

HUZOOR'S TOUR OF HOLLAND AND GERMANY

OCTOBER 2015

A Personal Account

PART 1

By Abid Khan

Introduction

On 4 October 2015, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) and his *Qafila* (entourage) set off for a 15-day tour to Holland and Germany.

During the tour, Huzoor would address Parliamentarians at the Dutch Parliament; would lay the foundation stones for various Mosques; hold various media interviews and attend the first Convocation ceremony of Jamia Ahmadiyya Germany.

Apart from Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*), there were 14 members of the *Qafila* who travelled from London on that day.

There were six security staff, Muhammad Ahmad Sahib (Ahmad bhai), Nasir Saeed sahib, Sakawat Bajwa sahib, Mahmood Khan sahib, Sardar Humayun sahib and Khawaja Qudoos sahib.

The office staff comprised Munir Ahmad Javed sahib (*Private Secretary*), Abdul Majid Tahir sahib (*Additional Wakil-ul-Tabshir*), Mubarak Ahmad Zafar sahib (*Additional Wakil-ul-Maal*), Bashir Ahmed sahib (*PS Office*) and me travelling on behalf of the central *Press & Media Office*.

Nadeem Amini sahib and Nasir Amini sahib from Bradford and Muhammad Ahmed sahib from London were also part of the *Qafila*.

They had volunteered to drive their personal vehicles as *Qafila* cars and Huzoor had graciously accepted their request.

Huzoor's love and concern

Around 2 weeks before the tour began, Huzoor asked me if my wife Mala, who was quite heavily pregnant, would be ok if I were to travel with him abroad. I immediately responded that it was our firm belief that being close to *Khalifatul Masih* was the means of all blessings and so we had no concerns whatsoever.

It was another example of Huzoor's love and concern for both his staff and their family members. When I returned home and told Mala she was extremely grateful and emotional that Huzoor had asked about her.

Finding out

Alhamdulillah, some days later I was informed by Private Secretary, Munir Javed sahib that I should get ready to travel with the Qafila.

As in the past, the moment I heard this news was a moment when I felt overwhelming gratitude to Allah and at the same time a great deal of trepidation. I am always fearful that, God forbid, I do anything that is wrong or that could reflect badly on the Qafila.

Saying goodbye to my family

I arrived at Fazl Mosque at around 9am on 4 October and I went to hand in my luggage to the security team. In the past, I had always limited myself to one bag but on this occasion I had also brought an extra small wheeler case

and so I was praying it would fit in the car! Thankfully the car had ample space and so it fitted in easily!

I then went to see Mala and Mahid who had come to drop me off. In the past, Mahid did not understand when I was leaving, but for the first time I think on this occasion he did understand, at least to some extent.

Throughout the car journey he was extremely quiet and then when I took my luggage out of the car he began to cry. Mala told me that as she drove home he cried for the rest of the journey. Thankfully, upon arriving home she gave him some crisps and he immediately cheered up and was in a good mood for the rest of the day!

Fixing Nadeem's car!

At the Mosque, I met Nadeem Amini who seemed surprisingly tense. He is normally extremely relaxed and always laughing and joking and so I asked if everything was ok.

He took me to his car and said that the previous night he had stayed at a hotel and his car had been broken into. The entire rear windscreen had been completely smashed and there was no time for him to get the glass replaced.

With the grace of Allah, Huzoor's security team is extremely resourceful on such occasions and so over the next 20minutes I watched as they made a temporary cover for the rear windscreen.

First, they filled every possible corner of his boot with luggage as a means to block the wind. They then placed a thick rectangular piece of cardboard where the windscreen ought to have been, before finally covering it with sheets of plastic cut from bin liners! The plastic sheets were then sealed with thick black tape.

It may not have been the most professional job but when we arrived in Holland I asked Mubarak Zafar sahib, who was seated in Nadeem's car, and he said that for the entire journey they did not feel any wind enter the car or any extra noise at all.

Departure from Masjid Fazl

Many Ahmadis had come to see Huzoor off from *Masjid Fazl*. Huzoor and Khala Saboohi came out of their residence at 10am and after a silent prayer the Qafila departed as the local Ahmadis waved Huzoor goodbye.

I was seated next to *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed sahib, whilst Sardar Humayun sahib was in the front, alongside Nasir Amini who was driving.

For most of the tour, our car was immediately behind Huzoor's vehicle, however due to the fact that Nadeem's windscreen had been smashed, our car was placed directly in front of Huzoor's vehicle for the first few days.

On the past occasions I had travelled with Huzoor to Europe by car, it had so happened that the Qafila had departed on a Saturday. On this occasion, Huzoor was travelling on Sunday and this proved to be a blessed decision.

Due to an escalation of the refugee crisis on Saturday 3 October the *Channel Tunnel* services were suspended for a number of hours and even when they re-started there were delays of at least 2 hours. However, by Sunday normal services were restored and there were no delays whatsoever.

A very amusing few minutes

We arrived at Folkestone around 30minutes prior to departure, which was at 12.20pm and so during the intervening minutes, Huzoor came out of his car and entered the services area for a few minutes.

Huzoor was wearing a grey *achkan* coat and a cream coloured Afghani *topi* and had also put on his reading glasses. Standing a few metres away, I saw that Huzoor was reading something on his *iPhone* and that he was smiling.

After a minute, Huzoor looked up and called me towards him. Huzoor said that he had just read a joke on his phone, which he then narrated to me.

It was about a driver in Pakistan who had been given a reward of 1,000 rupees for wearing his seatbelt whilst driving. Upon receiving the reward the driver said he would spend the money on getting a driving licence!

Thereafter, his mother who was seated next to him said "*Don't believe a word my son is saying because he is drunk!*" Then his father, who had been sleeping in the back, suddenly woke up and said, "*I knew we would get caught driving in this stolen vehicle!*" And then suddenly, the driver's brother who had been hiding in the boot, shouted, "*Brother have we managed to illegally cross the border yet?*"

As Huzoor narrated he laughed and enjoyed the joke a lot. Huzoor said that this is a person who is getting a reward for wearing a seatbelt, despite breaking almost every other conceivable driving law!

Lunch in Calais

As scheduled, the Qafila took the 12.20pm *Eurotunnel* shuttle from Folkestone and arrived at Calais at 1.55pm local time.

Ameer Sahib Holland and a few other members of the local Jamaat were waiting in a car at the nearby *Total* petrol station and from there the Dutch Jamaat escorted Huzoor to a nearby restaurant called '*Buffalo Grill*'.

Huzoor and Khala Saboohi were seated at a table on one side of the restaurant, whilst the majority of Qafila members were seated at a long table nearby.

Ahmad bhai said I should assist him in serving Huzoor and Khala Saboohi lunch. It is a great honour to be able to serve Huzoor and his family in any way but I was quite nervous that I did not make any mistake. There was also a proper waiter serving Huzoor's table and so there was not that much for me to do.

Both steak and fish were sent to Huzoor's table. Huzoor and Khala Saboohi ate the fish but returned the steak. After a few minutes Ahmad bhai said I should ask Huzoor and Khala Saboohi if they needed anything. I said it would be easier if there was something I could take and offer them and so he suggested I take some tomato ketchup.

I took the ketchup and walked to Huzoor's table but was dismayed when I saw that already a large bottle of ketchup was already on the table! Despite it being quite obvious that there was already ketchup on the table, I asked Huzoor and Khala Saboohi if they needed some to which Huzoor merely glanced towards the bottle already on the table! I quietly walked away wishing I had taken mustard or some other condiment instead!

I think Huzoor could sense my nerves and so he called me after a few minutes and asked me to take back some extra drinks that had been sent to his table.

After that I felt more relaxed and so towards the end of the meal, I went and asked Huzoor and Khala Saboohi if they needed anything further. In response, Huzoor asked what was available and so I said, "**Huzoor, they have coffee here**" upon which he said there was no need. The fact Huzoor asked reminded me that when serving I should know in advance what the options are!

In between Ahmad bhai asked Huzoor if he would like dessert and Huzoor said that he would try the cheesecake. A slice of cheesecake also came to our table and because Huzoor had ordered it I also tried it. It was extremely delicious and so Huzoor's choice had been excellent!

I ate my lunch with Ahmad bhai and Khawaja Qudoos sahib. Before the cheesecake, we ate fried chicken with chips. Whilst, eating Ahmad bhai asked me what type of food I liked and I mentioned how I enjoyed red meat such as steaks or burgers, but as I got older I was enjoying and valuing Asian *desi* food more and more.

I was quite surprised when a minute later I saw Ahmad bhai talking to Huzoor and Khala Saboohi and he mentioned our conversation. Upon this Khala Saboohi called me and said she was the opposite because the older she became the more she enjoyed other types of food and cuisine.

Zuhr and Asr at the restaurant

After lunch, and with the permission of the restaurant manager, *Salat* was offered in a room on the first floor.

I think it was a room that would normally be used for private functions at the restaurant.



The local Khuddam soon moved the tables to the side and laid out the prayer mats. After a few moments Huzoor came upstairs and led the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers.

A welcome break!

Following *Namaz* the Qafila continued its journey onward towards Holland. I had used the bathroom at the restaurant but for some reason as soon the journey restarted I found myself needing to use the bathroom again! Thus, the next couple of hours proved quite uncomfortable!

Thankfully after two rather difficult hours, I saw that the Qafila was making a short stop at a petrol station in Belgium. I breathed a sigh of relief and as soon as the cars stopped I ran and found the nearest bathroom!

I then went into the petrol station shop where I saw that Huzoor was looking at various items on sale. Huzoor called me and asked how I was and so I said that for the past two hours I had been praying for a bathroom break! Huzoor laughed and smiled upon hearing my predicament!

Arrival in Holland

The journey continued and thankfully the next few hours were much more comfortable. The Qafila soon entered Holland and thereafter the journey continued uninterrupted to Nunspeet, where Huzoor would be staying for the next 10 days.

I had been to Holland on a few previous occasions but not as a member of Huzoor's Qafila.

