatul Munawwarah⁴⁵ and then came to Darul Ulūm Deoband and continued teaching hadith there for another 32 years.

This is a very short summary about just few of the major scholars of Deoband. The *ulamah* of Deoband were not just *ulamah*, rather they were also *fuqahā*, *mufasssirūn* and revolutionary personalities.

Maulana Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmāni (d.1949) – Green Dome

In the 1920s, when the Saudi revolution took place, the Arabs wanted to demolish all the domes that were built on the graves including the green dome of Prophet ﷺ's grave. Prophet ﷺ had forbidden from building on top of graves but the Turks had built domes on top of graves and now that the Arabs had gained control, they wanted to demolish all the domes, including the green dome of Rasulullah ﷺ, to get rid of the *bid'aat* (innovations).

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ Desai Mufti Ibrahim, Shaykh Hussain Ahmed Madani.(p.01).Info.@ almahmood.org.

They demolished all the domes but when it came to the dome of Rasulallah ﷺ, they felt that it's such a topic that should be decided as a whole ummah. Therefore, the ulamah from around the world held a meeting, many ulamah came to discuss about this topic.

From the ulamah of Deoband, it was Maulana Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmāni who was the one entrusted with presenting the opinion of The Ulamah of India. When he spoke, he spoke for 2 hours. He stated that Rasulallah ﷺ has in fact forbidden from building on top of graves but when the dome of Rasulallah ﷺ was built, it was built on an already pre-existing building. So the dome is not built on top of the grave rather it's built on top of an already existing building therefore, the term *bidah* doesn't apply in this case. When they heard this answer of Maulāna Shabbir 'Uthmāni, it was so satisfying that they had no objection and accepted it as an evidence for keeping the green dome. This was due to the great knowledge that Maulana Shabbir Ahmad 'Uthmāni and the scholars of India as a whole. Through Allah's grace, he was such a grand personality that with his answer, the green dome of Rasulallah ﷺ was saved from being demolished.⁴⁶

This was the *qubooliyyat*, the acceptance, of Ualma-e-Deoband. Allah ﷻ had blessed Ulama-e-Deoband. They had pioneered a general revival for the whole ummah through the form of *T'līm*, *Tablīgh*, and *Tazkiya*. Maulana Ilyas Kāndhelvi (d. 1944 CE), the uncle of Maulana Zakariyya Kāndhelvi, who studied in Mazāhirul Ulūm, was blessed to see Maulana Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi and study under one of his disciples, Maulana Khalīl Ahmad Saharanpūri. He was the one who started this revolution of *Tablighi Jama'āt* that spread throughout the world in many masaajid. *Tablīgh* has encompassed the whole ummah. Even now still, brothers and sisters are in the work of da'wah inspiring and encouraging the general people to come and learn deen.

The ulamāh of Deoband did *Tablīgh*, *Siyāsi* and *Jihādi* khidmaat. They were the ulamāh of haq, of *Ahlu Sunnah*, Allah chose them to revive his deen throughout the world. May Allah ﷻ enable us to make the most of these blessed people and may Allah ﷻ grant us their love because as Rasulallah ﷺ says, "A person is with whom he loves".⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Authenticity not varified

⁴⁷ Mishkat al-Masabih; Bab al-Hub fillah wa al-Bughz fillah; PG 426; Ibn Mas'ūd

