

**Obituary of Marhoom Qari Abdul Hamid Dhudhat (Rahmatullahi Alaihi) of Panoli-India**

*Former Imam of Kerk st Masjid Jhb and Principal of Darul Uloom Zakariyya-Lenasia*

Qari Abdul Hamid Dhudhat (R.A.) was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1931/9<sup>th</sup> Jamad al-Thani 1350 in Panoli near Ankleshwar in the district of Bharuch – Gujarat, India. He qualified as an Aalim at Jamiah Ashrafiya – Rander in the year 1954/55 where he studied under the great saint and spiritual mentor Sheikh Raza Ajmeri (R.A.) whom he later took bay'at to. He also served as the Imam of Quwatul Islam Masjid in Rander. He was well renowned for his beautiful recitation of the Quran-e-Kareem. He taught Qirât for 8 years from the year 1960 to 1968 at Jamia Ashrafia-Rander after qualifying there. Some of the luminaries who studied under him were: Mufti Ahmed Khanpuri (D.B), Moulana Ahmed Laat Sahib, Sheikh Yaqoob Randeri and Moulana Muhammad Dhudhat Sahib.

Qari Sahib arrived in South Africa in 1968. He took up the post of Imam at the Kerk Street Masjid in central Johannesburg. This was a period when there were very few Huffadh and in the month of Ramadhaan Huffadh had to be brought in from other areas to lead the taraweeh Salaah. Qari Sahib established a Hifz class in Kerk Street Masjid with many students memorising the Qur'an under his tutelage. His first student completed Hifz in 1970.

Qari Sahib rendered sterling service and work with the youth. He would befriend them and thus win many over. He would with great wisdom bring them to the Masjid at the time of Salaah. During his initial years, Qari Sahib lived alone at the Kerk Street Masjid whilst his family remained behind in India. He would thus sit with the youth from the time they had returned from work, and continue late into the night advising and nurturing them.

It is perhaps in the effort of Dawah and Tabligh that Qari Sahib is remembered for most. He furthered and served the cause of Dawah and Tabligh immensely in the 70's. During this period, only a handful of the elderly frequented the Masjids. Knowledge and understanding of Deen was limited to a few, and secular culture and foreign ideologies were creeping into the society rapidly. It was during this time that Qari Sahib began house visits, going from door to door, day and night, encouraging the young and old, men and women to draw closer to Allah Ta'ala and His Deen. He would converse with all and sundry whom he came in contact with and encourage them to come to the Masjid for Salaah, to listen to the lectures and join them for the ghusht.

Although he knew no English at the time, his warmth allowed for the language of hearts to prevail. He emphasised the importance of establishing the following aamaal (actions) of guidance in the Masjids and homes of the people: Dawah (Islamic propagation), Taalim (learning and teaching), Ibadat (worship) and Khidmat (service to fellow human beings). He would encourage the men and youth to join him in ghusht and strive in the path of Allah. He used to advice “if people spend their health and wealth for the Deen of Allah, Allah would safeguard them from all evils and create an environment conducive towards Deen.”

The efforts of Qari Sahib soon bore fruit, as Kerk Street Masjid became a beacon of light and hope for many other towns in South Africa. It was the only Masjid at that time that hosted jamaats from other places. Every Wednesday brothers would meet for mashwarah (consultation) as to how and where further effort should be done. Soon it became the markaz (centre) for Deeni activities. The weekly shabkuzari (weekly religious gathering) was first established here.

Qari Sahib was also very instrumental in establishing Musallahs (places of prayer) in various towns and cities around South Africa, introducing the work of Dawah and Tabligh to them. He would send his students to lead the Fajr Salaah in Masjids where no Fajr Salaah took place. During the month of Ramadhaan, he would send his students to lead the taraweeh prayers in and around South Africa. Sometimes students would khatam (complete) the Qur'an in fifteen days so as to proceed and accommodate other areas where no huffadh were available.

Qari Sahib was according to Moulana Shabbier Sahib “one of the founding members of Darul Uloom Zakariyya” and served as its first principal from 1983 to 1986. Qari Sahib (R.A) moved in initially with nine of his students from Kertstreet and conducted his classes there. Qari Sahib (R.A) had initially only visualised catering for a maximum of 120 students. However, 28 years later, the Madrasah currently has a role of 750 students from approximately 56 countries.

Qari Sahib (rahimahullah) returned to India in 1986, on the instruction of his sheikh. He founded Jamiyah Hamidiyah, a Girls Madrasah in his village, which currently has a roll of 950 girls. Students orphaned as a consequence of communal riots in India over the past two decades and were feared to end up in Hindu homes, are catered for here. He was also in the final process of completing the construction of a Boys Madrasah that would cater for a 1000 boys. There are over 280 makaatib (primary madrasahs) that Qari Sahib (rahimahullah) ran in various villages. He has established many Masjids and Madrasahs in Bangladesh as well. He had many water wells dug there.

As he aged, Qari Sahib became ill. In late August 2011, Qari Sahib condition deteriorated and he was hospitalised. He was taken back to the Madrasah; his residence, where he passed away at the age of 81, on the night of Eid al Adhā, in the early hours of Monday morning at 3:00am, the 07th November 2011 corresponding to the 10 Dhul Hijjah 1432 AH. His janaazah Salaah was performed by Qari Rasheed Ajmeri (D.B), the son of his esteemed Sheikh.

Amongst his outstanding qualities was his love for The Quran. He kept the Quran as well as the aamaal of the Masjids alive. He would spend the entire night in the recitation of Quran. Concern for the Ummah was his hallmark. On joyous moments too, he would be seen crying for the Ummah. Dedication and punctuality was another great trait he possessed. During his teaching career, he would teach from early morning to late evening. All the days of the week were the same to him. Sundays and days of Eid too were spent in the service of Deen. He had great respect and regard for his teachers. He would consult with his teacher Sheikh Raza Ajmeri (R.A) on even the minutest of matters. Even after qualifying as an Aalim, he would sit with utmost respect before him (with his gaze lowered). He led a simple life right up to the end. He was never concerned with his personal comfort and prosperity. He would spend all that came to him on the poor and needy. Notwithstanding his simplicity, he had an excellent taste and choice. He would always be attired in the best and finest of clothing.

The lessons he taught those, who were privileged to meet him were: taqwa (piety), hikmah (wisdom), istiqmah (steadfastness), ikhlaas (sincerity), courage, love and compassion. Those associated with him in the early days aptly regard him as a revivalist of the Deen. Prior to his coming, many a person was submerged in ignorance and he was instrumental in reversing that tide. He served the Deen to the end.

He has left behind a great legacy, and we cry and pray in gratitude to Allah for having sent this ray of light to our beloved country. May Allah Ta'ala fill his qabr with noor and grant him the highest stages of Jannah. May Allah Ta'ala grant Qari Sahib's family, friends and the Muslim community locally and abroad patience and perseverance. Aameen. From Allah we came and to Him is the return.