

## **Ansār Leadership Conference 2011**

Baitul Naseer Mosque, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Report by Imran Hayee, Qā'id Umumi

By the Grace and Mercy of Almighty Allah, Majlis Ansāurillāh USA held Ansār Leadership Conference (ALC) 2011 at Baitul Naseer Mosque in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on the weekend of January 22-23, 2011. ALC was attended by members of the national 'Āmila, Nazimeen and Zu`ama or their representatives from 58 (out of 66) Majālis. A total of more than 75 delegates from all over the US attended the conference. More than Twenty Five volunteers from the local Majlis made sure that the conference ran smoothly.

Program of conference started on Saturday morning and concluded on Sunday with Zuhr and Asr prayers. Most of the delegates for ALC arrived on Friday evening and stayed in the beautiful Mosque providing a pleasant view of surrounding palm trees and typical landscape of Florida. Saturday's program started with Tahajjud and Fajr prayers followed by breakfast. The opening session of the formal program started with recitation of the Holy Qur'ān and its English translation by Munawar Malik, Za'im, Cleveland Majlis, on Saturday, January 22, 2011 at 9:00 AM. After the recitation of the Holy Qar'ān, the session continued with a poem recited by Kalim Rana, followed by Ansār Pledge and Dua (Silent Prayers) led by Sadr Majlis, Dr. Wajeeh Bajwa.

### **Sadr's Opening Address**

The remainder of the opening session contained a brief but concise opening address by Sadr Majlis in which he welcomed the delegates and highlighted the ALC program overview and objectives. He also shared the challenges and opportunities ahead of Majlis Ansāurillāh, USA for the upcoming year. He emphasized that the purpose of ALC is to provide a forum in which we can discuss and understand the challenges which may face and find ways to implement instructions given by Khalīfatul-Masīh (ayyadahullahu ta'ala binasrihil-'aziz). He introduced the Officer's Handbook which contains not only the key national goals from each department but also provides a detailed plan of action regarding how to achieve these goals in local Majālis. He emphasized that the following major goals are to be achieved by Majlis Ansāurillāh USA in the year 2011:

- Maintain 90% participation in online reporting by Zu'ama
- Encourage Ansār to offer prayers at Mosques. Increase number by 5% (where applicable)
- Distribute at least 200,000 Muslim for Peace flyers
- Increase attendance in meetings by at least 10% where member's attendance in meetings is below 30%
- Achieve 30% participation of Ansār in educational tests
- Initiate and sustain at least one social service activity in each Majlis
- Streamline financial processes and track the individual Ansār budget and Chanda payments.
- Increase number of Majālis holding Ta'līmul Qar'ān classes to 70%
- Contact all Nau Muba'i'in at least six (6) times during the year

- Increase number of participants in Tahrīk Jadīd and Waqf Jadīd schemes by at least 5% than last year
- To call 5-6 Zu'ama each month to ask them to update their Tajnid
- Complete the review of the translation of Sabilur-Rashad Vol. 2
- To have at least 30% of the Ansār to do exercise regularly (at least 3 times a week)
- To train all Majālis to have proper book keeping
- Visit each Majlis in the region by respective Nazimeen

After sharing the goals with the Zu'ama, Sadr Majlis continued to emphasize the original purpose of creation of Majlis Ansāurillāh as an auxiliary of Jamā'at. He explained that Majlis Ansāurillāh has been created to complement the work of Jamā'at and not for creating dissention. He mentioned that Majlis Ansāurillāh, as an auxiliary, is an independent entity but should work in cooperation with other auxiliaries and Jamā'at as a whole, at all levels – local, regional and national. After the opening address, Sadr Majlis requested all delegates to introduce themselves. The agenda of this year's ALC consisted of four interactive panel discussions, a presentation on completing online reports, important upcoming election deadlines, address by Imam Khalid Saeed and the award ceremony. Following are the brief highlights of all these events:

#### **Panel Discussion 1: How to handle Tajnid, Māl and Audit related issues at a local Majlis**

Moderator: Sadr Majlis Ansāurillāh USA

Panel: Qā'id Tajnid, Qā'id Tahrīk Jadīd, Qā'id Waqf Jadīd, and Qā'id Māl

Sadr moderated the panel discussion. He started the discussion by addressing the importance of Tajnid and indicated that accurate number of Ansār in each Majlis is very crucial and the evaluation of each department is based on these numbers. He specifically mentioned the link between Tajnid department and Finance. He mentioned that preparation of each Majlis' budget should be based on the total number of Ansār. Sadr then introduced the panelists and asked each Qā'id to highlight their department's 2011 goals. After the presentations the floor was opened for audience's questions and feedback.

In his presentation, Qā'id Tahrīk Jadīd shared his personal account of how Tahrīk Jadīd scheme has helped improve lives of members living in different parts of the world. The scheme is based on leading a simple life and serving mankind. He said that Muntazimeen Tahrīk Jadīd should remind members to adhere to Tahrīk Jadīd guidelines and assist local Jamā'at's Secretaries of Tahrīk Jadīd in collecting pledges and Chanda from Ansār members.

Qā'id Waqf Jadīd explained that Waqf Jadīd scheme was launched primarily to propagate teachings of Islam in selected countries. The scheme now includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and several countries from Africa. He went on to explain that Waqf Jadīd has enabled the Jamā'at to spread Islam's peaceful message to millions of people.

Qā'id Tajnid emphasized the importance of having accurate Tajnid. He requested Zu'ama to update contact information of all members and send it to him by April 20th. Correct mailing address and email will ensure that communication from Center is reaching members.

Qā'id Māl highlighted the changes being implemented to streamline processes, improve accountability and reduce expenditure of Majlis' funds. He enumerated advantages of using a single bank account for deposits throughout the country and the need for all local expenses to be approved by local 'Āmila. He also reminded Zu'ama to submit both income and expense budgets for 2012 intime for presentation to Majlis Shūrā to be held in October 2011.

At the end, Sadr made concluding remarks highlighting importance of maintaining updated tajnid, assisting Jamā'at secretaries in collection of Tahrīk Jadīd and Waqf Jadīd pledges, and adhering to procedures for Chanda collection and expense reimbursement.

### **Panel Discussion 2: Education Syllabus and its Significance in Monthly Meetings**

Moderator: Dr. Khalid Ata

Panel: Nā'ib Qā'id Ta'līm, Qā'id Ta'līmūl Qur'ān, Qā'id Tarbiyat, Qā'id Zahanat & Seh't Jismani, and Qā'id Tarbiyat Nau Mubai'in

The session started with the moderator's opening remarks explaining purpose of panel discussion and a brief introduction of panelists. Each panelist was then asked to present a summary of their departmental goals for the year 2011 and the methods to achieve them. All panelists shared their vision with the audience in a well-articulated manner. After the initial introductory round, the audience was allowed to ask questions to seek further guidance in matters of particular interest.

A wide range of issues was brought up with an enthusiastic participation. Qā'id Ta'līmūl Qur'ān enlightened the audience on the use of recently established 'Al-Furqan' website facilitating online learning of the Holy Qur'ān. He stressed upon the need to take advantage of this invaluable facility which is available to all members 24/7 free of cost.

Qā'id Nau Mubai'in answered questions on how to establish lasting contacts with new converts to impart basic knowledge of Nizām Jamā'at to them. Nā'ib Qā'id Ta'līm answered questions about Ta'līm syllabus especially the bi-annual Ta'līm tests. He requested Zu'ama and Nāzimeen to make special efforts to achieve the minimum participation target in these tests.