In 2006, when I was still working as a lawyer, I did a one-month internship at the *United Nations International Criminal Tribunal* for the former

Yugoslavia in The Hague. Also, in 1997, I was part of the *Urdu Class* that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) took with him to Holland for a week.

Thus, as the Qafila arrived at Nunspeet at 8.35pm, I spotted some familiar faces but also a number of new ones.

The local *Mayor* along with many local Ahmadis were present to greet Huzoor. All were delighted to see Huzoor and to welcome him back to Holland after more than three years.



It was extremely cold in Nunspeet and the cold weather was something that lasted throughout the tour.

Later on, Huzoor mentioned to me that the *Mayor* had had to wait in the cold for him and so it would have been better if the local *Jamaat* had arranged for him to meet Huzoor on a later day. This was another example of Huzoor's humility, whereupon he did not care for any form of protocol and his concern was that the Mayor had waited in cold that evening.

First Namaz at the rebuilt Baitun Nur

Soon after arrival, I did *Wudhu* and proceeded to the Mosque. The *Baitun Nur* Mosque had been rebuilt since Huzoor's last visit and was actually a different building on the premises. Thus, that evening for the first time *Khalifatul Masih* led *Salat* in the new Mosque.

I think the reason the Mosque had been rebuilt was that the previous Mosque area had been a converted hall and its size and shape had not been ideal. It was now being utilised as a general hall and exhibition, for which it was better suited.

As we waited for Huzoor to enter the Mosque one of the local *Jamaat* officials reminded the Ahmadis that Huzoor would likely be doing *Qasr*, meaning that his *Isha* prayer would be shortened as he was on a journey.

However, when Huzoor came to lead the prayers, he did not shorten *Isha* and he did not do *Qasr* at all during his stay in Nunspeet. I have to admit that this took me by surprise, as in other short journeys I had witnessed Huzoor doing *Qasr*.

I asked Huzoor about this later in the trip and Huzoor replied by simply saying:

"It is not necessary or an obligation to do Qasr always."

I do not know the reason Huzoor chose not to do *Qasr* but some of the local Ahmadis felt it was a sign that perhaps Huzoor felt at home in Nunspeet

and were extremely pleased that he did not shorten his prayers during his stay.

Holland's famous langar

Over the years, on various trips, the more experienced Qafila members had mentioned to me that the *langar* (kitchen) in Holland was excellent and the food served was always extremely well cooked and delicious.

On that evening and indeed over the next 10 days I saw that this was true.

The food cooked in the *langar* was not at all lavish and often simple vegetable dishes were served, but, generally, it was always very tasty.

The best part for me was that as we ate dinner fresh and warm *rotis* (Asian flatbread) were being served!

A great privilege

After dinner, Ahmad bhai told me that during our stay in Holland, we would be roommates and that Huzoor had given permission for us both to stay in the basement of Huzoor's own residence in Nunspeet. It was a great honour and privilege and I felt extremely fortunate to stay so close to Huzoor, *Masha'Allah*.

Ahmad bhai took me to the basement area where, apart from our room, there was also a large lounge and dining area. There was also another room adjacent to the dining area.

An unexpected visit

It was nearly 11pm and so I decided to unpack my suitcase and hang my clothes for the next few days.

Even though I was not ready to sleep, I decided to change out of my suit and put on my nightclothes, which consisted of an extremely baggy t-shirt and a loose fitting pyjama trouser. Ahmad bhai was also unpacking but he was still wearing his full suit and tie.

I sat on my bed for a moment to check my phone and as I did I heard a door open and then footsteps walking down the stairs in the adjacent lounge. Suddenly, my heart started to beat faster because I knew that the stairs led down from Huzoor's residence.

After a second or two, before I had any chance to change, there was a knock on the door and standing in front of us was Huzoor!

Upon seeing me, Huzoor smiled and said:

"You are already ready for bed!"

I was extremely embarrassed at my state but at the same time delighted that Huzoor had come!

Huzoor asked Ahmad bhai to call Abdullah Saprak Sahib, an Ahmadi who had come from Germany on Huzoor's invitation. As Ahmad bhai left the room, Huzoor walked to the lounge and told me to join him.

Within a few seconds I frantically changed my clothes and put on a pair of jeans and a sweater. Huzoor called me again and so without even having time to grab my *topi* I ran to the lounge.

Upon seeing that I had changed, Huzoor smiled and said:

“You did not need to change, you should have come in your pyjama because now when you go to bed you will have to change again!”

Huzoor is so loving that he did not mind my informal state or make me feel at all uncomfortable, but having changed I certainly felt more at ease.

A few unforgettable moments

I took a seat on the sofa opposite to where Huzoor was sitting. As I looked up, I saw that Huzoor was wearing a white *shalwar kameez* and a flat white round *topi*. Wearing all white, Huzoor looked even more radiant than normal.

I thanked Huzoor for permitting me to stay in his residence. Huzoor smiled and explained that during the past few years there had been many improvements made at Nunspeet.

For example, a series of single room apartments had been built that were ideal for families to stay in and during Huzoor’s tours were utilised by Qafila members. Huzoor also mentioned how the room in which I was staying had previously been part of the lounge but that on his instruction a wall had been erected to create an extra guest room.

I responded by saying that just one of the many blessings associated with this period of *Khilafat* had been the development of buildings and guest houses owned by the *Jamaat*.

For example, in London, under Huzoor's supervision and personal attention, the guest houses have been transformed over the past few years and this had been replicated in many countries, especially those Huzoor has visited and where he has personally given instructions.

A few days earlier, I had shown Huzoor an article published in the well-known British newspaper the '*Evening Standard*', in which the journalist Ed West had written a column appreciating the work of the Ahmadiyya Community and had contrasted the *Khilafat* of the Promised Messiah (as) to the so-called *Khilafat* leading the terrorist group known as I.S.

As we sat there in Nunspeet, Huzoor mentioned the article and said that he had himself sent it to a few people in Pakistan to view. Huzoor particularly appreciated the headline which had read "***Our own London caliphate is doing nothing but good***".

After a few minutes, Abdullah Saphrah sahib also entered and we were both able to enjoy Huzoor's company for some more time.

Stories from the past

Huzoor narrated stories and incidents from the life of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra). For example, Huzoor told how once *Nazarat-e-Maal* wrote a letter to Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) saying that the financial allowances of the *Jamaat*

workers should be increased and they should also be given a small financial gift upon *Eid*.

Huzoor narrated how Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) approved this request but later *Nazarat-e-Maal* informed him that there was not actually enough money within the *Jamaat's* treasury to permit such an increase. Upon hearing this, Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) himself personally paid for the increase and the *Eid* gifts so that no burden would be placed upon the *Jamaat*.

Huzoor's home life

Speaking of his home, Huzoor mentioned how in London, each afternoon, he would try to meet and play with his grandchildren for a few minutes whilst he had afternoon tea.

Huzoor mentioned how he had heard that his grandson *Muaaz*, who was around 17 months old, had been a little quiet missing Huzoor and Khala Saboohi that day.

Hearing these words, I felt even more love for Huzoor and his family members and thought of the unparalleled personal sacrifices Huzoor makes for the sake of the *Jamaat*.

A memorable day

At around 11.45pm, Huzoor got up and walked up the stairs to his residence.

I returned to my room and thought about the day and in particular the precious moments I had shared with Huzoor that evening.

A few minutes later Ahmad bhai returned to our room and I mentioned how Huzoor had seen me in my night-suit. If there is one thing you can count on Ahmad bhai for, it is that he will speak openly and so instead of saying “Don’t worry” or “It doesn’t matter”, he simply said:

“Yes Abid you really were in your worst possible state when Huzoor entered!”

We both laughed a lot and then after finishing our unpacking we went to sleep after what had proved a very blessed and happy day, *Alhamdulillah*.

Interview with Radio Nunspeet

During Huzoor’s first week in Holland, he held five media interviews. Huzoor gave a lot of time to the media, who had shown a great interest in his visit to Holland and the *Jamaat’s* efforts to spread the peaceful teachings of Islam.

The interviews had been arranged, on behalf of the Dutch Jamaat, by Safeer Siddiqi Sahib, who is a young Missionary and who was among the graduates of the first *Shahid Class* of Jamia Ahmadiyya UK.

On the morning of Monday, 5th October, Huzoor was interviewed by *Radio Nunspeet*. Although, a local radio station, the channel also live streamed its

service globally. An interesting feature of the interview was that it was not a recorded piece but was broadcast live.

The interview was scheduled for 11.05am and so at 11am, Huzoor entered his office where the interviewer was ready and set up.

As it was a live piece, the start of the interview was dependent on the interviewer being given a cue by her producers and it seemed they were running a few minutes behind schedule. She mentioned that she was waiting for the commercials to conclude before she could start. Without any hint of irritation, Huzoor smiled and waited very patiently for those extra few minutes and used those moments to ask her about the radio station and its programmes.

The interview finally went live at 11.10am and for the next 20 minutes Huzoor was asked about the purpose of his visit to Holland, his responsibilities as *Khalifatul Masih*, the teachings of Islam and also his views on political issues such as the rise of radicalisation and the refugee crisis in Europe.

Very eloquently, Huzoor answered each and every question. He told the journalist how the main reason for his visit to Holland was to address a meeting of the *Foreign Affairs Committee* of the Dutch Parliament.

Huzoor also said he would be laying the foundation stone for a new Mosque in the city of Almere and would be meeting local Ahmadi Muslims throughout his stay.

Upon being asked about his responsibilities as *Khalifatul Masih*, Huzoor said Ahmadi Muslims believed that the Promised Messiah (as) had been sent by Allah, in accordance with the prophecies of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa), to revive Islam's true teachings.



Huzoor explained how after the demise of the Promised Messiah (as), the system of *Khilafat* had been established to lead the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and to further the mission of the Promised Messiah (as).

Huzoor said:

“The responsibility of a Khalifa is to continue the work and mission of a Prophet of God. It is his duty to spread the true message of Islam and to guide those who accept it towards goodness and righteousness. Thus, as Khalifa, I guide Ahmadi Muslims in all parts of the world and meet with members of the community on a daily basis. The bond between the Khalifa and an Ahmadi Muslim is a two-way love.”

