

HUZOOR'S TOUR OF THE UNITED STATES AND GUATEMALA

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2018

Part 4

A Personal Account

By Abid Khan

Introduction

Part 3 of this series of diaries ended with Huzoor's meetings with *Ambassador Sam Brownback* and *Congressman Jamie Raskin* at Baitur Rahman.

This diary, *part 4*, commences immediately thereafter and in this concluding part, I shall mention aspects of Huzoor's engagements and activities during the final days of his visit to the United States.

A prayer fulfilled

It was the morning of 31 October 2018 and after meeting two American dignitaries earlier in the morning, Huzoor held a session of *family Mulaqats* that continued uninterrupted from 11.15am until 3.30pm.

Amongst those to meet Huzoor for the first time was an Ahmadi now living in the United States, originally from Pakistan, *Sheikh Latif Ahmad Akmal (49)*.

Telling me about the experience, Sheikh Latif sahib said:

"In 2008, I went to Qadian for the first time and as soon as I saw Minaratul Masih I prayed for two things. One was that in my life I would meet Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) at least once and, second, that my children remained forever firm in their faith. I do not care about meeting my children and being close to them in this world, I want to be close to them in the permanent state which is the next life."

Sheikh Latif sahib continued:

“Today, the first prayer of mine offered by me in Qadian came true and because I was able to take my children to see Huzoor and I know their faith will strengthen and so, in reality, both aspects of my prayer in 2008 have been fulfilled. I have no more demands of Allah the Almighty - He has already given me far more than I could ever deserve or dream of. If today I die then I am satisfied.”

As he said these words the state of Sheikh Latif sahib completely changed. Where a moment before he had been entirely composed, he had now completely broken down and was weeping uncontrollably. He kept repeating his astonishment that why had Allah the Almighty blessed him so much.

I also talked to *Mansoor Ahmad (42)*, from South Virginia, moments after he had met Huzoor for the very first time in his life.

As we spoke, Mansoor sahib was candid about his past shortcomings and explained what had motivated him to overcome them.

Mansoor sahib said:

“In the past, I was not regular in offering Namaz but then a couple of years ago I saw a dream in which Huzoor was present. He looked radiant in the dream, Huzoor told me that if I did Namaz all my other problems and worries would vanish. Since that day I have not missed a single prayer and in reality all of my problems and concerns have evaporated.

Whereas before I felt a hole in my life and as though something was missing, now I have contentment. The only tension I now have is the fear that, God forbid, I am ever late in offering Namaz and so I set numerous alarms to remind me when it is time for prayer. I have learned that if you become committed to Salat then Allah the Almighty creates enough time so that you can offer your prayers serenely and still have more than enough time to fulfil all your other work.”

Meeting with Lajna Imaillah National Amila

Later in the day, at 6.30pm, Huzoor held a meeting with the *National Amila of Lajna Imaillah USA*.

Due to Huzoor’s prior activities, the Lajna meeting started a few minutes later than originally scheduled and so, as soon as the meeting started, Huzoor mentioned the delay.

Huzoor said:

“You have been waiting some time and so that has given you enough time to do Istighfar.”

It was a reminder, from the outset, of the seriousness of such meetings and the constant need to seek Allah’s forgiveness for one’s shortcomings.

Thereafter, during the course of the meeting, all the *National Secretaries* and *Regional Presidents* had the opportunity to present reports to Huzoor about their departments or regions.

After a few minutes, Huzoor enquired when the *National Majlis-e-Shura* and elections for *Lajna Imaillah* were taking place.

Upon being informed that they would take place at the end of November, Huzoor said:

“This means the new national Sadr Lajna will take over on 1st December. When I receive the results, I will make the decision over who is approved quickly and will not wait, as I am doing with the Khuddamul Ahmadiyya election! With regards the Khuddam Sadr appointment everyone here is in suspense!”

Huzoor was referring to the election of the *National Sadr Khuddamul Ahmadiyya USA* which had taken place a few days before his arrival in the United States.

It had been expected that Huzoor would have given the approval by now as the new *Sadr Khuddam* was due to assume his duties the next day on 1st November.

As the hours ticked down, the sense of curiosity amongst *Jamaat* members, especially *Khuddam*, continued to increase and, as Huzoor had said, there was a genuine sense of suspense!

After a couple of days, Huzoor graciously appointed Madeel Abdullah sahib from Philadelphia *Jamaat* as the new *Sadr Khuddam USA* to take over from Bilal Rana sahib who had completed three terms.

Later, during the Lajna meeting, the *Secretary Tabligh* and *Secretary for New Converts* gave a report about how many ladies had converted to Ahmadiyyat during the past year.

In response, Huzoor asked how many converts were American and how many were from other ethnicities.

The *Secretary* stated that she did not have the figures but would find it out and send the details to Huzoor.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“It is not for my benefit that the information is required. Rather, it is essential for you to know the ethnicities and backgrounds of all of the converts so you can tailor the Tarbiyyat programmes individually for each new member according to their background and upbringing. The way to do the Tarbiyyat of someone from a Muslim background will be different to how you would do the Tarbiyyat of someone who is from a Christian or secular background. Hence, it is important to know as much about the people who convert to Ahmadiyyat as possible so that you can help and guide them according to their individual needs.”

The *Khidmat-e-Khalq Secretary* informed Huzoor that *Lajna Imaillah USA* had pledged to fund a model village in Africa and had raised a significant amount of money for this humanitarian project.

Expressing his pleasure at the efforts of *Lajna Imaillah*, whilst also expressing a sense of disappointment with another of the auxiliary organisations, Huzoor said:

“Masha’Allah, it is good what you are doing for the sake of humanity and others should learn from your example. If the women can do it then why can’t Ansar? The laziest organisation in terms of serving humanity here is Ansarullah and so I am requesting the members of Lajna Imaillah USA to encourage and push their husbands towards serving those who are in need.”

After further discussion on various issues, the meeting drew to a close.

Before it ended, Huzoor said:

“The elections of Lajna Imaillah USA are coming shortly and whosoever is elected and approved as the National Sadr should form their own Amila. If there are changes then the respective Amila members should pass on their knowledge and experience to the new Amila members and do a proper handover. Furthermore, if the new Sadr Lajna does not keep any of you in the Amila you should not hold any grievance in your heart.”

A few precious moments

After the meeting concluded, Huzoor returned to his office at Baitur Rahman and graciously called me to his office for a few minutes.

Huzoor mentioned the two meetings that took place with American politicians earlier in the day.

Huzoor said:

“Today, I intentionally did Tabligh in those meetings. Rather than only explain the differences between Ahmadis and other Muslims, I purposely explained the differences in belief between Ahmadis and Christians. Then, after explaining the differences in our beliefs, I told them that the Quran teaches that, irrespective of differences, we should join together in our common belief in God Almighty. It seemed to me that they would ponder and reflect upon what had been discussed.”

Thereafter, Huzoor asked me how I had found the meetings.

In reply, I said:

“Huzoor, they were both very good meetings but I enjoyed the meetings with a politician and academics that took place in Houston more.”

As I said this, I hoped that I had not said anything disrespectful.

The meetings in the morning had been a privilege to attend, as in every meeting a person can only learn from Huzoor’s words of wisdom and guidance.

Yet, personally, I had felt that the response of the guests who had met Huzoor in Houston had been more sincere.

After hearing my comment, Huzoor said:

“You preferred the Houston meetings, whilst I preferred today’s meetings!”

In reply, I said:

“Huzoor, surely if you say today’s meetings were better then they were better!”

It occurred to me that the likely reason Huzoor preferred the meetings at Baitur Rahman were because they were more *Tabligh* focused and it illustrated Huzoor’s keen desire to be able to spread the teachings and message of Islam at every opportunity.

Regarding the meetings with the guests, Huzoor mentioned that the *National Umoor-e-Kharija Secretary* for USA Jamaat had spoken quite a lot, compared to earlier meetings with guests during the tour.

Upon this, I said:

“Huzoor, actually I had suggested to him that if during these meetings with guests there is a pause of ten or fifteen seconds then he may wish to interject and mention something that may be of interest to Huzoor. So, I think it was on my advice that he spoke more!”

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“You get worried if there is a long pause in a meeting but sometimes a pause is a good thing, as it allows time for reflection and contemplation before speaking further.”

It was a beautiful and profound comment. I always considered that the best meetings are those where the guests are able to seek Huzoor’s advice and guidance on different matters.

Yet, out of ignorance, I thought that where there is silence perhaps it is better for someone to speak to stimulate the conversation.

Probably this is because, I have been raised in a society where a few seconds of silence is often deemed as ‘*an awkward silence*’ but I realised from Huzoor’s comment that the concept of an awkward silence is a concept of a materialistic society, whereas for a spiritual person a few moments of silence during a meeting are not awkward or undesired but are an opportunity to think and contemplate.

Alhamdulillah, every day I learn things from Huzoor and every day I realise his perspective, as a man of God, is quite apart from the rest of the world.