Qā'id Zahanat & Seh't Jismani answered questions relating to supply of Homeopathic medicines and also pointed out the recent Change of Majlis Ansārullāh's policy of distributing the Homeopathic medicines voluntarily to members. Instead, if a member asks for Homeopathic kit, he can be referred to Imam Inamul Kausar. This change was made under the direction of Huzur (ayyadahullahu ta'ala binasrihil-'aziz) instructions that Majlis Ansārullāh's name should not be used for distribution of medicines. He also reminded Ansār to pay special attention to general physical and intellectual wellbeing by observing healthy eating habits coupled with moderate physical exercise.

Qā'id Tarbiyat responded to questions about establishing Salāt Centers, listening to Huzur's (ayyadahullahu ta'ala binasrihil-'aziz) Friday sermons and increasing number of Ansār in congregational prayers in the mosques. He also urged upon all office holders of Majlis

Ansārullāh to join the Nizām Wasiyyat and respond to the call of Huzur (ayyadahullahu ta'ala binasrihil-'aziz ) in this regard. His comments were also reinforced by the moderator.

In summary, it was indeed a very useful and lively discussion, however, in view of constraint of time, audience were requested to contact respective panelists after the conclusion of the session for any remaining questions. In the end the moderator thanked all panelists for their precious time and prudence.

### **Panel Discussion 3: Overcoming challenges in doing Tablīgh and Social Service at local level**

Moderator: Naseem Waseem

Panel: Qā'id Tablīgh, Qā'id Social Service, and Qā'id Publication

Moderator, gave few minutes to each of the Qā'ideen to convey their messages to the Nazimeen and the Zu'ama. Qā'id Publication discussed the Publication Program and books published including the Homeopathic book. Qā'id Social Services emphasized that each Majlis should carry out at least one activity per month, and report how many people participated. Qā'id Tablīgh mentioned that seven reportable/measurable activities are part of the Tablīgh program for the Muntazimeen and are included in the handbook. He also emphasized that definition of one-to-one contact has been made easier and also that it is the responsibility of the Muntazim to motivate members and plan activities. During this panel discussion, many important questions were asked and respective Qā'ideen answered the questions in the light of the 2011 departmental plans provided guidance to Zu'ama.

An important question was asked to Qā'id Social Service, "Can Social Services help in the Tablīgh department?" In response, Qā'id answered, "By identifying yourself with social services and helping out those people, you could accomplish two things with one activity. For example, if we open our gym to other people once a month, we are not only helping the community but also doing Tablīgh at the same time. Another example is that if a car falls in a ditch, you stop by to help. When people see you doing these things, they think, why you are doing these things and response should be that as Ahmadī Muslim's it is our obligation to help those who are in need. You could do meals on wheels or many other programs."

Another question was asked if there has been any impact of the Lahore incident on Tablīgh. Qā'id Tablīgh answered that there had been a number of New Year Tablīgh activities done in many local chapters before and after this incidence. The peak in one-to-one Tablīgh activities was in March, and apparently there was no correlation from one to one Tablīgh activity's perspective to the Lahore incident which happened in May. He continued to mention, that there were a large number of flyers distributed this year with Muslims of Peace campaign. Many times, during the flyer distribution, people talked to Ansār members and that is reported was one-to-one contact. Our target is 200,000 flyers for 2011 and our Tajnid is 2,300. That means that our individual target is 100 flyer/Nāsir, we could surpass our target and distribute 230,000 flyers. Last year, we crossed the number of 50,000. So if a Majlis has a Tajnid of 71, their target is distribution of 7100 flyers.

In this context, another question was asked regarding how the distribution of flyers be carried out? Qā'id Tablīgh responded that this should be done in collaboration with Jamā'at including Khuddām and sometimes Lajna under the general guidelines of Jamā'at. At this point, Sadr shared an incidence in which his own son mentioned to him that they wanted to distribute peace flyers and had been asked by Lajna if they could participate with them. Sadr told him to ask Imam Naseem Mahdī, Nā'ib Amīr and Missionary in charge. Imam Naseem Mahdī said that Lajna could participate, but they had to take care of their security, and also Lajna and Khuddām should do it in such a manner that they are on different sides of the road and are not next to each other. But Khuddām should not be too far either from Lanja, in case they need help or security issue arises.