Huzoor was asked about the sudden influx of refugees entering Europe from Syria. Huzoor responded by saying that it was a moral responsibility to help those who were genuinely in need and to provide sanctuary to them. However, he said that world powers must also seek to establish peace and stability in the countries mired in conflict so that ultimately the refugees could return safely to their home nations.

During his subsequent interviews in Holland, Huzoor was again asked about his views on the refugee crisis. Each time, Huzoor said that genuine refugees should be given refuge but that there was also a risk that some extremists or terrorists would seek to enter the *West* whilst posing as refugees. Thus, Huzoor advised governments and authorities to be mindful of this risk and to be extremely vigilant.

Furthermore, Huzoor also said that the burden of sheltering refugees should not be imposed on just one or two countries but that it should be shared across the world and that Arab countries must take their fair share of refugees and fulfil their duties as neighbour countries.

Listening back to the interview

Following the conclusion of the interview, Huzoor called me back to his office for some work.

I mentioned that I had received some messages from Ahmadis who had listened live to Huzoor's interview, both in the UK and in Pakistan and that Mala had sent me a recording of the interview on my phone.

Although it was not the best quality audio, Huzoor took my phone in his hand and listened back to the interview that had just gone out live.

Upon listening back to his response to the question about the role of *Khalifatul Masih*, Huzoor said that the answer he had given was perhaps longer than was strictly necessary, however as the interview was going out live he thought it was a good opportunity to do *Tabligh* and so Huzoor had purposely mentioned the fulfillment of some of the prophecies in favour of the Promised Messiah (as), such as the eclipse of the sun and the moon.

After some time, Huzoor returned to checking his mail and as he was doing so, he asked me about the tour so far. I always find it amazing how Huzoor can '*multi-task*', whereby he reads important *Jamaat* letters or reports and writes instructions, all the while continuing to hold a conversation with the person seated before him!

For example, I mentioned how the water temperature in Holland suddenly becomes extremely hot and because of this I had scolded my face whilst shaving in the morning! Whilst continuing to review his office mail, Huzoor very precisely told me that when using the sink I should be careful and make sure I slowly and gently moved the handle of the taps to avoid any sudden change in temperature!

Huzoor mentioned how it had been very cold all night but he had not wanted to put the heating on. However, in the morning it had continued to be so cold that he had switched the heating on at breakfast time. Huzoor said he would switch it off again as soon as he returned to his residence.

I felt embarrassed when I listened to this because I would not normally think twice about putting the heating on, but Huzoor had spent the night in the cold. The simplicity of Huzoor and his family truly is incomparable.

Huzoor mentioned how he had noticed that the Dutch people were generally very tall. I replied that Huzoor's observation was correct because I had recently read a report, which said that the Dutch people were, on average, the tallest nation in the world. I said that even the Mayor who had come to meet Huzoor the previous evening had seemed like a giant!

Huzoor's care and help

In Nunspeet, there is not much general office space and so I had been wondering where I would be able to sit and work. In my mind, I thought that I would simply sit on my bed and work from there. I had not mentioned any of this to Huzoor, but that day Huzoor himself said I should use the dining table in the room adjacent to my bedroom to work.

I was extremely grateful. Despite being so busy, Huzoor noticed even the smallest and most insignificant issues facing those around him.

A source of confusion

After *Mulaqat*, I went back to the dining room and worked for the next couple of hours until *Zuhr* and *Asr*. Upon returning from *Namaz*, I saw that a huge puddle of water had gathered in the dining room. I was very confused because as far as I was aware, nobody had been in the flat and before *Namaz* the floor had been completely dry.

My immediate concern was that someone could slip and I was especially worried because the previous night Huzoor had come downstairs and so if Huzoor came down again there was a risk of him slipping, *God forbid*.

I frantically looked around for a mop but could not find one. I did however find a small tea towel and so placed that in the middle of the puddle. Within a second it was completely drenched but the puddle had not receded at all. I rinsed out the tea towel in a bowl and then placed it in the puddle again. I continued this process but rather than dry, it seemed the water was spreading further afield and had even reached the bathroom. I felt a mixture of frustration and confusion but continued with the process of drying the floor as best I could.

It took me well over 20 minutes but finally the floor was dry. I breathed a sigh of relief but continued to be confused as to how the water had appeared.

My confusion remained for the next 24 hours, when at almost the same time the next day another puddle emerged in the exact same location! I then realised that there must be a leak from somewhere but I could not see any dripping from the ceiling. I called Ahmad bhai and at first he was also confused but he then concluded that there must be a leak from the shower we had been using that was passing through to the dining room.

He called Hanif Sahib, a well-known member of our *Jamaat* in Holland who had converted to Ahmadiyyat many years ago, and who was in charge of maintenance at Nunspeet. Upon inspection he said there was a crack in the

seal of the shower tub and this had allowed water to pass through. He fixed it and thankfully there were no more leaks during our stay.

Interview with Omroep Gelderland

At 5.20pm, Huzoor had an interview with the well-known Dutch news agency, *Omroep Gelderland*.

At the beginning, the journalist said it had been 60 years since the *Jamaat* had inaugurated the *Mobarak Mosque* in Den Haag city and that during the past six decades the perception of Islam in the *West* had changed a great deal. In response, Huzoor said that during the past 60 years people had moved away from religion and this was not limited to Islam.

However, Huzoor agreed that there was a growing perception that Islam was the root cause of today's problems and conflicts. Huzoor said that whilst Muslims had moved away from the true teachings of their faith, the religion in its original form, was a means of uniting society.

Huzoor said:

“In reality, the Holy Quran is a beacon of peace and we Ahmadi Muslims are striving to portray Islam’s true teachings throughout the world.”

Huzoor was also asked if he was personally fearful of anti-Islamic groups or individuals such as the Dutch politician Geert Wilders.

Without a second's thought or pause, Huzoor responded very beautifully by saying:

“I am not at all fearful of those who are against Islam. Every person has a right to an opinion or viewpoint, however a person does not have the right to claim he understands what another person believes in their heart better than they do.”



Huzoor's answer exhibited not only his true courage and absolute trust in Allah but was also a rebuke to the unjust attitudes of those who sought to malign Islam.

Huzoor said that those who sought to portray Islam as a violent or extremist religion had not read the *Quran* properly and instead took verses or even single lines wholly out of context, without considering what went before or after.

During the interview, Huzoor was also asked about the deteriorating state of world peace.

In response, Huzoor said:

“I have said for many years that it was a mistake to assume everything in the world was fine after the conclusion of the Cold War. Today we are seeing opposing blocs and alliances forming and so there is a risk of the situation escalating into another world war.”

As the interview concluded, the journalist thanked Huzoor for his time and for granting him the opportunity to interview Huzoor.

In response, Huzoor smiled and said:

“I did not consider it to be an interview, rather it was just like a friendly meeting.”

The journalist thanked Huzoor and said he took that as a compliment!

Meeting local Ahmadis

That evening, Huzoor met members of the Dutch Jamaat in family Mulaqats and so during that period I took the opportunity, to meet some of those people who had just met Huzoor.

I met with a young Ahmadi boy *Tanveer (18)* and his sister *Mukhtar (23)*. When I met them I made the grave mistake of assuming they were husband and wife! They found my mistake both amusing and horrifying in equal measure!

Both of them spoke about how growing up in Dutch society brought about its own challenges. They said that there was so much emphasis on 'freedoms' and many segments of society were so vociferously against religion that it was difficult to not be influenced by the local society.

However, having met Huzoor in *Mulaqat* earlier that evening and being able to pray behind him they said that they felt a sudden and unique attachment to their faith.

Mukhtar sahiba said:

"It is extremely important and beneficial whenever Huzoor comes to visit us, because when we see and hear him we become more attracted to our faith and to the Mosque. There are so many negative influences in Holland that try to bring us away from our faith but when you see Huzoor it reminds you how important religion is and why it is good for us."

As our conversation concluded and I walked away, Tanveer called me back and said that he was grateful that we had spent those few minutes together.

He said:

"Just talking about Huzoor for the past 5 minutes has been very good for me because it made me think about our faith and it made me realise the importance of Khilafat. I already feel as though I am closer to Huzoor and to my religion."

Later, I met an Ahmadi called *Abdul Mannan (31)* who had been living in Holland for the past three years. When I met him he was extremely emotional because he had just met *Khalifatul Masih* for the very first time in his life.

As tears rolled from his eyes, he said:

“Just looking at Huzoor in person, rather than on TV, felt like a miracle. The light on Huzoor’s face, his grace, his beauty cannot be explained in words. I feel like the luckiest person alive because today I breathed the same air as my beloved Khalifa. Today, I realised just how awe-inspiring the presence of Khalifatul Masih is and that from every pore of his body nothing but truth emanates.”

I then met a young Ahmadi called *Muhammad Tariq (19)* who had met Huzoor after 8 years. He said:

“Today, I met Huzoor for the first time as an adult and when I think of the blessings associated with Khilafat it is incredible. People all over the world are joining Ahmadiyyat only because of him and his example. I honestly believe that our Tabligh efforts have no value on their own and any success our Jamaat has is due to the blessings of Khilafat.”

I met a young man called *Abbas (23)* who had recently moved to Holland from Rabwah. He had just met Huzoor for the first time in his life. He said:

“Just moments ago I was seated before the greatest person in the world. It was impossible for me to speak but somehow I managed to raise my

voice to ask for Huzoor's prayers. That is enough because I truly believe Huzoor's prayers will protect me for the rest of my life. Those few seconds will change my life forever."

Abbas continued:

"Today, I prayed behind Huzoor and the feeling of offering Salat behind the Khalifa is completely different and unique. Never have I felt such emotions in prayers before."

I also met an Ahmadi called *Malik Hasan Ahmad (25)* who had come to Holland from Pakistan in 2014. After meeting Huzoor for the very first time, he said:

"As I entered Huzoor's office I was astounded because I did not know it was possible for someone to radiate such beauty and such grace. I did not know that a person's voice could transmit such love, compassion and authority. I swear by Allah that from this day forth I will seek to always follow the teachings of the Quran to the best of my abilities and to obey whatever Khalifatul Masih requires from me."