As I had the opportunity to share a few more minutes in the company of Huzoor, I mentioned how I met an Ahmadi lady earlier in the day who was extremely emotional after meeting Huzoor.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“I have seen that people who come in to meet me here are initially quite confident yet after a few minutes their expressions change and their sincerity comes to the surface. Their style of speaking becomes humbler and softer.”

For some reason, I thought Huzoor was referring to the politicians and non-Ahmadi guests he had met.

Thus in response, I said:

“Huzoor, I have also noticed that during your meetings with politicians and dignitaries on this tour there has been a notable change in their attitude during the course of the meeting with you. By the end, after spending time with you, they all seem more humble.”

In reply, Huzoor said:

“I am not talking just about the guests, I am talking about our own Ahmadis here in the USA. The way they meet and talk is different to the Ahmadis from the UK and Europe but, in almost every Mulaqat, after a minute or two their sincerity and their love and loyalty for Khilafat becomes apparent. So, the style amongst Ahmadis in different countries can be different but the love for Khilafat is the same across the world.”

We were nearing the end of Huzoor's tour and perhaps with this in mind, as I left his office, Huzoor said:

“The last four months have been like a continuous Jalsa. First there was the period of the UK Jalsa, then Germany Jalsa, then Belgium Jalsa. Then there were the Ijtemas of Khuddam, Ansar and Lajna in UK and then this tour of USA and Guatemala.”

It truly had been a blessed and historic few months during which Huzoor's schedule had been even more intense than normal.

Yet, there was no sign of exhaustion or fatigue. Rather, all I could see was a look of gratitude to Allah the Almighty on the face of beloved Huzoor at the blessings that continued to rain down upon the Jamaat.

Meeting his relatives

After *Maghreb* and *Isha*, Huzoor returned to his residence and after having his evening meal, Huzoor graciously met the dozens of his relatives and family members who had come to meet him.

It seemed that some of Huzoor's relatives, probably like other Ahmadis based in the United States, felt confused and anxious about the current political situation in the country.

One family member mentioned that it could be argued that on certain social issues the Republican party's views were more closely aligned to Islamic teachings than the more socially liberal policies of Democrats. On the other

hand, the current Republican leadership had sought to enact policies that could easily be described as anti-Muslim.

In light of that he asked Huzoor directly which party they should vote for.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“I am not going to tell you to vote Democratic or Republican, rather you should vote for the candidate who you think is the best in your area. Vote with honesty for the person you consider to have the most integrity. Also, if any of the candidates in your district have good relations with the Jamaat then this should also be factored in”

Several of Huzoor’s relatives asked him to sign a copy of the Holy Quran for their children or grandchildren.

As he signed each copy, a relative expressed his personal regret that the publication of *Al-Fazl* in Rabwah had been forcefully stopped by the authorities in Pakistan and stated that he felt that this was a major issue, as *Al-Fazl* had always been a means of educating the members of the Jamaat and keeping them aware of the Jamaat’s latest projects and the activities of Khalifatul Masih.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Where one door is closed, Allah the Almighty opens others. So, you should read Al-Fazl International and Badr magazine.”

Upon this, a younger family member said:

“Huzoor, now there is also Al-Hakam magazine.”

Smiling, Huzoor said:

“Al-Hakam is in English and is mainly for younger people like you who do not know Urdu. Personally, I prefer to read in Urdu and enjoy Urdu articles the most.”

A relative mentioned to Huzoor that the Saudi Arabian leaders and Government were feeling a lot of pressure from the West over the murder of the Saudi Arabian journalist, Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“Yes, there is a lot of pressure over this issue, however the same nations and leaders who are criticising the Saudi Government over the cruel killing of the journalist are silent when it comes to the barbaric killings of thousands of innocent people in Yemen. Why do they not speak up for them?”

Finally, one of the younger people present, *Tariq Ahmad*, who enjoys sampling different cuisines, asked Huzoor if he had tried *brisket* barbecue meat whilst in Houston and, if so, if Huzoor liked it.

In reply, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Bas ghuzara tha!” meaning ***“It was just ok!”***

A boy from Puerto Rico

In recent years, I have had the good fortune to meet a lot of converts to Ahmadiyyat. Some were raised as Muslims and then accepted the Promised Messiah (as), whilst others were non-Muslims with no previous link or affiliation to Islam.

Each has their own unique story to tell and testify to the fact that the call of the Promised Messiah (as) has reached the corners of the world and is uniting people of all nations and cultures under the banner of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa).

On 1 November 2019 I met a 16 year old Puerto Rican boy, *Alejandro Garcia Pino*, who had converted to Ahmadiyyat a year before at the age of fifteen.

Though he was sixteen, he looked even younger and so I could not help but wonder whether he had been *too young* to make such a life-changing decision.

However, as we talked in corridor of the Baitur Rahman Mosque, I soon realised that he was intelligent and mature beyond his age. It was inspiring to hear not only his dedication and devotion to his new faith but also his understanding of it.

Explaining to me his interest in religion, Alejandro said:

“I am the only Muslim in my family. The rest of my family believe in God but are not practicing any religion. Personally, I was just seven or eight when I started looking for religion and I remember clearly that I heard the word ‘Islam’ in a dream when I was just eight years old and that dream made me curious. As soon as I was old enough to have internet access, I started to research about Islam as much as I could.”

Alejandro continued:

“People who knew of my interest in Islam warned me and told me to be careful. They said: ‘You don’t know Muslims’ but I would respond by saying ‘The Muslims don’t know me either’ and so the only way to know if someone is good or bad is to talk to them. The more I learned about Islam and the Holy Prophet (sa) the more impressed I was.

“For example, I was not impressed with how the Prophets were described by the Christian community but in Islam all of the Prophets were given a great status and this appealed to me. I also liked the fact that Islam treated Jesus (as) as a human being and not as God and this is something that I believed in my heart even from before. At that time when these things were going through my mind I was eight years old.”

As I listened to Alejandro, I was amazed to learn his curiosity and determination to learn about Islam at such a tender age.

Continuing, Alejandro said:

“At the age of fourteen I was convinced by the truth of Islam and I became a Sunni Muslim. A while later, I met an Ahmadi in Puerto Rico and he told me about the advent of the Promised Messiah (as) and that he is the Imam Mahdi. The Ahmadi introduced me to a Jamaat Missionary who told me about Islam’s teachings in a very logical way. I found the Ahmadi beliefs to be based on rationality and at no point did Ahmadi beliefs descend into the realms of fantasy such as the belief that Jesus (as) would physically come down from heaven.”

Unsurprisingly, accepting Islam had not been without its challenges. Yet, Alejandro remained firm in his faith.

Alejandro said:

“I have been an Ahmadi for one year and during this time I have lost most of my friends. They bullied me and made fun of me, especially when they saw me reading the Holy Quran in school break times. It was very tough – teenagers tend to have little or no mercy and respect and use their tongues without thinking of the consequences.

“However, I have never regretted my decision and tried to answer with patience the questions and derision of my school friends but in the end they would not stop their taunts and so we drifted apart. Even my teacher tried to warn me away from Islam. She said, ‘Why do you read the Quran because Muslims treat women so badly?’ In reply I told her that I will answer any question you have about Islam using the Quran itself.”

Alejandro continued:

“Anyway, I have had to deal with a lot of ignorance but not all people are like that. Some people have said to me ‘You are awesome because we have never seen anyone accept Islam and so you are brave and deserve respect’. Also, my father immediately accepted my decision and said that if Islam made me happy then he was happy.

As our conversation ended, Alejandro beamed as he told me why he had travelled from Puerto Rico. He said:

“I have travelled from Puerto Rico for one reason alone and that is to see my Khalifa! That is my only reason and objective of this trip! I listen to everyone of Huzoor’s sermons and whenever I see Huzoor all I see is a shining spiritual light. His light shines without limit. If I have learned one thing it is that Khilafat is the best gift in the world today and I just hope that the whole world accepts this gift from God.”

True respect

Another person to meet Huzoor was *Morinat Kukoyi-Sayalou*, whose parents had emigrated from Nigeria to the United States before she was born.

An allegation often levelled against Islam is that it is a misogynistic religion in which women are looked down upon or not treated with equality.

This was something that Morinat sahiba mentioned to me after her Mulaqat.

Morinat sahiba said:

“I have the ultimate respect for Huzoor. He is a holy and pious man. He lives his life in accordance with the teaching of ‘liking for others what you like for yourself’. When you see him you feel a sense of trust. He protects us and is committed to our well-being. As a woman, I felt that Huzoor demonstrated the highest levels of respect towards me. I was with my husband and so it would have been easy for Huzoor to converse with him and not to speak to me but if anything, Huzoor spoke more with me.”

Morinat sahiba continued:

“Huzoor has a very good sense of humour, he is observant and listens to what we say carefully. He gives women independence and freedom and wants us to blossom. Sadly, some men, including some Muslims, do not show enough respect to women but when you meet Huzoor it becomes clear that this is the mistake of those men and that Islam’s teachings protect the honour of women and requires men to treat women with respect.”

