

# **HUZOOR'S TOUR OF AUSTRALIA 2013**

## **A Personal Account**

### **PART 2**

***By Abid Khan***

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013, Huzoor's tour of Australia reached its second stage as Huzoor travelled to the city of Melbourne. In a number of ways this was to be a very significant and historic visit – not least because it was the first time that the city of Melbourne had been blessed by the presence of Khalifa-tul Masih.

### **Departure from Baitul Huda**

At 8.40am Huzoor emerged from his residence at the Baitul Huda Mosque in Sydney where many Ahmadis had gathered to wave Huzoor goodbye. Normally, whenever Huzoor leaves a city there is great sadness amongst the local Jamaat. On that day whilst there was definitely sadness, there was also a sense of happiness because the local Ahmadis knew Huzoor would Insha'Allah be returning to Sydney after a few days.

### **Examples of Huzoor's love**

Before getting into his car, Huzoor went to meet Ameer Sahib Australia who was unable to travel to Melbourne due to the fact that he had been unwell. Ameer Sahib was seated on a chair near his residence and upon seeing Huzoor he immediately got up and walked back with Huzoor. As they walked, I heard Huzoor very lovingly and tenderly say to Ameer Sahib that he should use the next few days to rest completely.

As Huzoor returned to his car he also saw Ahmad bhai who for the past 3 days, had been struck down by a very severe flu and fever. I had been to see him quite a few times and I remember thinking it would be extremely difficult for him to travel to Melbourne with us.

As Huzoor looked towards Ahmad bhai he said that if he wanted to rest he could stay in Sydney for the next few days. Ahmad bhai responded by saying he was fine and ready to go. This in itself was a reflection of the mutual love between Huzoor and his staff.

With great regard for his well-being, Huzoor offered Ahmad bhai the chance to stay behind, whilst on the other side, Ahmad bhai was determined to continue his duties even though he was not yet back to full health.

### **An unfortunate incident at Sydney Airport**

Huzoor's Qafila soon departed and just over an hour later arrived at Sydney's airport for a domestic flight to Melbourne.

However, an incident occurred upon arrival that caused a great deal of apprehension and concern amongst the members of the Qafila and the local Jamaat.

As our cars entered the airport, they had to cross through a barrier one by one. The barrier was the type where a long pole lifts up when a car is about to cross and then comes down again once the car has crossed.

The first couple of cars crossed without incident, but as the car in which Huzoor and Khala Saboohi were seated crossed the barrier it came down and hit the car quite forcefully.

I was in the car behind along with Mubarak Zafar Sahib and we were both very shocked and anxious. We were very concerned in case either Huzoor or Khala Saboohi had, God forbid, been injured in any way.

I and a few other people immediately opened our car doors and went towards Huzoor's car. In the meantime the barrier lifted and Huzoor's car moved ahead.

Huzoor and Khala Saboohi exited their car and *Alhamdulillah* they were both fine. We all breathed a collective sigh of relief and thanked Allah.

As Huzoor came out of the car he inspected the car from both sides before walking into the airport terminal.

No matter what the circumstances Huzoor always remains calm and here again was another example. Whilst a sense of panic and worry had gripped the rest of us, Huzoor was completely composed and seeing Huzoor's composure made all of us feel instantly better.

Afterwards, a few of us discussed the incident and we all shared how desperate and fearful we felt at the moment Huzoor's car was hit by the barrier and the sense of relief when we saw Huzoor and Khala Saboohi emerge from the car without any injury.

From my own perspective those few seconds were the worst I felt throughout the entire trip.

### **Investigation into barrier incident**

Rana Sohail Khan Sahib, who works for Qantas Airlines, was at the airport to receive Huzoor that day. Afterwards, Ameer Sahib asked him to investigate what had actually happened. He later told me:

***“When I saw that Huzoor’s car had been struck I felt my heart sink and prayed that Huzoor was not injured. Thankfully, I immediately saw he was ok.***

***Upon returning to Sydney I realised that the boom gate had not been locked into the ‘open position’ as per our request and was being manually operated. This meant that the operator had to raise the gate every time a vehicle approached, however the driver of Huzoor’s car thought the gate would remain open and followed the instructions of the Khadim who was gesturing to him to keep driving, resulting in the boom gate closing on Huzoor’s vehicle.***

***This was a very unfortunate incident but measures were taken to ensure that this could not happen again.”***

Thus, the report indicated that the incident had been an accident based on miscommunication.

I was relieved when I heard this because there was a small part of me that was fearful that, God forbid, Huzoor’s car had purposely been targeted.