Another person who had the opportunity to meet Huzoor for the very first time that evening was a *Khadim* called *Muhammad Luqman Ahmad (32)* who said:

"I have just met the Imam of the entire world. I was able to sit before him, to see him and to hear him. How fortunate am I? I swear my honour and dignity is in obeying Huzoor's every instruction. If I want to

live in peace then the only way is to follow Huzoor and to listen to everything he says.”

Ahmad bhai’s secret skill

The following day Huzoor was to visit the *Dutch Parliament* and so that evening after dinner I returned to my room with the intention of ironing my clothes for the next day but just as I was about to start ironing, Ahmad bhai offered to iron them.

Initially, I said there was no need but he insisted and said that he enjoyed ironing and it was not a chore for him. Knowing that my own ironing skills were not the best, I accepted his kind offer.

I then watched as he ironed my suit trouser and also steamed my suit jacket. Seeing him work was an education in itself! I can honestly say that my trousers had never been so crisply and professionally ironed!

Thus, that evening I learned a secret skill of Ahmad bhai! I tried not to take advantage of it during the rest of the trip but I think once or twice more I did take his help!

Interview with *Reformatorisch Dagblad*

The next morning, on 6 October 2015, Huzoor was interviewed by the *Reformatorisch Dagblad* newspaper.

During the interview, Huzoor was asked if it was his objective to be the “*leader of the Muslim Ummah*”.

Very beautifully Huzoor explained that he had no personal ambitions or desires but that according to the teachings and prophecies of the Holy Prophet (sa), the *Imam Mahdi* and *Promised Messiah* who was to come in the latter days would be succeeded by *Khilafat*.



Huzoor said that the objectives of *Khilafat* were to bring mankind towards their *Creator* and to remind man about the need to love one another.

Huzoor added:

“Our only ambition and goal is to spread the true teachings of Islam throughout the world and to unite mankind in peace.”

The journalist said that many extremists sought to justify their heinous acts in the name of Islam and used verses from the *Holy Quran* to support them.

In response, Huzoor said:

“I can also quote many verses from the Holy Quran that entirely refute their false interpretations. They have misconstrued the verses of the Holy Quran entirely. The Holy Quran says that there should be no compulsion in religion and so we respect every religion, every prophet and every person.”

Huzoor was also asked about his attitude towards other Muslims and in particular those Muslims who sought to persecute Ahmadis.

In response, Huzoor said that Ahmadis did not bear any hatred or enmity or seek revenge from those who opposed them. He said many Muslims were ignorant to the truth having been blinded by the falsehood of their so-called leaders and clerics.

At the end of the interview, Huzoor was asked what message he would be taking to the Dutch Parliament later in the day.

In response, Huzoor said:

“My message is that we must join hands and create peace in the world because this is the urgent need of the time.”

My slow response

During Huzoor’s interviews or meetings with dignitaries, occasionally he asks me for a reference or the source of a recent news report. Therefore, it

is part of my job to stay as alert as possible in such meetings. Unfortunately, in his interview that day I proved a little slow to react.

At one point, Huzoor mentioned how non-Muslim journalists and influential figures were appreciating the work of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and its efforts to spread true Islam. Huzoor mentioned a specific article recently published and upon doing so Huzoor looked in my direction and told me to retrieve it.

I have to admit that I was caught unawares and so it took me quite a while to first take out my phone, to unlock it and then to search for the article. All the while Huzoor waited. Finally, after what seemed like an age, I retrieved it and was about to hand my phone to Huzoor when he said:

“Give it to him (the journalist) not me!”

When he saw the news report the journalist appreciated it a lot and he understood Huzoor’s point much more. However, I felt embarrassed that I had taken so long.

After the interview was completed, Huzoor called me and said that during his meetings, I should make sure I have such things to hand and should seek to anticipate where Huzoor may need a reference in advance.

Huzoor said that showing a physical news cutting or report can have far greater effect than merely quoting it. It was extremely good and sage advice and thereafter in the interviews that followed, whenever Huzoor spoke

about a particular news topic or current affairs I used to quickly search on my phone in advance in case Huzoor wished to see the reference or report.

Meeting friends from London

During the first few days of Huzoor's tour, Jonathon Butterworth sahib and his Spanish wife, sister Maria sahiba, were also staying in Nunspeet. They had come, along with their young daughter, for a short holiday.

Both Jonathon and his wife are relatively recent converts to Ahmadiyyat, however when you speak to them or see them you feel as though they have been Ahmadis their entire lives. Certainly, whenever I talk to Jonathon I feel embarrassed at my own standards and on the trip to Holland I also had the opportunity to meet his wife and her devotion to the *Jamaat* was also very apparent.

That afternoon, Huzoor was scheduled to leave for the Dutch Parliament and so they were both stood on the street outside Huzoor's residence so they could wave to him as he walked towards his car.

I took the opportunity to meet them and I asked Maria Sahiba how she was finding her stay in Nunspeet. She said she felt "*in a different world*" and could not find the words to describe her happiness at being in Holland and staying so close to Huzoor. Jonathon also spoke of his happiness at seeing Huzoor and that even though they lived near *Masjid Fazl* in London, to have the opportunity to be so close to Huzoor in a different country, was an altogether different experience and extremely special.

Jonathon asked me about Huzoor's schedule in Holland and I mentioned how already Huzoor had conducted three media interviews.

Jonathon observed that wherever Huzoor gives his opinion he takes the best arguments from both sides and combines them. Thus, regarding the refugee crisis, Huzoor had said the world must show compassion towards refugees, but he had also expressed a concern that there could be people who were posing as refugees and so it was entirely necessary to remain vigilant at all times.

I agreed entirely with Jonathon's point. I had personally witnessed, time and time again, that wherever in the world Huzoor was, he spoke only the truth, only with justice and was never influenced by his audience.

This was something that we would witness once again later that evening in the heart of the Dutch nation.

Visit to Mobarak Mosque

For many weeks and months, we had heard about Huzoor's forthcoming visit to the Dutch Parliament and with the Grace of Allah, on 6th October the day of Huzoor's address had arrived.

Huzoor, Khala Saboohi and the rest of the Qafila departed from Nunspeet at 11.45am and drove directly to the Mobarak Mosque in *The Hague*.

I was happy to visit the Mosque as I had stayed there for around a month in 2006, whilst doing an internship.

Zuhr and *Asr* prayers were offered at the Mosque and thereafter we were served lunch consisting of lamb *karahi* and daal served with traditional Dutch bread.



I try to avoid eating heavy food at lunchtime but as we were seated outside in the bitter cold I found myself enjoying the piping hot food very much.

Huzoor's words a means of reassurance for all

After lunch I met a young Ahmadi friend from Ireland. He mentioned how inspired and personally affected he had been by Huzoor's *Friday Sermon* the week before, during which Huzoor had spoken about the recent fire at *Baitul Futuh*. He said:

"Huzoor's sermon last week was a means of inspiration not just for the people living near Baitul Futuh but for every single Ahmadi in the world. Personally speaking, my wife has suffered miscarriages and we have had problems conceiving but Huzoor's words have comforted us and our faith has been strengthened. We, Ahmadis are so fortunate to

have the blessings of Khilafat to guide us and help us throughout our lives.”

Meeting with dignitaries

There were a number of guests, including politicians from various countries, such as Albania, Croatia, Ireland, Spain and Sweden, who had travelled to attend the Parliament event. After lunch they had the opportunity to meet Huzoor at the Mobarak Mosque.

Some of the guests were meeting Huzoor for the first time, whilst some had met him previously on various occasions.

Huzoor thanked all of the guests for travelling from their countries to attend the Parliament event. Thereafter, the guests took the opportunity to ask Huzoor various questions.

One of the guests was a Nigerian priest, who lived in Switzerland. He had attended Huzoor’s address at the *European Parliament* in 2012. Upon meeting Huzoor again he said he desired for Huzoor to visit Switzerland and to bless the country with his presence again.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Thank you for the invitation and with the grace of Allah I hope I am able to visit again in the future.”

The next person to take the microphone was an *MP* who had come from Montenegro. He said that the world was going through extremely difficult

and challenging times and so the message of peace that Huzoor was spreading throughout the world was “*extremely important and significant*”.



He said his country was small and relatively weak and so he was unable to give Huzoor an “official invitation” to Montenegro but that he hoped to see Huzoor in the future.

Possibly, the politician assumed that, like many other leaders, Huzoor had huge entourages or required accommodation or the best hospitality. However, *Khalifatul Masih* is most simple and our *Jamaat* never seeks financial help of any government or agency.

Thus, upon hearing the remark of the politician, Huzoor responded in the most beautiful manner by saying:

“I am a humble and simple person and so it is possible that I could come even without your invitation! As for your country being small it does not matter. Numbers are insignificant, what is important is having an open-

heart and to be loving to all others. The Ahmadiyya Community is also relatively small but we are striving for peace in all parts of the world.”

Thereafter, the Spanish politicians in attendance asked Huzoor about the conflict in the *Middle East* and the rise of terrorism. As Huzoor has stated on a number of occasions, he said it was necessary to cut the supply lines and funding of terrorist groups.

Upon hearing this an Irish politician, Éamon Ó Cuív said that he had come to the conclusion that the only “winners” in a war were arms producers. Huzoor asked him why it was possible to place sanctions on major powers and countries like Russia and Iran but not restrict the funding of groups who were much smaller and less organised.

The Irish politician responded by saying:

“That is an extremely good question and very fair.”

During the meeting, Huzoor was informed how Sweden’s Government had started to campaign against the ‘veto power’ of the five permanent members of the *United Nations Security Council*.

On a number of occasions in the past, Huzoor himself had said that the *Security Council* veto power was an unjust mechanism that gave undue influence and power to the permanent members.

After hearing about Sweden's position, Huzoor said:

“Sweden seems to always take the lead in such matters. For example, it was the first major nation to recognise Palestine as a state.”

A Spanish MP asked Huzoor if the Promised Messiah (as) had made any prophecies relating to the current state of the world. It was a very interesting question and unlike the typical questions asked by politicians.

