

# CEYLON TODAY ....

## Enlightening the younger generation

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**By M. Mohammed**

In the wake of certain parts of Sri Lanka falling prey to Islamic extremism, a concerted effort is being made by sections of the Muslim Ummah, comprising senior erudite Muslims who have watched the changing scenario with trepidation. These senior Muslims have got together and are pursuing a means of enlightening the younger generation, especially in the North and East, which has fallen victim to the machinations of Saudi-led Thauheed and Wahabbi Groups.

By 2008, the traditional practice of Sunnath Wal Jamaa Athi had virtually lost its pole position in Sri Lanka and the younger brigade were calling the shots with power of the Petro Dollar, which funded their activities. Sunnath Jamaa followers and preachers were in fear of the new order and some were lured away from continuing in the tradition of Sunnath Jamaa Ath and the Sunnath Jamaa places of worship were deserted due to a lack of Sunnath Jamaa Moulavis being available. The mosques, Zavia's Thackiyas and Madrasas were infiltrated by the new breed of Muslims who with their strength in numbers took over the administration of the Mosques, Zavia's, Thackiyas and Madrasas and used these premises for spreading other new forms of Islamic practices. Whenever I met my friends they kept talking of the places of worship the Sunnath Jamaath lost to the Non Sunnath Jamaath followers.

The traditional Sunnath Jamaa followers, in the face of this onslaught, got into a fear psychosis and were practically paralyzed for several years to come.

At one of our evening meetings I asked my friends, what was the purpose of our discussing the loss of our places of worship if we are not going to take action to redress the situation and invited them and their friends to a meeting to discuss the ongoing situation and what we could do to change the trend.

We had three such meetings with a cross section of the community attending and decided to call a general meeting including the public at the Colombo Public Library in July 2010.

It was a fairly well attended meeting with about 60 delegates. The Chief Guests were His Holiness Shoaib Alim of the Aroosiyathul Quadiriya Thareeqa, His Holiness Reffai Thangal of the Reffai Thareeqa and Khaleefathul Khulafa of the Shazuliya Al Fassia Thareeqa Abdul Hameed Bahaji.

The name of the organization Ihthihaad Ahlis Sunnathi Wal Jamaa Athi was recommended by Khaleefathul Khulafa Abdul Hameed and accepted by the committee.

The general meeting was well attended with about 60 delegates attending. President Thalaath Ismail, Secretary General Dr. Fahmy Ismail and Treasurer Samsadeen Abdul Cader with the Board members were elected to serve for a period of two years.

It has been a rough ride with public being apprehensive of the ability of this new organization. Some of the Board members too were wavering with their support at times and it was left to the President, Secretary General and treasurer to take the Association forward in the formative years.

Dr. Fahmy's long experience in working in the Eastern Province enabled us to build good relationships with local Madrasas, and other religious organizations in the area.

Likewise, we were able to convince office bearers at the Jiffry Thakiya in Dangedera, Galle where the influence of the Non Sunnath Jamaa Ath organizations had infiltrated into the local population. The Jiffry Thakiya was finding it difficult to attract children to attend classes and requested our support to enable them to commence these classes for children and the need for funding to employ Moulavis to teach the children, which we were able to provide.

Our coffers were lean, but we were able to help them to start the Hifflul Quran Classes with about 20 children and regular classes are now conducted there. A few months later we commenced monthly Bayan classes for ladies in the Galle District which regrettably is no longer in operation.

A few years later, we did our first Da'wa Trip to the Eastern Province where we started Hiflul Quran classes for children in some areas of the Batticaloa District.

This was followed by a Da'wa Trip to the Southern Province extending from Kalutara to Beruwala, Ginthota, Weligama, Matara, Dickwella, Nagalagama, Hambantota and other neighbouring areas.

We had a Moulid and Dikr at a Thakiya in Hambantota, which was built in 1820 by the Alims of the Alaviathush Qadiriya Thareeqa.

This was the first Moulid held in the premises after over 40 years. We expected a crowd of about 75 people, but the whole town turned up with some 300 to 400 people present. The people were so overwhelmed and they were relating stories of how their forefathers held these Moulids and Dikr Majlis.

We set up several meetings of the local people and appointed a Committee to commence Hiflul Quran classes for children and monthly Bayans in the Hambantota District. Regrettably these are not functioning as well as it should.

We are funding a lot of activity including the support of the ladies Madras at Minnathul Fassia in Matara, the Mursiya Madrasa in Weligama, revived activity in the Dickella Zavia after over 35 years, and Aliya Arabic College, Navinna Galle.

We conduct Spoken English Classes for Senior Students at the following Institutions.

1. The Academy of Islamic Higher Studies, Beruwela
2. Al Jama'athul Ghauzia Dehiwala, and
3. Madrasa at Ummu Zaviya, Colombo.

Regular Educational Seminars for Final Year Moulavi Students and Moulavis are held in various districts of Sri Lanka.

We have held Five Seminars for Final Year Moulavi Students and Moulavis in the following districts:

1. 140 Final Year Students and Moulavis from 14 Madrasa in the Galle District;
2. 80 Final year Moulavi Students and Moulavis from 10 Madrasa in Kandy/Peradeniya and Gampola Districts;
3. 75 University Students attending universities in Anuradhapura District;
4. 130 Final Year Moulavi Students and Moulavis from 12 Madrasa in the Batticaloa District;
5. 100 Moulavis at the Hisbullah Hall, Katankudi at request of the Organization of Ulama for Guidance and Counselling, Kattankudy.

These senior erudite Muslim members sincerely thank the Sheikhs, Imams, Thangals, Khaleefathul Khulafas, Khaleefas, Alims, Ulama, Moulavis, Moulanas and other religious dignitaries who came on Da'wa with us, attended our events, Our seminars and helped spread the Sunnath Jamaa concept to the people. Reference our telecom this morning, I am now forwarding to you a copy of our current newsletter article with the heading A Success Story (Seminar for Moulavis in Katankudi). The article is a description of our visit to Katankudi when we made a visit at the request of the Organization of Ulama for Guidance and counselling, Katankudi.

They issue a regular Newsletter and first article describes the visit to Katankudi where the seminar was held. This article including the visit to neighbouring Eravur, Batticaloa and Kalmunai where Da'wa programmes were held are described therein. The news letter covers pictures of other events held during the year by Ihthihadh Ahlissunnathi Wal Jama'athi as well.

The article 'Learning to overcome worry' is for the reading pleasure of members. In addition, it also lists names of Madarasas, Arabic Colleges which the Ihthihadh Ahlissunnathi Wal Jama'athi

supports throughout the years to conduct Arabic / English and Quran classes and Da'wa activities.