### **Talking to Naib Sadr Sahib about barrier incident**

A couple of weeks later, I stood talking to a Naib Sadr of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Australia whilst he was doing security duty outside Huzoor's residence. During our conversation he told me that when Huzoor's car was struck by the barrier he had been the Khadim who had gestured towards Huzoor's driver to move forward.

He said that when he realised Huzoor's car had been hit he felt as though his entire world had collapsed and he felt ashamed.

He told me he could not bear to show himself in front of Huzoor and so for the next week or more he put himself on car parking duty so that he would be far away.

He said that finally when a number of days had passed he finally felt the strength to go and do duty near Huzoor and that immediately Huzoor noticed him and in a very kind manner asked him where he had been for the past few days.

Naib Sadr Sahib said he could not believe Huzoor had noticed that he had not been present. He added that when Huzoor spoke to him he felt so relieved and as if a weight had been lifted from his heart.

The way he spoke and the effect the incident had had on him was truly reflective of his love for Khilafat and the way Huzoor enquired from him where he had been was reflective of Huzoor's love for his Khadim.

### **Arrival in Melbourne**

The flight to Melbourne was thankfully uneventful and so after an hour, Huzoor arrived at Melbourne Airport where he was greeted by a number of local Jamaat officials.

As we walked out, I really felt that this was an historic moment because it was the first time a Khalifa had visited the city. It was a great privilege and honour to witness that moment, *Alhamdolillah*.

### **An 'interesting' drive**

We immediately departed the airport and sat in our respective cars. We headed to the Ahmadiyya Centre in Melbourne which was about 90 kilometres from the airport. Mubarak Zafar Sahib and me were sat in a car with Dr Malik Akhtar Majoka Sahib who was a member of the local Jamaat.

Majoka Sahib was a very nice man, in his 50s, and was clearly overcome with emotion upon Huzoor's arrival. However, perhaps he was not the ideal person to be a Qafila driver.

It is important for Qafila cars to stay close together and remain in formation as much as possible but it seemed Dr Sahib had never driven as a Qafila driver before and so was not really aware of this. Thus, from the first minute of the drive he was quite relaxed and drove at his own pace!

Both Mubarak Sahib and I were concerned because soon we had become separated from the other Qafila cars and no one was sure if we were ahead or behind.

Dr Sahib remained quite calm and whilst we were somewhat stressed he took great delight in pointing out the local landmarks such as the famous Melbourne Cricket Ground which is known as the 'MCG'.

As we drove, we became convinced that we had lagged far behind and so we were shocked upon reaching the Jamaat Centre that Huzoor and the other Qafila cars had not yet arrived and so rather than fall behind we had actually arrived first.

### **Huzoor's arrival at Jamaat Centre in Melbourne**

After about ten minutes I suddenly started hearing some *naaray* and sure enough a few seconds later, Huzoor's car came into view.

Huzoor remained seated in his car with the window pulled down halfway and drove past the Ahmadis waving at them as they welcomed him with great fervour and delight.

Mubarak Sahib and I walked behind Huzoor's car and it was a very wonderful scene where the love for Khilafat amongst Ahmadis was so clearly visible.



As Huzoor reached the main entrance of the Mosque he came out of his car and was welcomed by some young children and also local Amila members.



Huzoor then walked to his residence being escorted by the local Sadr Jamaat.

### **A very large Jamaat centre**

Huzoor immediately went into his residence, whilst the rest of us went upstairs to the main hall.

The Jamaat had purchased the centre a few years ago and it was very huge in size. Easily three or even four thousand people could fit into the main hall.

Currently the Jamaat had split the hall into two sections. The front half was used as a Mosque area and a *Mehrab* had been made at the front, whilst the rear half of the hall was used as a multi-purpose hall for Jamaat activities.



### **Climate change**

One thing immediately noticeable in Melbourne was that its climate was very different to Sydney. It was much cooler and very rainy and as a consequence there was much more greenery.

Its climate and landscape meant that Melbourne was more similar to the UK than the other places we visited in Australia. Whilst the Ahmadis from Sydney regularly complained about the weather in Melbourne, I quite enjoyed the rain as it reminded me of home.

### **Changing Huzoor's Office**

Whenever Huzoor arrives in a new place, one of the first things Private Secretary Sahib and Ahmad bhai do is to assess Huzoor's office and make sure it is suitable for Huzoor to conduct his work and for Mulaqats and meetings.

Thus as per their normal routine they went and checked the office set up by the local Jamaat. The office was quite small and having been recently decorated a strong smell of paint was very noticeable.

Private Secretary Sahib immediately reached the conclusion that the office was not suitable for Huzoor and so told the local Sadr that the office would have to be changed. Thus local Khuddam began the process of moving Huzoor's desk, chair and other furniture items to another office directly opposite.