In response, Huzoor said the Promised Messiah (as) had said that a time of conflict and disorder would come in which governments would oppose each other and in which people would oppose their governments and vice versa. Huzoor said that the Promised Messiah had said that the origins of such conflicts would be Syria.

Huzoor said:

“Thus, seeing the state of today's world and the disturbance is actually a means of strengthening my faith. We are not part of the disorder but we can see and feel what is happening.”

An example of Huzoor's humility and patience

When the meeting concluded, rather than leave the room first, Huzoor waited for each politician and guest to leave.

The reason was that Huzoor had been informed that it was time for the guests to be transported to the Dutch Parliament.

If Huzoor had walked out first it would have only delayed the guests for a few seconds, but instead Huzoor chose to wait for a few minutes as they filed out.

This was another example of Huzoor's personal humility that he never requires protocol or special treatment. The guests were also pleased as it meant they had the opportunity to personally meet Huzoor as they left the room.

A personal reflection

Huzoor returned to his room at the Mobarak Mosque for a few minutes, whilst the rest of us waited outside as Huzoor was about to leave for the Dutch Parliament.

I found myself praying silently for the success of the event and I am sure that others were as well. I felt nervous.

I knew Huzoor's address and presence could only prove to be a source of blessings for Holland and for our *Jamaat* but I was also worried that, *God forbid*, something could happen that would be a source of unpleasantness or someone could act in a way that was not befitting.

This, after all, was the same Parliament where Geert Wilders was an MP and a party leader. He is that person, who for a number of years, had spoken in the most vile and horrific terms about Islam and the Holy Prophet (*peace be upon him*).

As I thought of this, I was reminded how some years ago, Huzoor had referred to Wilders in his *Friday Sermon* of 14 October 2011 and said:

“Listen carefully! You, your party and every person like you will ultimately perish. But the religion of Islam and the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) will remain forever. No worldly power, no matter how powerful and no matter how much hatred they bear towards Islam, will ever succeed in destroying our religion.”

Huzoor had said such individuals and opponents of Islam would perish through the power of prayer alone. Huzoor said:

“We have no worldly power, nor will we ever use any worldly force. But the prayers of people whose hearts have been grieved are enough to shake the Heavens!”

Later on, after learning of Huzoor’s warning, Wilders had actually written to the Dutch Government’s Interior Ministry alleging that Huzoor had, *God forbid*, called for violence, and so he asked the Interior Ministry what action it would take against the Ahmadiyya Community.

In response, the Dutch Interior Minister, on official record, responded by saying:

“(Hazrat) Mirza Masroor Ahmad has said that such people or groups are not destroyed by violence or other secular activities, but through prayer. In the remarks I see nothing that incites or calls for violence.

There is no cause for any action therefore against the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.”

As I thought back to that incident and how Allah had protected the honour of our *Jamaat* and of *Khalifatul Masih*, I realised that no matter who was in the audience, Allah would protect our *Jamaat* and the honour and dignity of *Khilafat*.

After a few moments Huzoor and Khala Saboohi walked out and as I saw Huzoor my heart filled with emotion. Huzoor looked so graceful, radiant and commanding. *Alhamdulillah*.

Passing time during a brief delay

Our Mosque in Den Haag is located very centrally and so Parliament is nearby. The city itself is very attractive. It is covered in greenery and flowers and it has streams running throughout and cycle lanes running parallel to the main roads.

As we arrived at the Parliament entrance we were delayed for a few minutes as the security guard waited for clearance from his superiors to allow the Qafila cars into the inner area.

Whilst we waited, Nasir Amini and Humayun sahib started to have a debate about how tall the security guard was! After another minute or two passed both Munir Javed sahib and I also joined in with this speculation! None of us could agree on his height but our guesses ranged from 6 foot 2 inches to nearly 7 foot! My own personal guess was 6 foot 5 inches!

I remember thinking to myself how strange it was that we were about to attend such an historic event and yet we still found time for such a pointless debate!

Huzoor's visit to the Dutch Parliament

Upon arrival, Huzoor was greeted by Harry Van Bommel, a Dutch Parliamentarian and Deputy Chairman of the *Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs*. It was the Foreign Affairs Committee, a cross-party parliamentary group, who had invited Huzoor to address them that day.



Huzoor was escorted to a large and rather grand hall where the committee had elected to hold the event.

The wooden floors were partially covered by huge multi-coloured rugs and the ceilings were decorated with two huge multi-sided ornaments. There was even a grand piano placed on one side of the room!

Huzoor was seated in the middle of the head table, with the members of the committee to his right and Ameer Sahib Holland and Naib Ameer, Hameed Sahib to his left.

The formal event started with an introductory talk by Harry van Bommel in which he welcomed Huzoor to the Parliament and reflected upon how well attended the event was and particularly the fact that politicians and dignitaries from various different countries had travelled to attend.

As Mr van Bommel spoke there was an extremely loud and sudden bang. We all turned in the direction of one side of the head table from where the noise had come. I noticed that Huzoor also looked. It so turned out that one of the panels that was supporting the head table had given way and that had caused the commotion. It was not a big issue but the bang was certainly very loud!

Huzoor's address

After his short remarks, Mr van Bommel requested Huzoor to address the members of the committee and the audience.

Huzoor gave his address, whilst seated, rather than standing at a podium or lectern as is normally the case. This is something that some people asked me about in the following days.

The reason was that the rules of the committee were such that they prefer for all comments and remarks to be made whilst seated.

I have always seen how Huzoor respects customs and traditions of others as much as possible and this was another example.

Huzoor's security guards were also seated throughout the event and this seemed strange as otherwise they are always on their feet at such events.



During his address, Huzoor explained beautifully the peaceful teachings of Islam and proved categorically that the Quran did not permit terrorism or extremism in any circumstances.

Huzoor mentioned how different people spoke of different issues as the most critical or pressing issues facing the world. For example some spoke of climate change, whilst others spoke of the world's financial state.

Referring to his own view on the matter, Huzoor said:

"If we analyse the situation objectively, we realise that world peace and security is indeed the most critical issue of our time. Unquestionably,

with each day that passes the world is becoming increasingly unstable and dangerous.”

After describing the lack of world peace and security as the most significant issue, Huzoor went on to describe the means to peace and how to maintain international relations.

Every point Huzoor made was based upon the teachings of the Quran. He directly quoted numerous verses so that no one could deny that what he was saying was based on the true teachings of Islam.

Huzoor explained how certain so-called Muslim groups had taken the teachings of the Holy Quran entirely out of context to justify their extremist and terrorist acts.

Contrasting this to the efforts of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat, Huzoor said:

“We Ahmadi Muslims, are not amongst those people who are creating or partaking in today’s disorder and unrest. Rather, we are the people who desire peace in the world. We are the people who seek to heal the world. We are the people who seek to unite mankind. We are the people who seek to transform all hatreds and enmities into love and affection.”

Huzoor continued by saying:

“As a religious leader, I wish to say that instead of blaming and provoking one another, we should focus upon building true and long-lasting world peace.”

Huzoor said that the Quran taught that at all times and in all situations a person must adhere to 'justice'. Thus, whether prior to, during or after any conflict, all parties should uphold principles of integrity and fairness.



Huzoor said:

“In today’s world we do not find such high moral standards and levels of integrity. Rather, after a war is finished, countries impose sanctions and restrictions that limit the progress of the defeated parties and prevent their nations from attaining true freedom or independence.”

Huzoor concluded his address by calling on world powers to respect one another and to work together. He said that major powers should seek to help weaker or developing nations, rather than exploit them for their own benefit.

Huzoor said that if such just policies were implemented it would lay the foundations for true peace in the world but if the present injustice

continued it was highly likely that a “*disastrous world war*” would erupt “*whose repercussions would be felt for generations to come*”.

Alhamdulillah, Huzoor’s address was a perfect defence of Islam and a clear exposition of its true teachings.

Question and Answer session

As it was a formal committee hearing, time was also allocated for the committee members to ask Huzoor follow-up questions.

As far as I am aware the follow-up questions were meant to relate to the address given. However a couple of the politicians chose to ask Huzoor about the concept of ‘*freedom of speech*’ or ‘*freedom of expression*’.

Many Ahmadis in different countries were watching the Parliamentary proceedings via live streaming and afterwards many contacted me and others to state that they felt the questioning and style of those politicians was not suitable or appropriate.

I have to admit, I was also taken aback and disappointed by their style. It was not just we Ahmadis who felt this, but in fact many of the guests also expressed their disapproval later.

The issue was not the questions themselves, because the issue of *free speech* is a live issue that is being debated. The issue was that each time Huzoor gave a very clear and comprehensive response, based on Islam’s teachings, and yet they persisted with repeating their questions.

It did seem to me that they were perhaps hoping that due to their pressure or persistence, Huzoor's stance on the issue might weaken and he might, *God forbid*, say something that was more in line with *their* views, as opposed to Islam's views.



If they had been asking questions to anyone else perhaps they may have been successful. However, their questions were directed at *Khalifatul Masih*, who is divinely guided and who is not overawed by any location or title. Thus, in answer to their questions, Huzoor repeatedly stated that, whilst free speech was an important and fundamental right, there had to be limits.

Huzoor said that the peace and cohesion of society was paramount and so sometimes certain limits or sacrifices were required for the greater good. Repeatedly, Huzoor spoke of the importance of respecting one another and of the importance of abiding by '*human values*'.

Huzoor said that in terms of free speech, no one should ridicule or mock those things that are sacred or beloved to others because to mock such things was an invitation to disturbance and conflict.

Huzoor made the point that Parliaments continue to amend laws or to enact new ones and this attested to the fact that man-made laws could never claim to be perfect.

Nonetheless, the politicians continued to push their views. Finally, Huzoor cited to them the hypocrisy of their claims that absolute free speech was a fundamental principle enshrined in the *West*.

Huzoor said that in the *West*, hate-speech against Jews or sentiments that could be classed as anti-Semitic were not permitted under any circumstances. For example, people could be prosecuted for denying the Holocaust. Thus, it was wrong to claim that free speech was absolute.

Upon hearing this response the politicians had no further comment and were left silenced.