Morinat sahiba further said:

“Huzoor is also extremely compassionate so when I told him that we have been married for eight years but do not have children he prayed with great sincerity and love for us that may Allah bless us with children. I feel extremely calm and at peace after meeting him.”

Friday Sermon at Baitur Rahman

On Friday 2 November 2018, Huzoor delivered the *Friday Sermon* from the Baitur Rahman Mosque which was followed by a *Bai'at* ceremony.

The *Azan* was delivered by *Alejandro* the sixteen year old Puerto Rican convert I had met the day before in an extremely melodious way.



Huzoor's sermon was deeply profound and emotional. He explained what it meant to take *Bai'at* and the need for every Ahmadi to be sincere to the pledge they had made and to ensure that there was no disharmony between their words and their deeds.

Huzoor clarified what was meant when an Ahmadi pledged his obedience to any *ma'roof* decisions made by Khalifatul Masih. Huzoor said that it did not behove an Ahmadi to interpret whether a decision of Khalifatul Masih was *ma'roof*, rather any decision that is made by Khalifatul Masih is *ma'roof*, as his decisions are based on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the practices of the Holy Prophet (sa).

Huzoor said that someone had expressed his opinion that the love some Ahmadis had for Khilafat had crossed limits and was a form of *shirk* (*associating partners with Allah the Almighty*).

In answer to this point, Huzoor said:

“The Promised Messiah (as) came in servitude to the Holy Prophet (sa) in order to eliminate all forms of shirk. Hence, it is impossible that his Khilafat could encourage or facilitate any form of shirk. In fact, the foremost and fundamental objective of Khilafat is to eradicate all forms of shirk from the world and to establish the Unity of God Almighty.”

Huzoor said that perhaps the person who raised this fear had misjudged the bond of love between Ahmadis and Khilafat but, if there were any Ahmadis, whose love for Khilafat exceeded the rightful bounds they must seek the forgiveness of Allah the Almighty.

Emotions of Ahmadis

Later in the day, Huzoor met over 70 families in Mulaqat and graciously attended the *Walima* ceremony of a *Waqf-e-Zindighi*, Talha Chaudhry, who was serving in the Jamaat USA Finance office.

One of the people to meet Huzoor that evening in Mulaqat was *Lisa Mahmood*, a convert to Ahmadiyyat from Atlanta.

After meeting Huzoor, Lisa sahiba said:

***“Oh my goodness! The spirit of unity and love I have felt during Huzoor’s visit here to the USA is unlike anything I have ever felt before in my life. To see and meet Huzoor personally is beyond anything I could ever have imagined.*”**

Lisa sahiba continued:

“The Promised Messiah (as) said that people would join his community in droves and today there were thousands of people from across the United States here at the Mosque and so I can say that I saw the fulfilment of that prophecy with my own eyes! Thousands of people have converged here in Maryland and we are all united in our love for and obedience to the Promised Messiah (as).”

Another person to meet Huzoor was *Al-Hasan Atta (62)*, who was originally from Ghana but had moved to the United States in 1989 and now lived in New York.

After meeting Huzoor for the first time, Al-Hasan Atta sahib said:

“Huzoor is so vibrant and I could feel his special love for us Ghanaians. When you see Huzoor you realise that he is naturally extremely calm and considerate. My son wanted to ask a question but I stopped him as Huzoor’s time is precious but when Huzoor saw this he told my son to ask the question and said ‘Don’t fear your father! You can ask whatever you like!’”

A daftari Mulaqat

On 3 November 2018, Huzoor called the newly appointed *Sadr Khuddam*, *Madeel Abdullah* for a *daftari* Mulaqat.

Later, *Madeel Abdullah* sahib told me about his first *daftari* meeting with Huzoor as *Sadr Khuddam*.

Madeel Abdullah sahib said:

“I entered Huzoor’s office with much trepidation and I did not know what to expect. I kept thinking to myself that I was not worthy to sit in that seat across from my Khalifa.”

Madeel Abdullah sahib continued:

“Huzoor’s first instruction was to make my National Amila. I informed Huzoor that I had already prepared the Amila and had submitted it to Private Secretary sahib for Huzoor’s approval. By Allah’s Grace, I had an extra copy with me and so I showed it to Huzoor and thereafter he carefully went through the list of names one by one. Before approving the Amila, Huzoor asked me about each Amila member. Huzoor asked me who they were, what their background was and if they held that position before. Huzoor particularly emphasized the importance of Mohtamim Tarbiyyat and to ensure that he had a strong foundation in the Jamaat.”

After Huzoor had approved the *National Amila*, he gave further instructions to the new *Sadr Khuddam*. Most especially, Huzoor focused on the importance of humility.

Elaborating, Madeel Abdullah sahib said:

“Huzoor said that ‘Khadim’ means servant and we should always be ready to serve and that the Sadr Majlis should be the most humble servant of the Majlis.”

Madeel Abdullah sahib continued:

“Huzoor also stressed the importance of Salat and focused on our National Ijtema. Huzoor stated that in the past few years, there has been too much emphasis on doing ‘outdoor activities’ at the Ijtema. Huzoor said that seventy to eighty percent of the Ijtema should be focused on Talim and Tarbiyyat.”

Expressing his emotions after the meeting, Madeel Abdullah sahib said:

“I was able to spend 45 minutes with Huzoor in that meeting and so when I came out my emotions were off the chart! The anxiety and nervousness that I was feeling as I entered the room was now filled with feelings of relief. Huzoor had given me very specific instructions and Alhamdulillah, what better way to start the Khuddam year other than getting specific guidance from Khalifatul Masih.”

Madeel Abdullah sahib continued:

“Between the daftari Mulaqat and the Mulaqat of the National Amila of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, Huzoor spent two and a half hours giving direct guidance to Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya USA during those final days of his tour. The fact that Huzoor spent this much time showed how much he cares for our youth.”

Madeel Abdullah sahib further said:

“Huzoor showed great affection and love as he spoke to the National Amila, but at the same time mentioned multiple times that we should make our goals ‘ambitious’. Huzoor said to us that ‘If you want to change the world, you have to work hard’ and this comment was extremely inspirational for the National Amila members. I hope and pray that we can fulfil the desires of Khalifatul Masih and strengthen our bond with Khilafat, Inshallah.”

Inauguration of the Masroor Mosque

At midday Huzoor departed from the Baitur Rahman Mosque for the final public event of the tour. Huzoor travelled to the city of Manassas in South Virginia to inaugurate the Masroor Mosque.

Upon arriving at the Mosque at 2pm, Huzoor was welcomed by over three thousand local Ahmadi Muslims, all emotional to be blessed with Huzoor’s presence and grateful that he had come to open their Mosque.

Immediately, Huzoor was escorted towards the entrance of the Mosque and Huzoor unveiled a plaque to mark the inauguration and led a silent a prayer.



Unfortunately, during the silent prayer, most of the people present did not realise that a *dua* was taking place and so *naaray* (slogans) continued to be raised during most of the *dua*.

Thus, as soon as the *dua* was complete, Huzoor expressed his displeasure that there was no microphone nearby from which it could have been announced that a silent prayer was starting.

Thereafter, Huzoor inspected the site and expressed his desire that a *Mehrab* should be built in the main prayer hall, as currently there was none.

When Huzoor asked if it would be built, the local Jamaat official present said ***“Insha’Allah”***.

Upon hearing his response, Huzoor said:

“Will your Insha’Allah ever turn into a Masha’Allah?”

Those present laughed and enjoyed Huzoor’s comment but also recognised the fact that it was an indication from Huzoor that there should not be prolonged or unnecessary delays in Jamaat work.

Press Conference in South Virginia

Following Namaz and lunch, Huzoor graciously answered media questions during a *Press Conference* and then had meetings with some of the dignitaries who had come to attend the Mosque opening.



During the Press Conference, Huzoor was asked if there had been any major changes in the United States since Huzoor’s last visit to America in 2013, both in terms of the Jamaat and the wider society.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“The size of our Ahmadi community has grown in the past few years, mainly due to an influx of Ahmadi refugees. Further, we have built some new Mosques and so there has been a steady progression. In terms of the wider society in America the most obvious change since my last visit has been the change in Government. As a Community, we seek to cultivate good relations with politicians across the political spectrum so that we can introduce to them the true teachings of Islam. This effort we continue regardless of which party has been elected to form a Government.”

Subsequently, Huzoor was asked his views on the persecution of Rohingya Muslims in Burma.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“In recent years, the Muslims there faced threats and suffered a great deal of persecution. Through whatever means possible we raised our voice against these cruelties and sought to help them to the best of our abilities. All forms of discrimination and the targeting of minorities must be condemned in the strongest terms.”

A journalist asked Huzoor to describe what a ‘model Islamic society’ would look like.

In the first part of his answer, Huzoor spoke of the *Charter of Medina* and how it sought to protect the rights of people of all beliefs, whilst also

establishing the principle of fostering unity amongst the people of different faiths and beliefs.

