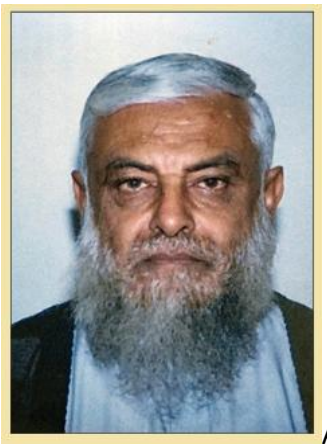
AHMED SAEED MOOLLA: THE TEACHER I REMEMBER, THE FRIENDSHIP I CHERISH

By Yunus Ahmed Bhamjee

The passing of Ahmed Saeed Moolla is a loss to his family, his students and the wider community. Much has rightly been written about his excellence as an educator, his mastery of Geography and the generations of teachers he influenced. I wish to remember him from a different perspective: through childhood memories, friendship and conversations that revealed the remarkable mind behind the respected teacher.


A S MOOLLA

I am grateful to teacher Ismail Variava for our conversation earlier today, which prompted me to share these personal reflections.

Our conversation touched on the late Ahmed Saeed's contributions to various fields, including his Hajj classes and his involvement in the team that helped compile the perpetual salaah times that many people continue to use today.

Ahmed Saeed was an exceptional educator who shaped generations of teachers.

My contribution, however, is different. It is a personal recollection of a friend who had the privilege of knowing him beyond the classroom.

The Moolla and Dockrat families were well known in "Fietas", also known as Vrededorp, where my childhood unfolded. I have fond memories of Ayoob Moolla, Ahmed Saeed's brother, with whom I played soccer and spent many evenings in the company of friends. Those were simpler times, filled with youthful adventures, laughter and conversations that often continued late into the night.

It was during these gatherings that Ahmed Saeed Moolla, the teacher, would sometimes join us. We spoke about life, society, religion and the world around us. Over time, our conversations developed into a close friendship, particularly when I began selling Islamic literature, a journey that continued for some forty years.

I also remember Ahmed Saeed's father, a dignified, well-dressed gentleman whose appearance and manner reflected the qualities of a true gentleman. These family connections were part of the foundation of memories that I continue to cherish.

I am not an academic, but I have always believed that the appreciation of knowledge is not restricted to those who possess academic qualifications. One can recognise an exceptional intellect through a person's curiosity, the questions he asks and the connections he makes. In Ahmed Saeed Moolla, I encountered a man whose thinking extended far beyond the boundaries of his profession.

Two subjects remain firmly etched in my memory.

Our discussions about the Mi'raj, the miraculous night journey and ascension of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), often took us into the fascinating realms of space, time, sound, light, speed and the vastness of the universe. We explored how these scientific concepts might help us reflect more deeply on this extraordinary event. These were conversations of faith, curiosity and discovery, in which we sought to understand more without diminishing the spiritual significance of the miraculous journey.

We also discussed the Kaaba, the Black Stone, Zamzam and Bayt al-Ma'mur, reflecting on their significance in Islam and their place in our understanding of creation. We could spend hours exploring these subjects, sharing ideas and learning from one another.

What struck me was not simply the breadth of his knowledge, but his willingness to engage, explain and explore. He demonstrated that a conversation need not take place in a lecture hall to become a lesson, and that learning does not end when one leaves the classroom.

His guided tours and extensive knowledge of the history of Makkah and Madinah, the two holy cities of Islam, were equally memorable. His passion for sharing their history and significance was unmistakable. His desire to preserve photographs, teaching materials and historical resources reflected a deeper purpose: to ensure that knowledge would continue to benefit others long after him.

He understood that knowledge gains its greatest value when it is shared.

I often wonder what opportunities his remarkable curiosity might have opened for him in today's world, with its advanced scientific instruments and expanding exploration of space. His interests in Geography, the universe, history and the human experience reflected a mind eager to explore the unknown. We cannot rewrite history or know what might have been, but we can recognise the intellectual gifts he brought to the world in which he lived.

His life also reminds us that talent and intellectual ability deserve recognition, regardless of the circumstances or era in which a person lives. His legacy should not be measured only by his professional titles, but by the knowledge he imparted, the minds he influenced and the curiosity he inspired.

There is a difference between knowing someone's reputation and knowing something of their character. The former may be established through achievements and public recognition; the latter often emerges in quiet conversations, shared experiences and the friendships formed over many years.

That is how I will remember Ahmed Saeed Moolla: the respected teacher, the intellectually curious conversationalist, the gentleman and the friend whose company enriched my life.

We sometimes measure a person's legacy by the books they write, the positions they hold or the awards they receive. Yet some of the most enduring legacies are less visible. They live in the memories of friends; the lessons passed from one generation to another and the questions that continue to inspire us long after the person who first raised them is gone.

Ahmed Saeed Moolla was a gift to his family, his students and his community. I consider myself fortunate to have known him beyond his professional standing and to have shared conversations that remain precious to me.

A teacher leaves lessons in the classroom; a remarkable human being leaves lessons in the lives of those fortunate enough to have known him.

May Almighty Allah grant Ahmed Saeed Moolla His forgiveness and infinite mercy, elevate his station in Jannatul Firdaus, and grant his family, friends, former students and colleagues patience and strength during this time of loss.

His voice may have fallen silent, but the memories remain, the knowledge lives on, and the spirit of discovery he embodied continues to inspire.

Some people leave behind a name. Others leave behind a legacy. The truly remarkable leave both, together with memories that time cannot erase.

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