The local Sadr said that this office had been readied as a back-up. Once the furniture had been moved into the new office, I could see that the Private Secretary was still not satisfied. Whilst this office did not smell of paint, it was very dimly lit and dark.

I think Ahmad bhai went and had a look around the building and found a large room near the Mehrab of the Mosque. However, it was not very clean and was filled with junk and was being used as a temporary storage room.

When Private Secretary Sahib saw it he immediately said it should be converted into Huzoor's office and that it should be done in the next hour or so because later in the day Huzoor would be holding Mulaqats.

When I saw the office in its initial state, I thought it would be very difficult to get it ready on time. But what transpired was really wonderful and inspiring.

A number of Khuddam entered and started undertaking various jobs.

Some removed the junk, others cleaned the floors, some scrubbed the walls, whilst others replaced the office furniture.

It was an amazing scene – sometimes on TV there are home ‘*makeover*’ shows where a full team enters and changes the look of a house within hours, and so this scene was similar to that – the only difference being that the makeover took place within minutes rather than hours and those conducting the makeover were volunteers and not professionals!

Thereafter, Huzoor’s office was ready and anyone who came and saw it in its new state could not imagine how it looked just an hour before. It was a really wonderful display of teamwork from the local Ahmadis, Masha’Allah.

The rooms that were originally designed for Huzoor’s office were also utilised.

The first room was turned into a dining room for the Qafila and the second office was used by Majid Sahib, Mubarak Sahib and I for the rest of the week.

### **A late lunch**

Lunch on that first day was very delayed and so by the time we sat down it was almost 5pm. The majority of us had not eaten since around 8am and so we were extremely hungry.

When the dish of *aloo ghosht* came we were all relieved and everyone’s spirits were soon lifted. It is quite amazing how in minutes a person’s state of mind can change after a meal!

Soon after, Huzoor came to his office and began meeting the local Ahmadis in Mulaqat. Rather than rest or take time, Huzoor's attitude is always to return to his office as soon as possible and to start meeting the local Ahmadis.

### **Staying in a motel**

Huzoor was staying on site as were his security staff and Bashir Sahib. Upon the conclusion of the day's events the rest of us were taken to a motel which was more than 25 minutes drive away.

We stayed in the motel for the next two nights, but for the final few nights we were moved to a motel much closer to the Jamaat centre.

### **An email from America**

One day, whilst we were in Melbourne I got an email from my friend Muhammed Chaudhry from the US Jamaat who is a very active member of our media team in America.

In his email he mentioned how he had recently met California's Lieutenant Governor, Gavin Newsom.

A few months earlier on 11 May, Mr Newsom had attended the Special Reception held in Huzoor's honour in Beverly Hills and had heard Huzoor's address.

Muhammad told me that Mr Newsom had said that initially he thought Huzoor had been a little pessimistic about the state of the world. But having witnessed how close America had come to attacking Syria just a few weeks before, he realised that Huzoor's words had actually been very accurate and wise.

After reading Muhammed's email, I went and sat outside Huzoor's residence with his security guards. It was close to Namaz time and so I knew Huzoor would be coming out of his home in a few moments.

When Huzoor came out and was walking towards the Mosque I mentioned the email I had received from Muhammed and the comments of the Lieutenant Governor. Huzoor was quite interested to hear this and in fact asked me again the next day about this incident.

After Namaz, I emailed Muhammed and mentioned that I had told Huzoor what he had written. In response, I got a typical American reply from him saying it was '*so awesome*' that within minutes Huzoor knew about his conversation with the Lieutenant Governor!

### **Doing security duty**

One evening during our stay in Melbourne, Ahmad bhai asked me to walk with him from the dining room down to his bedroom.

He said the reason was that *he*, our head of security, needed *my* security!

I was confused and at first I thought it was one of Ahmad Bhai's jokes that I did not understand but he again repeated that he needed me to walk as his security.

I asked what he meant and he said that in his pocket he had Huzoor's passport, which he was taking to his room for safekeeping. He said that whenever he had Huzoor's passport in his hand, he preferred to have someone with him so that if, God forbid, anything happened to him, the other person would know he had Huzoor's passport and could take it into safekeeping. Hearing this, I was quite astonished at how far ahead he had thought and planned.

I have to admit that as we walked I thought to myself that if something happens to Ahmad bhai and Huzoor's passport comes into my possession then who will do *my* security?!

This was not actually my first ever security duty. Both in 1999 and 2000 I did *Waqf-e-Arzi* in London for one month and was part of the *Hifazat-e-Khas* team. I remember those experiences with great fondness.