Then, Huzoor spoke of the importance of peace within the domestic family unit and said that if families were content and peaceful, it would engender peace throughout society.

Turning towards business and economic activities, Huzoor said:

“According to Islam, all forms of trading and business must be executed with complete honesty and integrity. Once, the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) observed that the grain being sold at a market was of a low quality and he said that this was not fair trading and was actually deception. Thus, Islam teaches honesty and fairness at every level of society and if there is justice at each level it follows that there will be peace and harmony throughout society.”

As the Press Conference drew to a close, Huzoor was asked about his views on the current state of the world.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“In today’s world, everyone seems to blame everyone but themselves. Governments, leaders and ordinary people are willing to highlight the flaws and shortcomings of others, yet are unwilling to accept their own mistakes. Instead of demanding that our own rights are fulfilled, we should strive to fulfil the rights of others and prioritise their rights above

our own. Unquestionably, this is not easy but this is the way to avert disaster and bring peace.”

Huzoor continued:

“Otherwise, if the world continues on its current path and people do not reform and repent, I am certain that a Third World War will take place. In fact, the flames of war are already smouldering and so we must do everything we can to dampen the flames before they erupt beyond our control.”

Huzoor’s sombre words of warning were clear and unambiguous.

In recent times, in my Mulaqats with Huzoor, I have sensed a change in Huzoor’s tone when it comes to the prospects of a *Third World War*.

In the past, Huzoor always warned of a *Third World War* but, alongside it, Huzoor also expressed his hope that it could be avoided if efforts were made to root out injustice and, above all, if people came to recognise the existence of God Almighty.

However, recently it has appeared to me that Huzoor considers the prospect of the warnings of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya* being heeded to be diminishing and so, in turn, the chance of a calamitous world war is increasing by the day. May God have mercy.

Meeting an 'old friend'

After the Press Conference, Huzoor held a meeting with *Dr Katrina Lantos-Swett*, the *President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice*.

Dr Lantos-Swett had previously met Huzoor in 2012 in Washington DC and she had also travelled to London to take part in the *Conference of Living Religions* in 2014.

As the meeting started, Dr Lantos-Swett mentioned her visit to London in 2014. She said:

“Your Holiness, it is my honour to meet you again. I took a flight especially today because I wanted to meet you and welcome you back to the United States. I still remember visiting London in 2014 for the interfaith conference and at the time you gifted me a beautiful ornament which I keep in my home and whenever I see it, I remember you.”

In reply, Huzoor said:

“That is very kind of you. My wife and I also remember you and sometimes we talk about you in our home. In fact, when my wife found out that you were coming to this event she was extremely pleased.”

It was a beautiful personal insight of his home life and illustrated the personal regard Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*) held for Dr Lantos-Swett.

Thereafter, Dr Lantos-Swett said:

“Your Holiness, we very much, more than ever, need your spirit of peace in the world today and to learn from you. Our country is deeply divided. We need to show moral leadership but we are struggling. We need to find a way out from the divisions that have taken root. In this regard, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is such a positive example for us as a country. You are horrifically persecuted but you never retaliate and so you are an inspiration to us all.”



In reply, Huzoor said:

“There is no doubt that we need peace in the world but the world is moving in the opposite direction. For a long time, I have feared that we are heading towards a Third World War and now others have started to say the same, whereas in the past some of the people I met considered that I was being pessimistic.”

Huzoor continued:

“As a major power, if the United States can stop the situation spiralling out of control then the future generations will look back at their elders with pride and remember them with love. However, if it is not controlled and the world continues to move towards warfare then the next generations will never honour or cherish their forefathers.”

Dr Lantos-Swett informed that her father was a *Holocaust* survivor and so she considered it her personal mission to carry on her father’s personal legacy in *human rights* where he had been extremely active and renowned.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“No matter what you should never get disheartened and never give up your efforts to promote human rights in the world.”

As the meeting continued, Dr Lantos-Swett said:

“Your Holiness, you have a great burden upon your shoulders and you are doing such wonderful work in leading the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. We can all see it and indeed, as they say, the proof is in the pudding! Whenever I meet Ahmadi Muslims I am struck at how they are well educated, people who are achieving personally but at the same time they are infused with a spirit of service, of building bridges and this all flows directly from your leadership as the Caliph.”

I have always observed that if someone praises Huzoor he changes the subject and or deflects the praise in a different direction!

Thus, after hearing the comment of Dr Katrina Lantos-Swett, Huzoor said:

“We need more people like you who are good natured and sincere.”

Hearing this, Dr Lantos-Swett said:

“Your Holiness, the truth is we need more people like you but the problem is that you are one of a kind!”

Unquestionably, in today’s world, beloved Huzoor is one of a kind. And the mutual respect between Huzoor and Dr Katrina Lantos-Swett was clear.

In reply, to her comment, Huzoor said:

“The key is that we do not work just as individuals but work together. Every person is one but if we all join hands in friendship with a spirit of cooperation for the betterment of mankind then we can bring about a real positive change in the world.”

As the meeting ended, Dr Katrina Lantos-Swett said:

“It will always be my honour to join hands with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and I will always value your leadership. You are not just a spiritual leader but a true ambassador for peace in the world.”

After thanking her for joining the Jamaat at the inauguration of the Mosque, Huzoor said:

“You are no longer a guest but I consider that you are a close and old friend of me and my family.”

Prior to the main reception, Huzoor held further meetings with Honourable Dawda Fadera, *Ambassador of The Gambia to the United States, United States Congressman Gerry Connolly* and a meeting with various local dignitaries and guests.

Masroor Mosque Reception

Following the meetings, Huzoor proceeded to a marquee erected at the site at 5.40pm for the formal event to mark the opening of the Masroor Mosque. Around 200 guests were present, including *Congressman Gerry Connolly* and *State Representative, Hala Ayala* who offered guest remarks.

Dr Katrina Lantos-Swett also had the opportunity to speak. She said:

“Whenever I am in the presence of His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, I feel the spirit of wisdom, of reconciliation, of love and of tolerance that he brings and we need that spirit now more than ever before amongst us.”

At the start of his address, Huzoor spoke of how large segments of the media had given an entirely false portrayal of Islam.

Huzoor said:

“I wish to immediately reassure you that the negative media portrayal of Islam is completely at odds with the reality of the religion... Wherever and whenever, a Muslim has conducted a terrorist attack or exhibited any type of radicalism or fanatical behaviour, it is only because he or she has deviated entirely from Islam’s teachings. Such people, and such acts, serve only to defame and besmirch the pure name of Islam”



Speaking emotionally about the Holy Quran and the character of the Holy Prophet (sa), Huzoor said:

“From cover to cover, the Holy Quran is a Book of Peace that enshrines universal human values and human rights. Its teachings seek to unite mankind under the banner of humanity and guarantee the rights of every individual to live with freedom, equality, liberty and justice.”

Huzoor continued:

“Without a shadow of a doubt, at every moment of his life, the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings be upon him) manifested immense love and respect for all people. His pure and noble heart was filled with compassion and, at all times, he sought the betterment of mankind and strived to alleviate the suffering of others. He taught his followers to respect and value all humanity.”



Huzoor mentioned that the Holy Prophet (sa) once stood as a mark of respect when a funeral procession of a Jewish person passed by and how, on another occasion, the Holy Prophet (sa) permitted a group of Christians from *Najran* to worship in his Mosque.

Reflecting on the latter incident, Huzoor said:

“Through this munificent and magnanimous gesture, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) set an everlasting example of tolerance, freedom of religion and freedom of worship for all mankind.”

Towards the end of his address, Huzoor spoke about the continued deterioration of the peace of the world and the need for people of all faiths and beliefs to unite in a common purpose of striving for peace.

Huzoor said:

“From the depths of my heart, I pray that after we have departed this world, our children and future generations remember us with love and affection. May they affirm that their elders spared no effort to foster a spirit of love, peace and brotherhood amongst mankind and to leave behind a peaceful and enlightened world.”



Huzoor continued:

“Surely, the alternative does not bear thinking about. That our children remember us with nothing but contempt and consider us to have been

belligerent warmongers who destroyed their futures and left behind only a trail of war and destruction.”

Concluding, Huzoor said:

“Rather, than a world of hate and hostility, I pray we leave behind a world of love and compassion. Instead of selfishly pursuing self-interests, may all people recognise the true value of serving the common good. At the end, I pray that this Mosque proves to be a shining light in this community and a means of unity and hope. Ameen.”

Impact of Huzoor’s words

After the event concluded with a silent prayer led by Huzoor, I took the opportunity to meet some of the guests.

Every person I met was extremely impressed by Huzoor’s speech and several spoke of feeling emotional and a sense of spirituality upon seeing Huzoor.

One of the guests was, *Freba Mirzada*, who was originally from Afghanistan.

After listening to Huzoor’s address *Freda Mirzada* said:

“Some people in this community are fearful of Muslims and of this Mosque but the way the Khalifa presented his speech has built trust. You could see that everything he said came from his heart and felt it and there was nothing fake in what he was saying. Personally, I have not felt as spiritual for a long time. In fact, I should say I feel fabulous! This was

such a pure event and your leader has shown that he is a selfless person, who is travelling the world to spread decency and to try to bring people together.”

