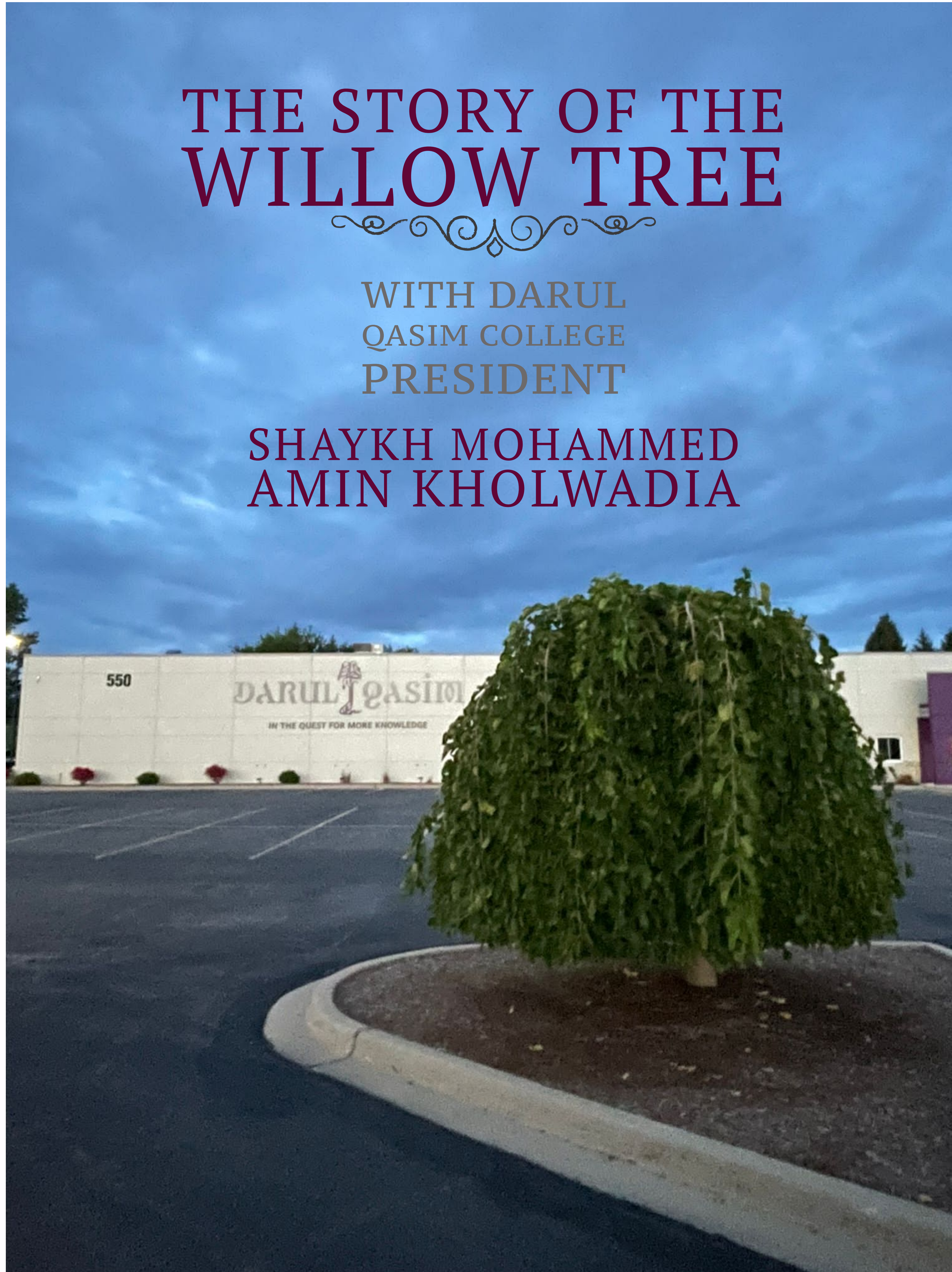


THE STORY OF THE WILLOW TREE



WITH DARUL
QASIM COLLEGE
PRESIDENT

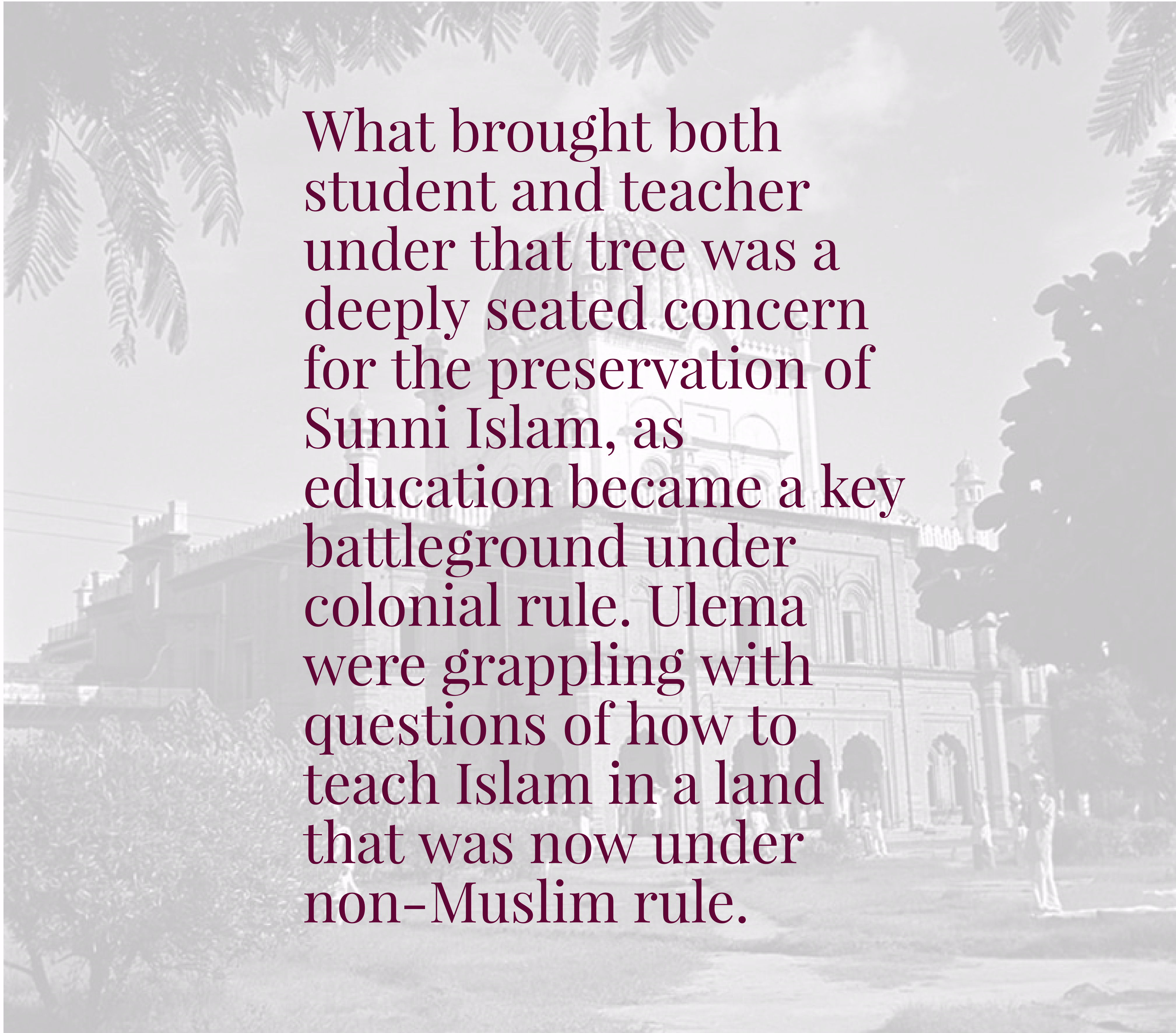
SHAYKH MOHAMMED
AMIN KHOLWADIA





This tour begins with the story of the Willow Tree, an image that beautifully encapsulates the inspiration, vision, and mission of Darul Qasim College. Sitting with Shaykh Mohammed Amin Kholwadia, the founder and visionary of the college, his