As the session concluded, I felt fortunate to have been present at such an historic occasion and thought how blessed Ahmadis were to have *Khilafat* because no one could represent Islam in the way that Huzoor had just done, *Alhamdulillah*.

Throughout Huzoor had remained entirely calm, collected and persuasive. His conduct and words had been a means of highlighting the truth of his message and the dignity and honour of Islam.

It was also interesting to note that as soon as the cameras were switched off, the same politicians who had appeared somewhat hostile to Huzoor's views on free speech, suddenly became extremely respectful and thanked him for addressing them and for answering their questions.



Huzoor mentioned later, how one of the politicians, even apologised in case any of his questions had been inappropriate. As graceful as ever, Huzoor responded by saying he had not minded at all.

Impact of Huzoor's address

Following the conclusion of the event, I was able to meet some of the guests who had attended.

They were all extremely appreciative of Huzoor's address and the way he had portrayed Islam.

I met a theology academic, Professor Eric de Jong who said:

“Your Khalifa is the voice of Islam – or at least he should be! He is the person we needed in the Dutch Parliament and it was a great privilege for me to attend.”

One of the guests was a Croatian MP, who said he particularly liked how much Huzoor quoted from the Quran. He said this had proved to be ***“such an effective and convincing way of showing what Islam is”***.

I met a Priest from Switzerland who said:

“When I see and hear the Khalifa Masroor I feel much more hope for the world.”

He added that he had not appreciated the repeated questions of the committee members about free speech. He said he felt they were ***“unduly provocative”*** and that he felt the politicians had wanted Huzoor to say something that was against the teachings of Islam. The Priest said:

“The Khalifa did not fall into their trap and stayed firm to Islam”.

A well-known Muslim academic, Professor Yasser Latifi said that he had been very impressed with how Huzoor had responded to the questions in the question and answer session. He said:

“Your leader handled the questions extremely well – he remained calm throughout and displayed no irritation whatsoever.”

An Indian journalist, Sultan Shahin said that he wished to print the entire text of Huzoor's speech in his publication. He added:

"In the question and answer session I saw that Huzoor was not apologetic for his faith but rather displayed his pride in Islam. As a Muslim I really appreciated this. Also when he referenced the limits of free speech in relation to the Jews and the Holocaust it was excellent because it showed the double standards of the West. It was a very brave thing to say."

I met a Dutch architect called Michael who was clearly unhappy with the attitude of the Dutch politicians during the question and answer session. He said:

"Your Khalifa is a very dignified and wise man. However, I was very angry and in fact ashamed by my country's politicians. They should only have come to take the wisdom of the Khalifa and should have shown him much more respect. I felt they turned the question and answer session into a platform for their own publicity as they knew that people from across the world were watching."

Another Dutch guest, Mr Luipert said he had found Huzoor's address to be ***"extraordinary and intellectual"***. He said that he had been particularly impressed by the fact that Huzoor ***"is not looking just at today but to the future"***.

I also met with a Dutch lady who said:

“Due to the media’s influence I had a very negative impression of Islam but today has changed my views forever. I am convinced that Islam is peaceful because His Holiness quoted verses from the Quran. That proved he was representing the teachings of Islam and not his personal views or his own interpretation.”

Huzoor’s meetings with guests

Following the conclusion of the formal event, Huzoor, Khala Saboohi and the Qafila members returned to the cars and were driven to a large nearby building called *Nieuwspoort*.

It is a building that is used by Dutch politicians, journalists and other groups to host press conferences or meetings. On that day, it had been arranged that Huzoor would personally meet some of the dignitaries and guests in a meeting room at *Nieuwspoort* and thereafter dinner would be served to all of the guests in a large hall.

Over the next 45 minutes, Huzoor met various guests and dignitaries including the former Defence Minister of Holland, the Spanish Ambassador, a Police Chief from London and various other guests.

Meeting with Arnourd van Doorn

One of the guests who came to meet Huzoor was a Dutch politician called Arnourd van Doorn. He was formerly a senior member of the far-right PVV Party and a close advisor to the anti-Islamic party leader Geert Wilders.

However, despite his background he had later accepted Islam and had now founded Holland's first Islamic political party. Thus when he met Huzoor he asked for his guidance for his political activities.



In response, Huzoor said:

“As you have founded an Islamic Party you should seek guidance and direction from the Holy Quran. Even though it is a religious scripture it contains guidance that is applicable to all parts of our daily lives. You must also learn about the true character of the Holy Prophet (sa).”

Huzoor continued:

“When you meet Muslims you should encourage them to follow the true teachings of the Quran, rather than what the Maulvis are preaching. You should yourself read the translation of the Holy Quran done by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.”

The politician thanked Huzoor for his advice. It so happened that later I was seated next to him during dinner. I spoke at length with him about his conversion to Islam.

He told me that when he was part of the PVV Party he was campaigning blindly against Islam and he viewed it as a barbaric and misogynistic religion. He decided to read the Quran and other books so that he could find further ammunition for his campaign against Islam.

However, he was quite shocked that what he read was completely different to what he had been told or had heard and so secretly he continued to learn more about Islam over the next 18 months and finally took the decision to accept it.

He also informed me that some non-Ahmadi Muslims had warned him not to meet Huzoor but he had not been deterred and was extremely grateful for the opportunity.

Return to Nunspeet

Following the conclusion of the meeting dinner was served to all of the guests. Thereafter, Huzoor returned to the Mobarak Mosque to lead the Maghreb and Isha prayers before returning to Nunspeet.

It had proved to be an extremely blessed and historic day in the history of our *Jamaat*.

A few moments by the stairs

During our stay in Holland, every morning after *Fajr* there was a short *Dars* which we would sit and listen to. However the next morning, when Huzoor left the Mosque after leading *Namaz*, I instinctively got up and followed behind.

It was fortunate I did because as Huzoor approached his residence he looked back and called me and told me to meet him downstairs where I was staying.

I returned to the flat and moments later Huzoor opened the door of his residence and walked down the stairs. There was a small gate at the bottom of the stairs and Huzoor stood on one side, whilst I stood on the other side of the gate.

Over the next few minutes, we talked about the Parliament event. Huzoor told me about some of the people he had spoken to and I also mentioned some of the people I had met.

Huzoor mentioned how Harry van Bommel, the politician who had hosted the event, was very respectful of the *Jamaat* and sincere. We also discussed some of the media interviews Huzoor had given during the tour.

With the grace of Allah, during the tour I had various opportunities to meet Huzoor and to spend time in his presence, however perhaps I look back at those few moments with the greatest fondness. They were extremely private and unique moments shared with my Khalifa.

Interview with De Stentor

On the morning of Wednesday, 7th October Huzoor was interviewed by the Dutch newspaper De Stentor.

The journalist said that negative stories about Islam were given far more coverage than the message of peace conveyed by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He asked Huzoor if he was frustrated by this.

In response, Huzoor said:

“I am not frustrated but it does lead me to bow down ever more and submit before Allah the Almighty in prayer. Thus, rather than becoming frustrated, we are drawn ever closer to our Lord and towards serving humanity. Most surely Allah is He who loves His Creation.”

The journalist said that Muslim extremists used verses of the Holy Quran to justify their violent ideologies. In response, Huzoor said that it was clear they were taking verses of the Quran entirely out of context.

Huzoor said that there were many verses in the Bible that, if taken out of context, could be seen to promote extremist views. Thus, any scripture had the potential for being abused or misused.

In terms of the teachings of the Quran, Huzoor said we should look at the life and character of the Holy Prophet (sa) who bore the most horrific persecution for many years and never retaliated.

When he was finally given permission by Allah to wage war, it was given only as a defensive measure and not just to defend Islam but to defend *all* religions and *all* places of worship.



Huzoor was asked if he considered himself to be a target of the opponents of Islam or non-Ahmadi Muslims and if he was at all personally fearful.

In response, Huzoor said:

“If I were to be fearful then I would not be able to fulfil my duties. Ahmadi Muslims are targeted in Pakistan, Indonesia and certain other countries but it will not stop us from fulfilling our mission, which is to spread the true teachings of Islam to every corner of the world.”

Very beautifully, Huzoor added:

“We Ahmadi Muslims are soldiers who are fighting for peace – but we do not use swords or violence. Our weapon is prayer alone.”

Meeting some local Ahmadis

After the interview concluded, whilst family Mulaqats were taking place, I took the opportunity to meet some of the local Ahmadis.

I met an Ahmadi lady, *Mrs Shamim Mazhar*, who was with her husband and children. She mentioned how upon seeing that one of her children was disabled Huzoor very lovingly asked about his health and prayed especially for him.

Shamim Sahiba added:

“I feel as though I am walking in the clouds. I cannot describe my joy and happiness. I am going to tell all my family members that today I had the opportunity to meet Khalifa-Waqt and that truly, nothing can ever be greater than this.”

I met an Ahmadi Khadim, *Ataul Munim (32)* and his wife *Maleeha Hannan*.

Ataul Munim said:

“I could not sleep at all last night knowing that today I would meet our beloved Khalifa. The peace and contentment I feel having met him is indescribable. During the Mulaqat Huzoor prayed that ‘Allah bless you’ and those few words will stay with me throughout my life. Those words will protect me and my children forever, Insha’Allah.”

His wife, Maleeha sahiba said:

“When I lived in Rabwah I used to wonder if ever someone like me would have the opportunity to meet Huzoor. I have waited my entire life for this moment.”

An emotional meeting

I met a man called *Mir Naeem ur Rasheed* (44) who was standing with his young children. When I saw them, I felt instantly saddened because two of his children were severely disabled.

Naeem sahib told me how they had recently arrived in Holland after being stranded in Thailand for some years waiting for their asylum cases to be processed.

His daughter Zaina (9) was physically disabled and was extremely tiny for her age. However mentally she was completely alert and spoke in a very sweet and loving way.

After meeting Huzoor, beaming with joy, she said:

“I am extremely lucky because I met Huzoor and he is so kind because he gave me a chocolate and a pen. I am so happy.”

One of her brothers was also physically disabled and mentally handicapped. As I met him, his father told me that whilst they were in

Thailand his disabled son had fallen into a swimming pool and was on the verge of drowning.