A Muslim guest, *Robert Salaam* told me he had been affected by Huzoor’s personality. He said:

“The disposition and character of the Khalifa had a big effect on me. He is extremely friendly and I cannot articulate in words how I felt when I saw him. He is humble and soft and I feel he also has a sense of humour. He radiates an inner light and peacefulness that is just overwhelming.”

An American lady, by profession a teacher, *Monica* said:

“I was particularly moved by how His Holiness spoke about the importance of serving your community and his humbleness was very surprising to me. He is such an important leader with great status but still he spoke to us with no arrogance and only sincerity. I felt a spirit of peace from him.”

An Hispanic guest, *Sandra* said:

“The Khalifa came across as a very intelligent man with a lot of wisdom and knowledge. It was a beautiful message of hope which has resonated in my heart and I was actually on the verge of tears. The message of the Khalifa was from the heart.”

A former US army soldier, Nelson Garcia said:

“What I saw today was that the Muslim community gets misrepresented because your leader (Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad) made it crystal clear that Islam is for all people and does not hate anyone. He broke down barriers and if this speech does not change hearts then nothing will.”

Continuing, Mr Garcia said:

“People should be open minded and listen to His Holiness as he is the best ambassador for Islam they will find. I really liked how he explained the concept of Muslim wars and how they were for freedom of religion and not for domination or conquering. I liked how he emphasised the rights of neighbours and how this Mosque will welcome people.”

Alhamdulillah, the final public event of Huzoor’s tour had concluded successfully and like those that had gone before had proven extremely blessed and emotional for all those fortunate enough to be present.

Controlling the crowd

As Huzoor departed from the Mosque at 8.25pm, hundreds of Ahmadis gathered outside to see him off.

Many were emotional, raising slogans and trying to get as close to Huzoor as possible. Those on security duty stood together striving to control the crowd and preventing them from getting too close.

However, Huzoor sensed that some of the people doing security were becoming slightly anxious or panicked. As a result, Huzoor himself took steps to calm the situation.

First, Huzoor instructed some Ahmadi men who were standing in a line to stand back because they were obstructing the view of Lajna members who had gathered to see Huzoor off.

Thereafter, Huzoor noticed a large four by four car being used by the security team near the crowd. Ever concerned for the safety of every single Ahmadi, Huzoor instructed the driver of the car to switch off his vehicle and step out of his car so that there was no risk of any accident.

During this period, Huzoor also noticed a member of his own personal security team raise his hand to stop someone who, in his love for Khilafat, was trying to push forward.

Huzoor firmly instructed the security member that it was not acceptable for him to raise his hand or to be physical in any way towards the Ahmadis who were there due to their love for Khilafat.

It was amazing to see how alert Huzoor was to the emotions that were flying around. On the one side, Ahmadis were extremely emotional that Huzoor had visited them and were desperate to see him.

Perhaps, they were more emotional knowing that Huzoor was returning to London in a few days.

On the other side, in their efforts to ensure that no one approached Huzoor in an inappropriate or dangerous way, some of the people doing security duty became slightly heavy handed.

Thus, to calm the situation, Huzoor himself took control and within a few moments, everything was perfectly fine and the Ahmadiis present were able to wave goodbye to Huzoor and Huzoor lovingly waved back at them before entering his car and returning to Baitur Rahman.

A day of meetings

On 4 November 2018, the final full day of Huzoor's tour, was spent in meetings and Mulaqats.

The day started with a group Mulaqat with Ahmadi men, most of whom had the chance to meet Huzoor for the first time.

Some of the people present were consumed by emotions, in particular, one Ahmadi man remained in floods of tears throughout the period that he stood in the line of people waiting to meet Huzoor and remained in the same state whilst meeting Huzoor and for some time afterwards.

Thereafter, Huzoor held further Mulaqats before spending the rest of his day in meetings with the *National Amila of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya USA* and the *USA Jamaat National Amila*.

Meeting with Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya National Amila

From 2.10pm until 3.45pm, Huzoor held a meeting with the *National Amila Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya USA*. A new Amila had formed just a couple of days before and so Huzoor graciously permitted the members of the previous Amila, who were not in the new Amila to also attend the meeting and attain the blessings and benefits of being in the company of Khalifatul Masih.

The meeting, like the other meetings with Amila members took place in the Conference room at Baitur Rahman.

There was a long table, around which members of the Amila had gathered and those who could not find seats around the table were seated behind. The Amila members were seated in large black leather executive chairs and the same chair had been placed for Huzoor at the head of the table.

However, upon taking his seat, Huzoor instructed that a simple and less padded chair be brought for him.

As his chair was replaced by a simple one, Huzoor said:

“I do not like chairs that are overly comfortable. I prefer simpler chairs to sit on.”

After a silent prayer, the members of the National Amila had the opportunity to introduce themselves to Huzoor and to give brief reports about their departments and future plans.

As the Amila members introduced themselves, Huzoor noticed that the *Muavin Sadrs*, who are appointed as assistants to the *National Sadr*, were sitting next to the *Sadr*, followed by the *Mohtamimeen* (National Secretaries).

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“The order in which you are seated is incorrect. Next to the Sadr, should be the Motamid (General Secretary), then the Mohtamimeen, then the Muavin Sadrs. As you are sitting around a table, the Naib Sadrs ought to have been seated on the other side of me.”

After a few minutes, Huzoor instructed that the *Muavin Sadrs* swap positions with the *Mohtamimeens* who were seated behind them.

I think perhaps the reason Huzoor made this point and instructed that they correct the position was to make it clear that the people directly responsible for departments were the National Secretaries (*Mohtamimeens*) and that the *Muavin Sadrs* were there to help and support the *National Sadr* and *Amila* on specific projects.

Thereafter, Huzoor addressed the new Amila, as well as the previous one.

Huzoor said:

“Every Mohtamim (Secretary) must know his duties and responsibilities and make an annual plan of how to fulfil them and the plans should be ambitious. Every year should be better than the year before and the pace of progress should increase year on year.”

Huzoor continued:

“Now if you want to do something positive, if you are serious in your determination to change the world, if you are raising the slogan that ‘Nations cannot be reformed without the reformation of the youth’, then you will have to work hard for it and be devoted to your mission.”

Very graciously, after giving guidance to the newly appointed *Sadr Khuddam* and the *Amila*, Huzoor addressed those members who were departing the *National Amila*, including the previous *Sadr Khuddam*.

Huzoor said:

“Thank you to the previous Sadr Sahib Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Bilal Rana Sahib. I could see that he worked hard according to his capacity and capability during the last 6 years. And I express thanks also to the Mohtamimeen and Naib Sadraan who are leaving Khuddamul Ahmadiyya this year.”

Huzoor also instructed the new *Sadr Khuddam* that each year *Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* should hold a farewell event for those *Khuddam* who had served the *Majlis* diligently and were now progressing to *Ansarullah*.

When the *Mohtamim Atfal* introduced himself, Huzoor sought a detailed report about the work being done to train the *Atfal*.

Huzoor said:

“It is of great importance that you train the Atfal well and give them a solid foundation so that when they enter Khuddamul Ahmadiyya they are already closely attached to the Jamaat. Otherwise, when they enter late teenage years it is possible they will become engaged in other things and become distant from the Jamaat.”

In the second half of the meeting, the Amila members had the opportunity to seek Huzoor’s guidance on various issues related to *Tabligh, Tarbiyyat, Maal* and other matters.

Despite the fact that the meeting had overran, Huzoor answered each question very patiently.

One Khadim sought Huzoor’s advice about whether the *Saiqeen* system, used by Khuddamul Ahmadiyya in Pakistan could be set up in the United States.

The *Saiqeen* system required that individuals within a local Majlis were appointed to look after moral training of a small number of Khuddam and to ensure that they were closely involved in Khuddam activities.

In response, Huzoor said:

“If you can implement the Saiqeen system here it will be very good and helpful. This is a real ‘grassroot level’ system and if it is implemented it can lead to a big positive change in the activities of Khuddamul Ahmadiyya and Atfal-ul Ahmadiyya.”

Huzoor continued:

“When I was in Atfal-ul Ahmadiyya, I became a Saiq, then I became Secretary in the Atfal Amila, then I served as a Zaeem in our Majlis, then I served as Nazim Amoomi in Rabwah Majlis and then I served as Mohtamim at a central level.”

Huzoor further said:

“So, my personal training started from the age of being an ordinary Tifl and I was able to progress through the various stages of Atfal and Khuddam. Now in these countries there are people who have hardly served at all in the lower levels but are appointed as a National Secretary in the Amila. The benefits of being trained at the grassroots level are vitally important.”

Later in the meeting, Huzoor spoke of how members of *Khuddam* should try to find time each day for increasing their knowledge of religious and secular affairs.