voice is firm, clear, and full of reverence- as he introduces us to one of the greatest scholars of the subcontinent, Mawlana Qasim Nanautavi (Rahmatullah Alahi) (1832-1880).

The story of the Willow Tree not only resides in the present, but its roots are firmly planted in a history that goes back a little more than a century. We travel 110 years back in time to the era of British colonial rule in India, where Mawlana Qasim sits underneath a tree in the masjid with his sincere and dedicated student, Mahmud Hasan.



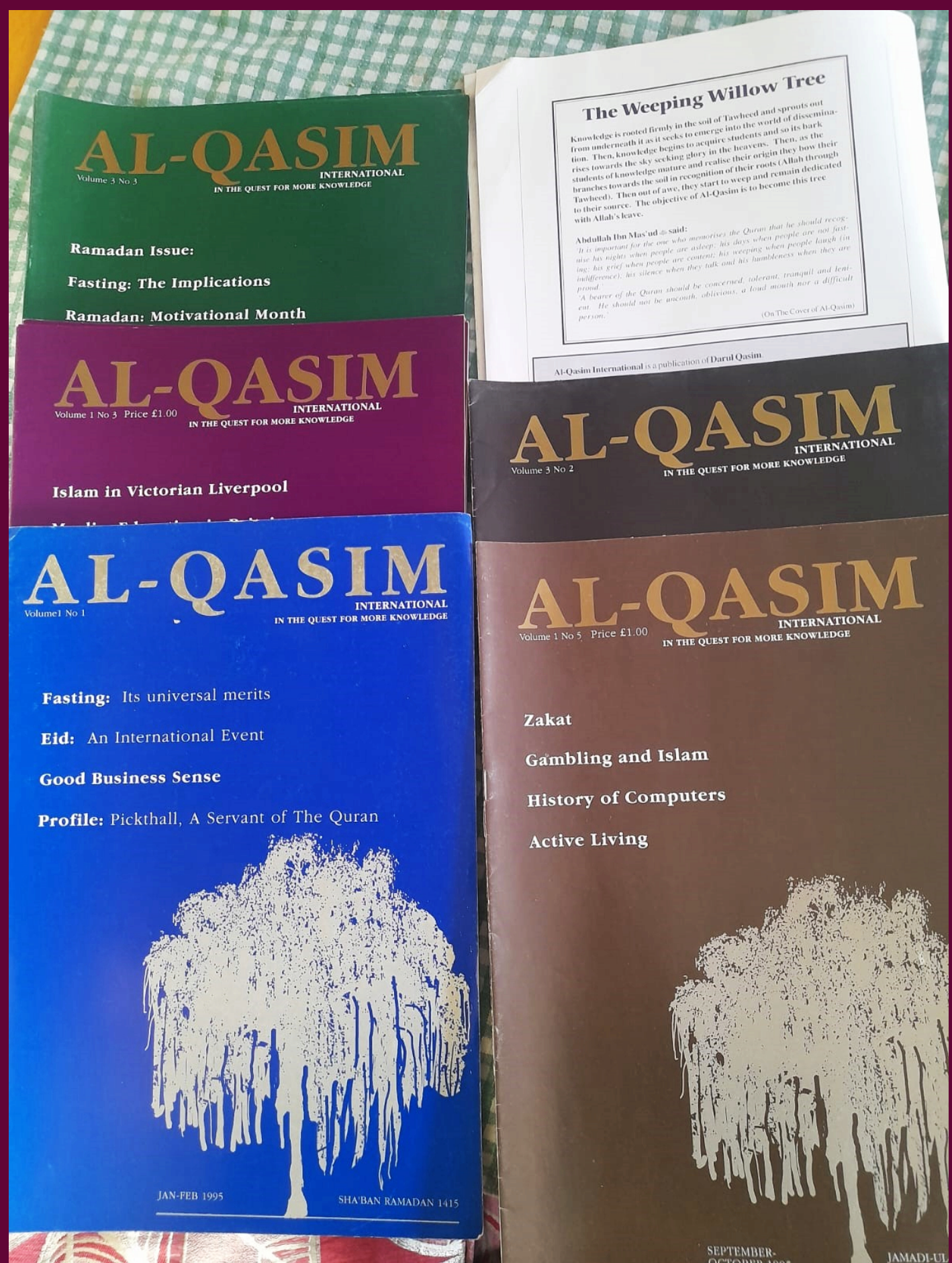
What brought both student and teacher under that tree was a deeply seated concern for the preservation of Sunni Islam, as education became a key battleground under colonial rule. Ulema were grappling with questions of how to teach Islam in a land that was now under non-Muslim rule.