Za'im Dallas Majlis asked that Dallas Majlis cleans the neighborhood in Dallas once a year. They do it in conjunction with other organizations. They have been doing it for two years. However, some people say that we should not do it in collaboration with the other organizations. Qā'id Social Services responded that it was fine to do so. It builds relationships. Tablīgh is about building relationships. This is serving humanity. People who are hungry don't care who you are. All they want is food.

At the end, Sadr stated that Zu'ama should be very specific in their comments in monthly reports. It should not just say that Ansār did Tablīgh. It should include numbers of Ansār who participated and time spent in the activity, and what activity was done.

#### **Panel Discussion 4: How to Lead My Majlis**

Moderator: Sadr Majlis Ansārullāh, USA

Panel: Zu'ama from Dallas, Philadelphia, Georgia/ South Carolina, and Los Angeles East Majālis

In this panel discussion, the leading Zu'ama were gathered to share their opinions and best practices on the top issues facing all Zu'ama around the country. Sadr, the moderator, immediately put the panel on the 'hot seat' and raised the 'stakes' by telling the panel that he wanted to pose a question directly to them which would test their leadership! The question posed to the panel was 'What was their personal challenge on taking over as Za'im for their respective Majlis?' A common answer was that they were fortunate that they were following in the footsteps of prior Zu'ama who had been very successful running their Majlis. In addition most commented they were already part of their respective Ansār 'Āmila and as such the transition to Za'im was not that difficult.

Next Sadr asked for the list of the top issues facing by the leadership of a Majlis. Quickly the areas identified were attendance, Chanda collection and participation in Ta'līm tests. On the area of attendance (and participation) there were a number of comments about the need to lead by example, and ensure that as Za'im they participated fully with their Majlis' activities and were personally active and engaged. One panel member grouped the inactive members into three categories: (a) those who never came, (b) those who are at work when auxiliary meeting is held, and (c) those who are sitting at home and just require an extra 'push' to attend. While email was used to encourage attendance, the common theme that arose was that Zu'ama had to take the time and personally contact members who needed the 'push' or never came. This

was the means to most successfully increase attendance. One Za'īm spoke about the efforts made to align Ansār meeting times to that of Lajna and Khuddām. At this point Sadr introduced a 'detour topic' on opinion of Zu'ama on holding monthly Jamā'at general meetings in addition to the four established Jamā'at meetings (Seeratun Nabi, Masih Ma'ud, Musleh Ma'ud, and Khilāfat Days) as opposed to Auxiliary meetings. There were many opinions expressed and depending upon the Majlis' size and geographical spread, the need for holding Auxiliary meetings of Lajna, Khuddām, and Ansār at the same time was endorsed as more beneficial than holding a combined Jamā'at general meeting in which only male members participate.

On the topic of collecting Chanda, the panel discussed the need to establish personal relationships to get members to participate. One panelist noted that a member commented that 'you only contact me when you need Chanda!' Zu'ama gave examples of contacting members if they heard that they were not well, another commented that they sent an email to all members after severe weather in their area to find out if everyone was okay, and this elicited a large number of responses from their members. Personal relationship and personal interaction were keys to drive engagement and increase in Chanda.

On the topic of getting members to participate in Ta'līm tests, one Za'īm explained how he had created a web page containing syllabus and content of Ta'līm material and he could send that link via email. With 'one click', his members could review the verses of the Qur'ān or the hadith that was to be reviewed. To help members participate in the test, the same Za'īm would give the page numbers where the answer could be found, thereby giving members an incentive to participate. Another Za'īm spoke about holding their Ta'līm test in a park and having snacks and refreshment available, which created greater opportunity for members to take the test and create a more inviting environment for socialization.

There were many more questions posed to the panel, and the session was a great success, going on for one and half hours instead of the allocated one hour. The success can be largely attributed to the genuine enthusiasm showed by the panel members, their openness to share their personal stories and personal commitments. There was a real passion in their voices and a dedication to discharge their duties as Za'īm.