Huzoor said:

“There is more than enough time in the day if it is used correctly. Most people now waste a great deal of time scrolling on their iPhones or iPads on unnecessary things and they complain that they do not have enough time for Jamaat work or to increase their knowledge. There are 24 hours in each day and if a person sleeps for 6 hours, it means there are still 18 hours left.”

Huzoor continued:

“During the day, Khuddam will be busy with school, college, universities or their careers but, if they do not waste time, they will still find two or three hours easily which should be used productively. Instead of watching dramas on TV or surfing on the internet, Khuddam should use those hours to increase their knowledge of contemporary issues. There is no harm in watching television but watch things that increase your understanding of the world and the political conditions of your country and the wider world.”

Continuing further, Huzoor said:

“Apart from this, a Khadim should dedicate some time, every day, to increasing their religious knowledge. Use the internet for good things, such as reading Jamaat literature.”

Huzoor said:

“If there are things that a Khadim does not understand he should research it and ask his local Missionary. If the Missionary does not give an answer that satisfies then the Khadim should write to me. And once a person has knowledge and understanding, he should seek to share it with other Khuddam so that the knowledge is used to help others.”

One of the Amila members mentioned his view that *Lajna Imaillah* in USA was more ‘*organised and efficient*’ in its work than Khuddamul Ahmadiyya.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“This is a reflection of your priorities as an auxiliary organisation. If you prioritise your religion above all else then naturally your organisation and efficiency will improve. When you repeat the Khuddam pledge you state that you will give priority to your faith over worldly issues but if you are not fulfilling this then it is not possible to be efficient, as other things will get in the way of your duties to the Jamaat. If Lajna is more organised it is not enough that you admit this to me but you should feel regret and make a firm and heartfelt pledge that you will seek to improve and fulfil your duties.”

By the time the meeting ended it was 3.45pm and after Wudhu it was 4pm when Huzoor proceeded to the Mosque for Zuhr and Asr.

An unusual Nikah

After Salat, Huzoor announced several Nikahs (marriage) of Ahmadis from the USA Jamaat.

One very unusual and touching moment was the Nikah ceremony of a couple, in which the groom was deaf. As a result, his Nikah was given via *sign language*.

Huzoor announced the names of the parties and when it came to obtaining the assent of the groom, an Ahmadi versed in sign language signed out Huzoor’s words to the groom. The groom then gave his consent through sign language, which the third party spoke out by saying *“Yes, I accept”*.

It was a unique moment and a sign of how Khalifa-Waqt makes every possible effort to fulfil the needs of those who have disabilities and he continues to set an example of compassion for the members of the Jamaat to learn from and follow.

Thereafter, at 4.40pm, after 6-hours without break, Huzoor returned to his residence for lunch.

Caring for his family

One person present throughout much of Huzoor's three-week tour was *Nakasha Ahmad* from New Jersey.

As the eldest daughter of Ameer Sahib USA, she is Huzoor's niece, whilst her husband *Khalid Ahmad* is the son of Huzoor's eldest sister.

Nakasha baji grew up in the United States but after getting married in 2001 she moved to Rabwah for some time and so was able to spend time in the close proximity of Huzoor, who at the time was the *Nazir-e-Ala* in Pakistan.

Whilst in Pakistan, she experienced first-hand how Huzoor guarded the trusts and confidences of others.

Nakasha baji said:

"In 2002, I started to apply to graduate schools and because communication was so difficult back then, I needed to fax the applications and also to receive faxes. I asked Huzoor for his help in this

matter and also asked him not to tell anyone that I was applying and he never told anyone. This is just one small example of keeping the imanat (trusts) of others.”

Despite being a close relative of Huzoor, Nakasha baji told me that her family relationship with Huzoor was secondary to her relationship as an Ahmadi.

Nakasha baji said:

“The relationship of Khilafat is first and foremost and takes precedence over all other relationships and so in that respect family members are on exactly the same ground as all other Ahmadis when it comes to our bond with Khilafat.”

Nakasha baji continued:

“Just like other Ahmadis, whenever I meet Huzoor I am extremely nervous. In fact, I’m perhaps more nervous because the majority of Ahmadis, at least outside of Pakistan, met Huzoor for the first time after he was elected Khalifatul Masih with their best foot forward, whereas Huzoor knew me before he was Khalifa and so he saw me when I was not on my best behaviour.”

One thing all members of Huzoor’s family attest to is that, despite having the burdens of the world placed directly on his shoulders, Huzoor continues to ensure that the needs of his family and relatives are fulfilled and he takes personal interest in their lives and wellbeing.

Referring to her own experiences, Nakasha baji said:

“At a personal level, Huzoor’s love and care, as my chacha (paternal uncle) has only ever increased with time. To take care of one’s relatives is an Islamic value and in this respect, Huzoor upholds those family relationships even more than before.”

Nakasha baji continued:

“One example is that my husband Khalid and I came to London on the day of the Peace Symposium. Upon arriving, I wrote to Huzoor that we planned to go to Spain for a few days the following day. Despite the fact that the Peace Symposium is one of the biggest Jamaat events of the year where Huzoor delivers a very important address, within a few hours, we received a reply from Huzoor. Not only did Huzoor give us permission to travel to Spain but also enquired details and took interest in our travels, in spite of the fact that he was about to address the guests at the Peace Symposium.”

Mentioning the hectic travel schedule in the United States and Guatemala, Nakasha baji said:

“During the US tour, the first two weeks of the trip were incredibly gruelling travel-wise and everyone I know was exhausted. But throughout, Huzoor seemed the freshest of everyone and several times he asked Khalid and me about our travel arrangements, along with the small details concerning many other people. Considering I could barely keep track of my own travel arrangements I was amazed and it shows

how Khalifatul Masih, in spite of travel and his relentless schedule of work, continues to watch out for everyone and looks after their individual needs.”

Without doubt, in every way, Huzoor follows the noble example of the Holy Prophet (sa) and this is also reflected in the way he lives his life with simplicity. In fact, Nakasha baji mentioned that in the midst of such a busy tour she had even observed Huzoor doing his own travel packing and other household work.

Reflecting upon her personal observations of the tour, Nakasha baji said:

“I hope that it would not be breaking a trust to say that Huzoor works more than even people realise, and that remains the case day in and day out, even during the most gruelling and intense travel and work schedule.”

Meeting with USA Jamaat National Amila

After a short break, Huzoor returned to the conference room at Baitur Rahman for the final official meeting of his tour.

After meeting the *Missionaries* of the United States Jamaat and the *National Amilas* of the auxiliary organisations, the final meeting was with the *National Amila* of the USA Jamaat. The meeting started at 6.35pm and continued uninterrupted until 9.10pm.

The early part of the meeting was spent discussing plans for new Mosques to be built in different cities of the United States.

This was followed by discussions regarding the translation of Jamaat books by the USA Jamaat, the numbers of Ahmadis in the United States, Tabligh and Tarbiyyat programmes and the attendance at congregational prayers across the various Jamaats in the USA.

As the discussion turned to the numbers of Jamaat Missionaries in the United States, Huzoor said:

“There is a significant number of African-American Ahmadis in the United States but there are no African-American Khuddam who are entering Jamia Ahmadiyya. Thus, Azhar Hanif sahib (Missionary in-charge USA) should make a concerted effort to encourage African-Americans to join Jamia, as they will be able to relate better with the African-American Ahmadis and to spread the message of Islam to their people. At a minimum, each year, there should be at least one or two who enter Jamia Ahmadiyya.”

The *National Secretary Taleem*, Atif Mian, presented a report about the Taleem department.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“It is important that the National Taleem department provides guidance or counselling to Ahmadi students to guide them about how to navigate through their secular education and the challenges that arise.

Furthermore, when the Jamaat acquires new properties they should include the provision of a library so that Ahmadi youth can come to study and increase their knowledge and at same time they will be able to offer their prayers in the Mosque.”

Thereafter, based on the fact that Atif Mian sahib is a world respected economist, Huzoor turned to Ameer Sahib USA and said:

“The USA Jamaat should include Atif Mian in its budget committee and take his advice on financial matters and planning.”

For several years, the *media* work done in the United States had been conducted by a *media team* working under the supervision of a *Naib Ameer* in the USA. However, according to the rules of *Tehrik-e-Jadid*, the press and media work in each Jamaat is chiefly the responsibility of the *Umoor-e-Kharija* department.

Thus, when it came to the turn of the *National Umoor-e-Kharija Secretary* to present his report, Huzoor read out the relevant extract of the *Tehrik-e-Jadid* rules and instructed that the media work in the USA Jamaat should be the responsibility of the *Umoor-e-Kharija* department, working under the supervision of Ameer Sahib USA.

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

“When dealing with the media, you will often face issues that are ‘general’ or only focused on the USA but certain issues are ‘international’ or can affect other Jamaats, such as Pakistan, and so it is necessary to be

cautious when dealing with those matters. For such international matters or policy matters you should take my permission and directions before launching any media campaign or giving any statement.”

Huzoor continued:

“One thing to note is that it is not imperative to answer or respond to every query or issue that arises in the media. There are some issues where it is of no benefit to us to comment on or which are not directly related to our Jamaat.”