He said that when the ambulance arrived they took him to a hospital but the doctors said he would not survive. However, he called London to request Huzoor's prayers and thereafter his son made a miraculous recovery, which left even his doctors stunned.

Naeem sahib said that thereafter Huzoor instructed that regular reports about his son's health should be sent to him from Thailand.

Naeem sahib said:

"Huzoor is so busy and has the burden of the entire Jamaat on his shoulders and yet he loves each Ahmadi so much that he contacted us in the remote village of Thailand where we were staying to enquire about our son. I swear that only Khalifatul Masih can be so compassionate, loving and kind."

Baitul Aafiyat foundation stone ceremony in Almere

By the time Mulaqats were concluded and Huzoor had led Zuhr and Asr prayers it was 3pm.

Normally, following the afternoon prayers Huzoor would return to his residence for some time, but that afternoon the *Jamaat* had arranged for the foundation stone laying ceremony of the *Baitul Aafiyat* Mosque in the

city of Almere. Thus, just a few minutes after returning to his residence, Huzoor came back out and the Qafila proceeded to Almere.

The Qafila arrived at 4.30pm where Huzoor was welcomed by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Mr Frits Huis and members of the local Jamaat.

The formal session began with Tilawat and thereafter Ameer Sahib Holland, Hibatun Noer Sahib gave a welcome address.

Wise words from the Deputy Mayor

The *Deputy Lord Mayor* then took to the stage and spoke very briefly but the few words he did speak were extremely eloquent and considered.

Out of respect for Huzoor he spoke in English rather than Dutch and said:

“My speech will be extremely short because it is better for us all to listen to His Holiness. I was born in the same year as His Holiness but he has far more wisdom than me and so there is no need for me to speak any further.”

Normally politicians or dignitaries enjoy the opportunity to address audiences but I, and all the Ahmadis in attendance, were very impressed by how he had grasped and understood, to some extent at least, the status of *Khalifatul Masih* and his personal humility.

Huzoor's address

Thereafter, Huzoor took to the stage and spoke about the true objectives of Mosques and reassured the local people about the teachings of Islam.

Huzoor said:

“Every Ahmadi mosque, no matter where in the world it is built, is an abode of peace, security and shelter for all of humanity.”



Huzoor continued:

“It is incumbent on a true Muslim to exhibit love and compassion towards all others and to be guardians of peace of society. Let it be clear therefore that this mosque, whose foundation stone is being laid today, will prove to be a glorious symbol of peace, security and sanctuary for all.”

Stating that non-Muslims were welcome at Ahmadi Mosques, Huzoor said:

“Our mosques have no hidden agendas and nor are they built for any secret purposes. Rather the doors to this and indeed all true mosques will forever be open. Whoever wants to come and visit the mosque, it will always be extremely welcome.”

Concluding, Huzoor thanked the local authorities and the local people for supporting the Jamaat’s efforts to build a Mosque in the city.

Huzoor said:

“Many of the Ahmadis living here are those who had to migrate from their home countries due to the religious persecution they faced. It is due to your kindness and open hearts that those people who were previously persecuted and deprived are now able to live with true religious freedom, and will soon be able to worship in a new purpose built mosque, Insha’Allah.”

Impact of Huzoor’s address

Huzoor’s address was not especially long but it had a profound effect upon the guests, many of whom I met afterwards.

One person I met was *Asjen van Dyk*, a local politician, who said:

“Your Khalifa spoke only of peace and humanity. He explained that Ahmadi Mosques are centres of peace. There has been a fear of Islam

that has slowly built up in our society and so the message of your Khalifa needs to be spread far and wide. His words and example are the means of changing the negative impression that people hold of Islam."

I met the *Deputy Mayor*, who had welcomed Huzoor and spoken at the event, who said:

"It was such an honour to meet the Khalifa and to spend time with him. His grace and wisdom is incredible and he is the person who can build bridges of peace across the world."

A local police officer I met kept his comments brief. He said:

"There are three words that describe your Khalifa – Peace, Respect and Humanity. There is nothing else to say!"

A Dutch lady called *Sonja* said:

"His Holiness transmits peace and love and he has reassured every person about the new Mosque. The only way to describe today's event is 'perfect'".

I met a Dutch man called *Dr Willen Koelsier* who said that Huzoor had "reassured everyone about the religion of Islam". He said his personal heroes were Gandhi and Martin Luther King and he considered Huzoor to be like them. Of course, as Ahmadis we consider the status of *Khalifa-Waqt* to be far higher than such figures but certainly the guest's sentiments were a sincere expression of his high regard for Huzoor.

A memorable Nikah!

Following the conclusion of the foundation laying ceremony the Qafila returned to Nunspeet.

That evening immediately after the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers, the *Missionary in-charge* in Holland led the *Nikah* ceremony of Tommy Kallon sahib, the former *Sadr Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK*. The *Nikah* was performed in the presence of Huzoor.

Whilst announcing the *Nikah*, our *Missionary* struggled to pronounce Tommy sahib's full name and also that of his father. As he struggled, it was left to Tommy sahib himself to correct the pronunciations and to clarify his own name and that of his father!

After a few minutes the *Nikah* was finally announced and Huzoor led the silent prayer and then Huzoor met Tommy sahib and offered congratulations to him.

Smiling, Huzoor said:

“Tommy sahib perhaps it would have been better if you had announced your own Nikah!”

All of us who could hear Huzoor's comment laughed a great deal. Even the *Missionary-in-charge* sahib who had struggled to pronounce the names enjoyed Huzoor's joke!

Precious moments with Huzoor

That evening after dinner I returned to where I was staying and was working on my laptop when I heard the door from Huzoor's residence open. I realised it must be Huzoor and so I immediately said "*Assalamo Alaikum*" so that Huzoor would know that I was in the room.

Huzoor came and sat down in the lounge and switched on *MTA*. Huzoor told me to call Abdullah Saphrah sahib and so I ran to the dining room and then to various other places looking for Saphrah sahib.

Finally after a few minutes I was able to locate him. I ran back to the flat and informed Huzoor that Saphrah sahib was coming. Thereafter, for the next 35 minutes, Saphrah sahib and myself had the privilege to sit in the blessed presence of Huzoor.

Alhamdulillah it seemed that Huzoor was pleased with the foundation stone ceremony that had taken place earlier in the day.

Huzoor mentioned how he had enjoyed the company of the *Deputy Lord Mayor* and that he had found him to be humorous and quite informal. Huzoor said that in this respect he reminded him of the *Mayor of London*, Boris Johnson.

Huzoor narrated how the Deputy Lord Mayor had said that he and Huzoor had been born in the same year but in different countries and so it was surprising and interesting that they had come together and met now after 65 years.

Huzoor had responded by saying:

“Even more interesting is the fact that we were both infants who were born and raised thousands of miles apart and we had entirely different religions and beliefs and yet today, with the Grace of Allah, we have been brought together due to this Islamic function that is being held in Almere!”

Huzoor asked who I had met that day and how I had found the function. He asked me how Mala and Mahid were and how everyone else in London was.

Those informal moments being able to observe the humility, beauty and grace of Huzoor will forever remain ingrained in my memory.

Late night conversations with my roommate

It was Ahmad bhai’s routine that he would normally return quite late to our room after doing a final security check. By the time he came I was often lying in bed reading but then we would talk and discuss our experiences and also about our lives back in London. Normally, these conversations would take place whilst Ahmad bhai did his ironing. I enjoyed his company very much and looked forward to our nightly chats!

Catching up on sleep and a late breakfast

Since we had been in Holland, each morning I had stayed awake after Fajr, however on Thursday morning I went back to sleep for a few hours. Those

hours of sleep worked perfectly because when I woke up I felt completely refreshed after what had proved a very busy few days.

By the time I was ready I had missed breakfast. I was quite hungry and thought I would have to wait another couple of hours until lunch but then Ahmad bhai told me that Nasir Amini had sent me a chocolate muffin which he had picked up from a local bakery in the morning. I was delighted! The muffin tasted extremely delicious alongside a hot cup of coffee that I made.

The muffin was extremely sweet and chocolaty but that was good because the previous evening I had tasted some *chilli achaar (pickle)* which had been possibly the hottest and spiciest thing I had ever tasted! It felt like it had burnt a hole in my tongue and so having the chocolate muffin was a very nice antidote to the previous evening's spice!

An unfortunate disturbance during *Salat*

On Thursday afternoon, as Huzoor led the *Zuhr* prayer, the mobile phone of someone sitting in the front row rang twice and both times it took the person quite a bit of time to silence their phone.

When *Zuhr* was completed, without looking back, Huzoor said:

"Whoever's phone was ringing should switch it off".

I am sure, whoever's phone it was will have been extremely embarrassed to have disturbed Huzoor's prayers but he was saved further embarrassment by the fact that Huzoor did not look back or ask whose phone it was.

Until then I had kept my phone on silent during prayers, however for the rest of the tour I was much more conscious and so I made sure that I switched off the phone completely to avoid any risk of disturbing *Namaz* whatsoever.

Visit to Nunspeet town centre

That afternoon, after lunch, I took the opportunity to visit Nunspeet town centre for the first time. The local *Jamaat* had made a number of bikes available for the duration of the tour and so I took one bike and rode to the town centre with Nasir Amini.

The town centre was quite small and it took us only 30 or 40 minutes to see as much as we wanted. Unsurprisingly, I was attracted by the various different types of chocolates that were on sale.

We also went to a local cheese delicatessen and as we entered the smell of the cheese was overpowering and slightly unpleasant, however that did not stop me from gratefully accepting a sample of cheese offered by the owner! It tasted delicious and I was tempted to buy some for home but I was worried that the cheese would go off by the time we returned to London. Some of the other Qafila members did buy some local cheese to take back to London and as far as I know the cheese was ok.

I also could not help but be amused when Nasir bought some bags of dry fruit for a total of 15 euros and said to me that they were very reasonably priced only to find the very same bags being sold in a different shop at one third the cost!

Meeting relatives

During our stay in Holland I met Mirza Fakhar Ahmad Sahib, his wife Ayesha and their children on a few occasions. They have lived in Holland for the past few years after moving from London.