In the shade of that tree, sincerity, dedication, and creativity became the seeds that were buried deep into the earth of obscurity and what sprouted forth was the world-renowned Darul Uloom Deoband, one of the most important and influential schools of Islamic Studies in the world.

Shaykh Amin is precise and clear in clarifying, that particular species of tree is not found in North America. However, the willow tree is closest in variety . With this reality, he takes us into the present context, yet the past is not far removed. He explains:

“When you’re looking for water in the wilderness, the willow tree is usually a landmark to show scouts where the water is. Because the willow tree is always around water. So water refers to knowledge. You find knowledge where the Willow Tree is.”



Darul Qasim's first initiative was to distribute Al-Qasim Magazine which Shaykh Amin edited from 1994 to 1999. On the cover of Al-Qasim one finds the image of the Willow Tree.

Today, the Willow Tree is the logo used by the college. The story and symbolism continue to inspire and educate faculty and students alike.

Poetry presents itself as the most powerful medium to express the depth and breadth of the Willow Tree metaphor in the context of the college that you see today. The Divine facing mission and vision penetrates not only the walls of the institution, but more importantly it is buried deep in the hearts and minds of the college's faculty and students. With this, our tour takes a journey inward and upward with a poem penned by Shaykh Mohammed Amin Kholwadia.

"The Weeping Willow Tree"