As he transferred the responsibilities of media work in the USA, it was incredible to see how Huzoor wanted to ensure that the *Nizam* of the Jamaat was upheld and followed.

Furthermore, Huzoor’s insight into the media was extremely valuable and filled with wisdom. Rather than responding to every single issue and just becoming a ‘*talking-head*’ willing to comment on any and every matter, Huzoor expressed his desire that the long term benefit to the Jamaat should always be at the forefront of our media efforts. It was a lesson not just for the USA media team but also for the media work of the central *Press & Media* team in London and in other Jamaats.

As the meeting drew towards a close, Huzoor sought a report from the *National Tehrik-e-Jadid Secretary* of the previous year.

With great happiness Huzoor informed of the vast sacrifices made by the members of the Jamaat in Pakistan and Huzoor particularly highlighted the

collections made by the members of *Lajna Imaillah Pakistan*. When Huzoor informed them of the amount collected by Rabwah's Lajna alone, some of the USA Amila members appeared genuinely shocked.

The way Huzoor spoke of the spirit of sacrifice amongst the Ahmadis in Pakistan illustrated his continued love and affection for them and his happiness that they were excelling Jamaats in the Western world, despite the continued persecution faced by Ahmadis there and their comparatively weaker financial circumstances.

Reflections of the National Ameer

As the meeting ended, I thought of how Huzoor had spent several hours guiding the various Amila members and Missionaries of the Jamaat during the past few days.

In each meeting, Huzoor listened to the issues faced and guided the Amila members with love and kindness.

In each meeting, even where it was apparent that Huzoor's expectations had not yet been met, Huzoor guided the Amila members with patience and ensured that all of their questions were answered.

No doubt, Huzoor's guidance and his presence proved a source of great inspiration to all of those fortunate to be present, including the *National Ameer (President)*.

Whenever, Huzoor visits any Jamaat, the *National President* has the honour and responsibility of overseeing many aspects of the tour, including the formal events and the arrangements for Huzoor and those who travel with him.

In the United States, the National Ameer during Huzoor's 2018 tour was Huzoor's elder brother, *Sahibzada Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad* and so, as we reached the end of the tour, I was extremely curious to hear his personal reflections regarding the visit. However, Ameer Sahib was constantly engaged by his duties and responsibilities and so it was not possible to speak to him during the tour itself.

Subsequently, I contacted him and after some initial reluctance, he kindly shared with me his own personal sentiments regarding Huzoor's visit.

Where I had assumed that his reticence was because he was too busy, Ameer Sahib explained to me that his initial hesitation was for another reason entirely.

Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib, Ameer Jamaat USA said:

“I apologise for the delay in responding to your frequent reminders. I just feel inadequate when expressing myself whether in writing or in speech, especially in matters of Khilafat and Jamaat.”

It was an incredible lesson for me. As the brother of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih, most people would perhaps assume that Ameer Sahib USA would feel comfortable speaking about Huzoor.

Yet, due to his complete respect and reverence for Khilafat, he did not consider himself worthy to speak about it. Nevertheless, I am and will remain extremely grateful for the fact that despite his reluctance, Ameer Sahib USA did share some of his own observations of the tour.

Referring to the fact that Huzoor visited the United States for the first time since his visit to Los Angeles in 2013, Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib said:

“Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) visited the USA Jamaat in 2018 after five years. His presence was a great blessing which every Jamaat wishes to be bestowed upon often and for longer periods of time. It was a great favour of Allah upon our USA Jamaat that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) chose to visit us but at the same it was an awesome responsibility for the whole Jamaat to host Khalifatul Masih.”

Speaking very movingly of how he personally felt the weight of responsibility, Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib said:

“How can I describe the immensity of this responsibility when there is none else to compare it with? It is the sheer Grace of Allah and the benevolence of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) which keeps you standing.”

Ameer Sahib USA told me how throughout the tour, he regularly sought and received the guidance of Huzoor on various matters.

Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib said:

“Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) continually guided and instructed us throughout his stay here individually and collectively. I had the opportunity to seek his advice on so many issues. He helped me understand the Nizam-e-Jamaat. But I must admit my failure in discerning and taking a cue from his gestures, suggestions, and expressions before he spoke to us and instructed us. May Allah grant me the wisdom and foresight of a true servant of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya.”

In recent years, I had heard from many members of the USA Jamaat that Ameer Sahib USA was extremely versed in the *Nizam-e-Jamaat* and often guided the USA Jamaat members in this regard.

Indeed, far beyond their testimony, Huzoor himself had remarked to me in the past that Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib had a lot of knowledge and understanding of the intricacies of the Jamaat’s organisational *Nizam*.

Yet, despite his prior knowledge, Ameer Sahib USA made it clear to me that he had learned a great deal from Huzoor during the trip regarding the *Nizam-e-Jamaat*.

I asked Ameer Sahib USA what his personal memories and reflections of the tour were. In response, he reminded me of the emotional scenes of love that were witnessed throughout the tour.

Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib said:

“Khalifatul Masih's visits are a source of charging and rejuvenating the spirit and morals of every Ahmadi and members of our USA Jamaat were no different in their response to Huzoor's visit. No words and pictures can ever do justice to the depth and breadth of the emotions of love and compassion.”

Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib continued:

“You (Abid) yourself witnessed the scenes in Baitur Rehman. Thousands of people stood by in inclement weather, not once but many times. I know some young individuals, who in normal circumstances would not let a single rain drop fall on them for the fear of messing up their appearance, but here were getting soaked in rain just to have a glimpse of Huzoor while walking between the mosque and the residence.”

Not only did Ameer Sahib observe the spiritual transformation and rejuvenation of Ahmadis but also saw the deep impact and effect Huzoor's presence and personality had on non-Ahmadis and non-Muslims.

Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib said:

“Abid you yourself have met hundreds of non-Ahmadis and interviewed them before and after they have an audience with Huzoor and they express their opinion of him. I can only tell you one example where not a single word was spoken, but the scene I witnessed spoke a thousand words.”

Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib continued:

“As we were getting ready to receive Huzoor at the airport in Washington, Amjad Mahmood Khan Sahib (Secretary Umooor-e-Kharija) and I were given permission to go onto the plane to greet Huzoor. One government official was assigned to escort us through the restricted area. The person met us at the airport a few minutes earlier and we were introduced. This person behaved in a very reserved manner and appeared to be distant and cool, even indicating that this protocol was for one time only and not to expect this again.”

Describing a sudden change in attitude of the government official, Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad sahib, Ameer Jamaat USA said:

“Huzoor arrived and was welcomed by us and this individual escorted Huzoor to the lounge and assisted in the immigration process. The person sat there in the company of Huzoor till the completion of the paperwork. Then, as Huzoor was about to leave the lounge, a few photographs were taken and this official had his photograph taken with Huzoor very eagerly. Then this official escorted Huzoor all the way to the car and stood there until the car left, which was about 5-10 minutes later.”

Continuing, Dr Mirza Maghfoor Ahmad said:

“I was witnessing in real time, a change in the behaviour of this official, where reservation was replaced with respect and coldness turned into warmth. This was a phenomenon that could only be attributed to the

pure grace of Allah and a divine favour accorded to His Khalifa. But there is more to this incident. The next morning, the Jamaat's Umoor-e-Kharija Secretary received an unsolicited call from this official and was told that Huzoor will continue to be provided with the same protocol during upcoming trips and that appropriate measures had been put in place."

It was amazing to hear Ameer Sahib's perspective because having travelled with Huzoor, I had not seen the government official prior to Huzoor's arrival or a second person who was appointed to receive Huzoor.

I only saw the officials who had come to receive Huzoor after the arrival and throughout their meeting with Huzoor it was clear that they were greatly impressed by Huzoor's personality and eager to have the chance to have a photo with him and to avail every possible moment in Huzoor's company.

If Ameer Sahib had not informed of the official's demeanour prior to Huzoor's arrival, I would never have imagined that they could have been previously cool and reserved.

As Ameer Sahib noted it was an example of how Allah the Almighty makes the arrangements for Khalifatul Masih and how the blessed personality of Huzoor is able to soften the hearts of people in moments, where the efforts of others over prolonged periods of time fail.

It was emotional for me to have the opportunity to note the reflections of Ameer Sahib USA, who I have always held in the highest regard, not just as a senior member of the Jamaat, or because he is a member of the family of the

Promised Messiah (as) but mostly because I have seen in him true respect and obedience for the institution of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya.

Rather than take advantage of his personal family bond and relationship with Huzoor, anyone who has seen him or knows him will testify to the fact that his obedience and devotion to Khilafat is exemplary. Indeed, his initial reticence to even speak about Huzoor was for fear of saying anything that could be considered inappropriate.

It was riveting and faith inspiring to hear the words of Ameer Sahib, or Khaloo Foori, as I have always called him. Yet, he himself was not sure if there was anything I would want to use in my diary and reassured me that if I did not mention anything he would understand and would not be upset.