Their eldest daughter *Aeman* had read a number of my personal diaries about Huzoor's various tours during the past and so every time I met her she asked me how I was finding Holland. She seemed quite concerned that I would write something negative! I tried to reassure her as best I could that I was enjoying my time in Holland!

German Khuddam coming for Namaz

On the evening of Thursday 8 October, I met two members of Khuddam, *Intisar Malik (26)* and *Sheheryar Aslam (26)* who had driven that evening from Germany to offer *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers behind Huzoor.

Speaking about why they had travelled from Germany, Intisar said:

“Our only objective was to pray behind our Khalifa and to see his blessed face. Even if we only get a glimpse of Huzoor it feels like our entire lives have changed and been specially blessed.”

Sheheryar added:

“There are millions of Ahmadis in the world who are desperate to see Huzoor and to pray behind him. Some people live their lives and die

without meeting or seeing their Khalifa and so it would be utterly shameful if we did not avail this opportunity that Allah has blessed us with.”

Impressions of local Ahmadis

That evening I met a number of local Ahmadis who had just met Huzoor in Mulaqat.

One of the people I met was an Ahmadi called *Imran Chaudry (53)* who had lived in Holland for 47 years.

He told me he used to be part of the *National Amila* in Holland and during that period the *Amila* had had the opportunity to meet Huzoor collectively. He said one thing he had noticed was Huzoor’s excellent mathematic skills!

He said sometimes various figures were discussed or currencies would require converting and the *Amila* members would frantically press the buttons on their calculators but before they had even finished entering the figures, Huzoor would already have worked out the figure in his head!

I also met some Arab Ahmadis, including *Khalid al-Karbashi (40)* and his wife *Shaheeda* who were from Morocco.

They had converted to Ahmadiyyat around five years previously.

After meeting Huzoor, Khalid sahib said:

“Huzoor is like a bright shining light, he is like a star who guides us. It is my duty to obey Khalifatul Masih because he is the representative of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa). To obey him is to obey the Holy Prophet (sa) and every true Muslim must obey the Prophet of Islam (sa).”

His wife, Shaheeda sahiba said:

“I cannot describe my feelings after meeting Huzoor. What an honour and privilege it is to see him because he is closer to Allah than anyone else living today. His prayers are a special wealth and a treasure that will protect me and my children for generations to come.”

I met an Ahmadi called *Mustafa Shafaqi* also a convert from Morocco. I was quite shocked when he told me he was 46 because he looked much younger. He had converted to Ahmadiyyat when he was 25.

As he spoke tears rolled down his eyes, whilst at the same time he was smiling from ear to ear. Mustafa sahib said:

“I swear that each day my love for Ameer-ul-Momineen increases. Sometimes we face difficulties, for example I struggled to find work and so I requested Huzoor’s prayers and now I have a good job, Alhamdulillah. Huzoor listens to all our problems and cares for us like a father.”

I also met *Yusuf Ikhlaq sahib (34)*. I had not met him before but as soon as I heard his voice I knew that he must be the brother of *Ibrahim Ikhlaq sahib* who is a very well-known Ahmadi in London and who is now serving the Jamaat as a *Waqf-e-Zindigi*. Ibrahim sahib is a close friend of mine and so I enjoyed meeting his brother and hearing the same deep and booming voice.

Yusuf sahib had converted to Ahmadiyyat at the age of 16. Speaking about his Mulaqat that evening, he said:

“I am truly speechless because I just met the person who is the greatest and most blessed person on earth. In the world there is so much disorder, Muslims are declaring one another as kafirs but our Jamaat is completely united at the hand of Khalifa-Waqt. That is what distinguishes us and our honour is in our obedience to Khilafat.”

Friday Sermon at Nunspeet

On 9 October 2015, Huzoor delivered his Friday Sermon from the *Baitun Nur Mosque* in Nunspeet.

During his sermon, Huzoor spoke of how the majority of Ahmadis living in Holland had been granted residence in Holland due entirely to the fact that they were Ahmadis who had been denied their religious rights in Pakistan.

Thus, Huzoor said it was essential that they sought to live their lives according to the true teachings of Islam and fulfilled the expectations of the Promised Messiah (as).

He said each Ahmadi should pay attention to the conditions of Bai'at and reflect upon to what extent they were fulfilling each and every condition.



Interview with De Correspondent

Later that afternoon, Huzoor held an interview with the Dutch media outlet, *De Correspondent*.

During the interview, Huzoor was asked about the concept of *Jihad*. In response, Huzoor said:

“Groups like Daesh are interpreting the Holy Quran in completely the wrong way. Jihad actually means to struggle for something good but the terrorists are making their own violent interpretations just to feed their own vested interests.”

Regarding the situation in Syria, Huzoor was asked whether world powers should co-operate with Syria's President Bashar al-Assad.

In response, Huzoor said that the biggest threat to peace in Syria was the terrorist group *Daesh* and so the priority should be to eliminate their threat and for that it would be necessary to co-operate with the Syrian Government to some extent at least.



Huzoor was asked if he was optimistic about peace emerging in the Middle East. In response, he said that the signs were not hopeful and there was a risk of the war escalating still further. Thus he was “not optimistic” in the short-term but hoped that eventually people would realise their mistakes and turn towards Allah the Almighty.

Upon being asked about the Jamaat’s efforts to spread Ahmadiyyat, Huzoor said:

“We will never give up and we will never become frustrated. Rather, we shall continue with our missionary work and we believe that one day change will come. If not this generation, then in coming generations people will come to realise the truth of Islam.”

Media coverage in Holland

As the interview concluded I thought to myself how I had witnessed dozens of interviews of Huzoor in different countries, but I did not think I had ever seen five media interviews in just five days!

Alhamdulillah each interview was extremely blessed and to the credit of the journalists each of them immediately wrote stories or broadcast their interviews within a day or two.

Thus, through the grace of Allah, the message of Ahmadiyyat was conveyed to many millions of Dutch people through Huzoor's interviews.

Waqf-e-Nau classes

That evening, Huzoor also held a *Waqf-e-Nau* class with Ahmadi boys from Holland and a *Waqfat-e-Nau* class with Ahmadi girls.

During the *Waqf-e-Nau* class a short presentation was given about the Mobarak Mosque in Den Haag in which it was mentioned how during the time of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) there was a major fire at the Mosque.

At that time, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) reassured the members of the Holland Jamaat that they should not worry and that with Allah's Help the Mosque would be restored and would be bigger and more beautiful than before.

It reminded me very much of how after the recent Baitul Futuh fire in London, Huzoor had given reassurance to the entire *Jamaat* and said that soon those halls that had been burnt would be replaced by halls even more beautiful and blessed, *Insha'Allah*.



Updating my home-screen

That evening, Huzoor called me to his office and asked for my phone as he wanted to check something on the dictionary. Thus, for the next few minutes Huzoor used my phone, whilst I remained seated opposite.

Huzoor knows how to use the *iPhone* very well and so he immediately opened *Safari* and went to the *Oxford Dictionary* website and checked the word he wanted to. Huzoor advised me that it would have been easier if I had installed the app!

Anyway, when Huzoor returned my phone I saw that he had saved the *Oxford Dictionary* webpage to my home-screen! Thus, now whenever I look at my phone I am reminded of those few blessed moments!

Huzoor's non-stop schedule

Huzoor spoke about his address at the Parliament a few days earlier and the fact that English is not his first language. I responded by saying that Huzoor's English was *Masha'Allah* excellent and far better than many native speakers.

Huzoor said once a Canadian politician had said to him that he could never understand the English of most Pakistani politicians he met but that he understood Huzoor's English very well!

Huzoor said that sometimes he thought about spending a month reading English books, novels and magazines but that he never had time to fulfil this plan.

In my heart I prayed that somehow Huzoor would get some time in the future where he could read or relax as he pleased. However, I have witnessed that whenever Huzoor has had a little bit of free time, more often than not, he still consumes himself with yet more office work or holds extra sessions of *Mulaqats*.

Huzoor's appreciation at Jamaat's spirit of sacrifice

Whilst Huzoor was checking his mail he mentioned how even though he had not launched any scheme many Ahmadis from different parts of the world were sending funds for the restoration of the Baitul Futuh complex after the fire.

It seemed that Huzoor was pleased at the spirit of sacrifice and love for their Mosque displayed by the Ahmadis.

Huzoor's media guidance

Huzoor also mentioned the media interviews of the past few days and said that one thing he had tried to clarify to the journalists was that our peaceful beliefs were nothing new but were based on the teachings and practice of the Holy Prophet (sa) and that the views of the Ahmadiyya Community had not changed since the *Jamaat* was founded by the Promised Messiah (as).

Huzoor said it was important to make sure that non-Muslims were aware of this important point.

Huzoor's compassion and love for children

I mentioned to Huzoor how the day before I had met a family in which two of the children were disabled. Immediately, Huzoor recalled who I was speaking about and he spoke of them with great love. Huzoor said that the girl is 9 years old but she is completely alert and mentally normal but that her brother was sadly mentally handicapped.

I was amazed at how Huzoor recalled every detail of the people he met.

Arranging a special visit

Huzoor asked me if I had ever been to see the famous *Panorama* painting in the city of Den Haag. He said that he had seen it a few times, both before

Khilafat and after and that it was worth seeing. I said I had not seen it and so immediately Huzoor called Private Secretary sahib and instructed that the next morning I should go with Nadeem Amini to see it.

I was so grateful to Huzoor for arranging for it and I looked forward to seeing something that Huzoor had liked and recommended.

A blessed week

As I left Huzoor's office, he smiled and said:

"Let's see if I have time tomorrow then perhaps we will go cycling."

As I heard these words, I became extremely excited and delighted. I had heard that sometimes in his previous trips to Holland, Huzoor had taken the opportunity to cycle in the Nunspeet countryside and I knew that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) had also very much enjoyed cycling in Holland. I looked forward with eager anticipation.

We had been in Holland less than a week but already so many activities had taken place and the blessings of *Khilafat* had been witnessed in so many different ways. I eagerly looked forward to the rest of the tour.