### **Online Reporting Demo and Important Deadlines**

Department of Umumi had started a new online reporting system for monthly reports from Zu'ama since last year which was a big success in terms of reporting activity. In this session, Qā'id Umumi gave a brief tutorial about how to submit online reports and also explained some common misconceptions regarding answering some specific questions in the report. During and after the demonstration, Zu'ama were allowed to ask questions about online reporting system which were answered by Qā'id Umumi. From time to time, Sadr, who was chairing the session, provided further clarification on important points. After the online report demonstration, Qā'id Umumi shared the important deadlines and the procedure of the upcoming Sadr and Nā'ib Sadr Saf Dom elections. Sadr answered the questions posed regarding the clarification of the procedure.

### Address by Missionary

Regional Missionary, Imam Khalid Saeed addressed the ALC audience on the topic of “Obedience to Khilāfat”. He shared that obedience to Khilāfat is the key for our success both in this world and in the hereafter. We should all develop a personal relationship with the Khalīfa of the time by listening to his Friday Sermons and writing him for prayers, regularly. He emphasized that it is our duty as mentioned in our pledge that we need to ensure that our children are attached to Khilāfat as well. We should inculcate this habit of writing to Huzur (ayyadahullahu ta’ala binasrihil-’aziz) within our children. If the children are too young to write, we should write for them and ask them to read and write their names underneath so that they can learn the importance of this routine.

### Concluding Session

The concluding session started with the recitation of the Holy Qur’ān followed by recitation a poem of the Promised Messiah (alaihis salam). Then the award ceremony in which best performing Majālis were recognized based upon their performance throughout the year in small, medium and large Majālis categories. Alm Inami was also presented based upon overall performance. The award winning Majālis are listed below:

**Alm Inami:** Dallas Majlis Za’im: Suhail Kausar

### Large Majālis

First Place: Dallas Majlis Za’im: Suhail Kausar  
 Second Place: Philadelphia Majlis Za’im: Imtiaz Rajayki  
 Third Place: Central Jersey Majlis Za’im: Jalaluddin Abdul Latif

### Medium Majālis

First Place: Cleveland Majlis Za’im: Munawar A. Malik  
 Second Place: Austin Majlis Za’im: Malik Mohammad Altaf  
 Third Place: LA-Inland Empire Majlis Za’im: Muzaffar Chaudhry

### Small Majālis

First Place: Houston-Cypress Majlis Za’im: Iftikhar A Sheikh  
 Second Place: Indiana Majlis Za’im: Waseem Ahmad  
 Third Place: Minnesota Majlis Za’im: Nasim Ahmad

**Most Improved Majlis:** Kansas Majlis Za’im: Sultan Habeebu

After the award ceremony, Sadr Majlis invited Za’im of Miami Majlis and President of Miami Jamā’at to express their thoughts on being host of this year’s ALC. Both of them expressed gratitude and shared that they were blessed with this opportunity and would love to do this again. Their remarks followed by the concluding address of Sadr Majlis in which he reiterated many important points regarding roles and responsibilities of Zu’ama and Ansār. He requested all Zu’ama to follow the guidelines provided by Qā’ideen about their respective departments, and to timely report any activities taking place in their Majālis. At the end of his concluding

remarks, he thanked the volunteers and all delegates and requested Imam Khalid Saeed to lead the silent prayers.

At the end of this report, it will be only fair to mention that the host Majlis under the leadership of local Za'im, Abdul Basit, along with fully supported leadership role of local President, Munawar Chaudhary, did a wonderful job on all fronts including conference venue, arrangements, transportation, accommodation, refreshments and taking care of needs of all the delegates. May Almighty Allah give them and their teams reward for making the ALC 2011 a memorable experience for all the attendees.



Attendees of Ansār Leadership Conference (ALC 2011) held at Baitul Naseer Mosque, Fort Lauderdale, Florida on January 22-23, 2011