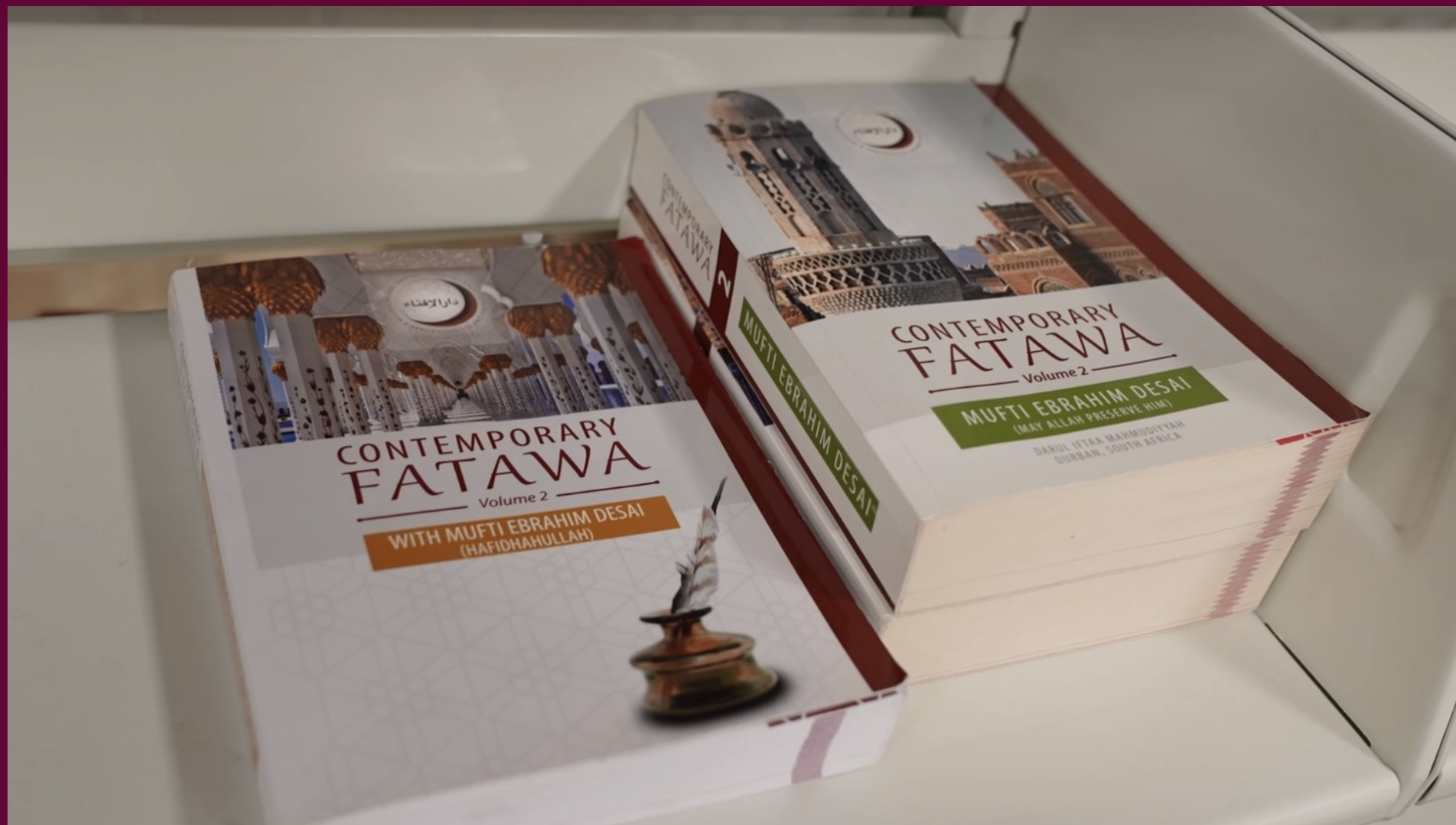
**As the roots of the willow
penetrate
Downwards
Into the soil of Divine
Presence
Its trunk and branches
aim to seek glory
Upwards
In the skies of Divine
Wisdom
But as they find
Solitude
In the heights of the Lord's
Pleasure
The Divine moulds them
with Eternal
Flexibility
Towards the Fadl of Humility**

**And Service, whence they
bend over backwards
In servitude
To draw affinity from
the earth
From which they originate
There
They realize He is both
in the Heavens and Earth.
Thus the tree becomes
Guide
For scouts who seek
Eternal Water
Water
Left behind
By the Weeping of the
Willow**

The symbolism of the Willow Tree and its shade in the American context offers a glimpse into the institution's educational philosophy and approach. The need for sincere and dedicated faculty and students is centered in the Qasimi approach, above all else.

Thus, the Willow Tree is symbolic in where it brings us and whom it brings us to. What better way to understand the Willow that grows, than to offer you a taste of the curricular and pedagogical approaches employed by our faculty that take refuge in its shade.





Stay tuned for Part 2 of
In the Willow's Shade:

“The Life of a Fatwa”



with
Mufti Hisham Dawood,
Islamic Law Department
Chair