On the contrary, I wished only that I could have heard more.

Return to London

The final day of Huzoor's tour of the United States was spent at *Baitur Rahman*. During the day, various departments and teams who had served the Jamaat were given the blessed opportunity of having their photo with Huzoor.

Later, the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers were combined at 6pm and, as the prayers ended, thousands of Ahmadis convened at the Baitur Rahman complex to see Huzoor off after what had proven an extremely blessed and memorable tour.

At 7.30pm, Huzoor came out of his residence and walked through the courtyard of the complex waving at the Ahmadis who had come to see him off. After a silent prayer, Huzoor entered his car and the Qafila departed for Dulles Airport.

At the airport, after clearing security, Huzoor went to a private lounge until boarding on the 11pm *British Airways* flight back to London.

As it was an overnight flight, we had to offer *Fajr* during the journey. I had been unsure when was the right time to offer it and so just offered it after waking up a few hours into the flight.

Later, I asked Huzoor how he had calculated the right time to offer *Fajr*.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Shortly after midnight US time, I went and did Wudhu (ablution) but then I looked out of the window and it was pitch black and so I went to sleep. I woke up after one hour and then I did Tayammum (ablution without water) and offered Fajr.”

I told Huzoor that I had offered *Fajr* around two hours after Huzoor had himself offered it.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“Do not worry, Allah the Almighty is Merciful and Forgiving. Once, even the Holy Prophet (sa) and his companions, when returning from an

expedition at Khyber, became extremely tired very late in the night. Thus, the Holy Prophet (sa) appointed Hazrat Bilal (ra) to wake them when it was time for Fajr but due to his intense fatigue Hazrat Bilal (ra) also fell asleep. As a result, the Holy Prophet (sa) and his companions woke up late and the Holy Prophet (sa) then offered Fajr late. If you look at the life of the Holy Prophet (sa) there are examples which guides us for all possible eventualities and circumstances.”

Alhamdulillah, the overnight flight was smooth and landed at Heathrow Airport in London at 10.25am local time the next morning on 6 November 2018.

Shortly after, the Qafila departed from the airport and returned to the Fazl Mosque where Huzoor was welcomed by hundreds of members of the UK Jamaat.

At the time, I did not realise the significance of that moment but it proved somewhat historic, as it was the final time that Huzoor returned from a Jamaat tour whilst living at the Fazl Mosque complex.

By the time of his next tour in July 2019, the Markaz had shifted to Islamabad.

A few precious moments

The next day, 7 November 2018, I reported for Mulaqat late afternoon at the Fazl Mosque.

As I entered his office, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Did you also come back from America?”

In reply, I said:

“Huzoor, I came back with you!”

I think the reason Huzoor asked was that after we cleared security at Dulles airport, I did not have the chance to see Huzoor again until the return to London.

Thus, Huzoor’s question was his affectionate way of confirming that the return journey had been smooth and well.

Thereafter, I was able to spend two hours in the blessed company of Huzoor, as he worked through various files that covered his desk. In between his work, Huzoor spoke about various aspects of the USA tour.

Huzoor was interested in the results of the US mid-term elections which had been reported overnight. I informed that the *Democrats* had regained control of the *House of Representatives* and presented the relevant details.

Upon hearing the result, Huzoor said:

“Now the Democrats should use their majority wisely. They should work with the Republicans on those issues where it is in the public interest and not just have an attitude that they will block everything proposed by the

Republicans. If they try to block everything then it will not be good for the country and will foster an atmosphere of increased division. However, where the policies of the US Government and the Republicans are extreme or unjust then there the Democrats should take a stand.”

I informed Huzoor that all of the members of Congress he met during the tour had been re-elected. Huzoor was pleased and said that he expected most of them to be re-elected but was concerned that Gerry Connolly, the Congressman he met in Virginia, would lose. In the end, Congressman Connolly won with a healthy majority and Huzoor was happy to hear it.

I mentioned to Huzoor that an American journalist had been greatly impressed by Huzoor’s answer to his question about political leadership in the press conference that had taken place in Baltimore early in the tour.

The journalist said Huzoor had not mentioned any politician by name but the way Huzoor emphasised the need for humility in leaders had left him in no doubt about whom Huzoor was referring to.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“The answer I gave there was according to my normal way. I do not normally criticise politicians or leaders by name but instead I highlight their injustices and wrongdoings. During my Khilafat, if there has been an exception to this, it is the Dutch politician Wilders (Geert Wilders) who I have spoken out against by name because he has repeatedly exceeded all bounds of decency in his attacks on the character of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa).

During the Mulaqat, I mentioned that during the tour an Ahmadi friend, who had served the *Jamaat* in a particular department for a number of years, had sought my advice about how he should react to the fact that he had now been relieved of this duty.

In response, I had told him that he should fully support those who were now charged with the responsibility for the work.

After hearing this, Huzoor said:

“The way of a believer is to serve to the best of their abilities so long as their service to the Jamaat is required and then when the time comes they should handover the duty with humility and his or her heart should be filled with gratitude that they had the chance to serve the Jamaat. There should not even be a trace of resentment or bitterness in their heart and they should be every ready for any future service if it is required of them.”

It was a complete and beautiful answer.

As I sat in Huzoor’s office, I prayed that if and when my own service to the department I am currently serving in is no longer required that I can respond in the manner of a true believer that Huzoor explained.

Huzoor also mentioned the various addresses that he delivered to guests in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Guatemala and South Virginia.

Then, laughing Huzoor said:

“My family, and some other people told me that they liked the South Virginia address the most, even though that was the speech that I prepared for the quickest! I put more effort into the others and people liked this one!”

Huzoor said that it was good that he had prepared the public speeches in advance of the tour as there was no time during the tour to prepare them due to the hectic schedule.

In reply, I said:

“Huzoor, you are right that there was no time but, for selfish reasons, I like it best when Huzoor prepares his external addresses whilst on tour, as it means I have an opportunity to spend some extra time in Huzoor’s company during the tour, as he gives dictation for me to type.”

As the *Mulaqat* drew to a close, Huzoor mentioned the forthcoming *diaries* that I was due to write about the UK Jalsa and Huzoor’s tours of not only the United States and Guatemala but also of Germany and Belgium. Huzoor advised that I should not include long excerpts of his speeches and addresses in the diaries, but a few paragraphs of each.

Huzoor said:

“Most people listen to the speeches and so you do not need to include lengthy excerpts, rather you should make brief summaries. The way to

do this is to read the text a few times yourself, highlight what you consider to be the key points. Then repeat this process several times and each time the text will be less until you get to a point where you are left with a few paragraphs that present the essence of the address.”

In words reflecting his personal humility, Huzoor continued:

“When I was young and in school we were often given the task of summarising long articles with thousands of words into just a couple of lines and this was something I could manage. In other things, I was weak but Allah the Almighty gave me the ability to edit long documents into very brief summaries. I used the same method that I have told you, that I used to read the document and filter some parts and then would repeat this process several times.”

Then, Huzoor said he thought I would cover the backlog of diaries in eight separate parts.

I actually forgot about this comment until I checked my notes from the *Mulaqat* whilst drafting this final part of the USA-Guatemala diary. It turned out that Huzoor’s prediction was proven true. I wrote two diaries for the UK Jalsa, two for the Germany-Belgium tour and four diaries to cover the USA-Guatemala tour.

Conclusion

Alhamdulillah, Huzoor’s tour of the United States and Guatemala had proven extremely blessed and historic.

Much of the tour was spent in travel, as Huzoor travelled to Maryland, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Houston, Guatemala, Virginia and back to Maryland. Irrespective of the physically exhausting schedule, Huzoor remained constantly engaged in meeting thousands of Ahmadis and hundreds of guests.

Whether it was through his addresses, public engagements or ordinary Mulaqats with members of the Jamaat, throughout the tour, Huzoor continued to touch hearts and move people through his grace, humility and personal exemplification of the true teachings of Islam.

I saw and heard first-hand how people who feared Islam with every fibre of their beings, suddenly came to view it as a source of peace for mankind and pledged to be its defender.

Thereafter, in the final days, Huzoor held various administrative meetings in which he guided the different organs of the Jamaat towards their future activities and plans.

Some days, especially during the relentless back-to-back travel in the first part of the tour, I wished that the USA Jamaat had cut back Huzoor's schedule or added some longer periods of breaks through which he could rest and recover. I wished that he would take some time for tourism or relaxation.

Yet, I knew that even if they had proposed such rest periods, more than likely, Huzoor would have instructed to fill the gaps with further sessions of Mulaqats or other activities.

As I reflect on the tour of the United States and Guatemala many months later, whilst being fortunate to travel with Huzoor in Germany, I am reminded of the fact that duties of Khalifatul Masih are lifelong and never-ending.

May Allah the Almighty grant Huzoor a long and healthy life and enable all members of the Jamaat to be loyal and obedient servants of Khilafat. *Ameen.*

End of Part 5

Any comments or feedback: abid.khan@pressahmadiyya.com