Also, on the very first occasion I had the opportunity to travel with Huzoor in 2008 to Africa, I remember on one occasion Ahmad bhai asked me to do security whilst Mulaqats were taking place because there were thousands of people present and so he needed some extra help.

### **Majid Sahib's good idea**

As the day's events concluded on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October, Private Secretary Sahib, Majid Sahib, Mubarak Sahib and me got into a 7-seater car and were taken back to our motel.

As we were driving we passed some fast-food restaurants and seeing them Majid Sahib suggested that one day we should go to KFC at night to make a change from the routine of *Aloo Ghosht*.

I was delighted to hear this suggestion and said ***"Majid Sahib that is such a good idea!"*** Having eaten *desi* food for lunch and dinner every day since arriving in Australia I was craving something else and so KFC had never sounded so good!

However no one else said anything and ultimately the KFC plan never did come to fruition.

### **A very blessed day**

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October proved to be an extremely blessed day.

On that day, Huzoor led the first ever Friday Sermon delivered by Khalifatul Masih in Melbourne and then later in the evening Huzoor delivered the keynote address at a Special Reception in front of an audience of various dignitaries and guests.



### **Historic Friday Sermon in Melbourne**

Huzoor came out of his residence at 1pm and immediately unveiled a plaque to commemorate the official opening of the Jamaat Centre in Melbourne called *Baitul Salam*.

Thereafter, Huzoor went to the main hall and delivered his weekly Friday Sermon during which he highlighted the importance of true obedience to the Promised Messiah (as).

Huzoor said obedience was not following only the instructions of the Khalifa or the Jamaat that suited you or that you liked, but to follow all instructions even where they did not tie in with your own personal desires or wishes. This point particularly struck me.

Even in my very limited experience I have seen people quote the Promised Messiah (as) or the Khulafa to support their arguments, even though they may do other things that are not in line with the teachings of our Jamaat. And personally, I know it is very easy to accept those decisions of the Jamaat that are in our favour but the true test of obedience is when there are decisions that are not so easy to adopt or that may cause short-term inconvenience.

Huzoor also spoke about the sincerity of many new Ahmadis. He said that when he had visited Singapore a few weeks earlier, people had travelled to meet him from great distances even though they had no money to spare.

Huzoor said that some people had sold property just to have the chance to meet him for a few seconds and to pray behind him. He said that when they met him they did not ask for prayers to become rich but only requested Huzoor to pray that they and their future generations always remain attached to Khilafat.

I also vividly remember Huzoor describing the commitment to her faith of a young Ahmadi lady living in Switzerland. She was working in a professional firm and initially her employers had been cooperative to her needs as a Muslim and allowed her to offer Salat during her work hours. During this period the company excelled and grew.

But some time later she was pressured by her employers to take part in mixed-swimming sessions as was required by the college where she was doing a professional qualification. However she declined and ultimately had to leave the job.

It so transpired that the firm where she had previously worked began to suffer losses and had to make a number of people redundant. Later one of her ex-colleagues informed her that one of the senior managers had said that the company's fall from grace seemed directly related to the way they had treated that innocent Ahmadi girl.

Huzoor spoke in praise of her example by saying:

***“Therein is a lesson for our young women and girls that God’s blessings come your way if faith is given precedence over worldly matters. It is not essential***

***to adopt everything of here in the West. Adopt their good points but avoid their bad points. Girls are not forbidden from swimming, they should definitely swim but not in a mixed situation - girls should only swim with girls.”***

Huzoor continued by saying:

***“Swimming is good and everyone should know how to swim. Nowadays swimming is very popular and common amongst girls, but my grandmother used to tell me that she was a very good swimmer. There were no swimming pools in those days and swimming was done in canals. This is more than a hundred years ago when she used to swim and was a very good upstream swimmer.”***

Hearing this, I was also amazed to hear the way Huzoor’s respected grandmother used to swim in the canals more than a hundred years ago. That in itself was such a great example to give to those people who allege that Islam stops women from taking part in various activities.

### **Huzoor’s humility and simplicity**

Later that evening, Huzoor and his Qafila departed the Jamaat centre at 6.15pm for a Special Reception being held at the Princess Court Reception Centre in Melbourne.

The previous evening I had seen some photos of the Reception Centre taken by Munir Odeh Sahib who had visited the Centre the day before and I had been

somewhat underwhelmed by the location. The venue was routinely used for weddings and similar events. It was my personal opinion that because the Khalifa was visiting Melbourne for the first time they should have booked a better hall to hold the reception.

This view was also shared by certain other members of the Qafila and is something we communicated to the local Sadr. However, as all the invites had been sent out there was no way the venue could be changed.

Anyway, few hours earlier, as Huzoor was walking back to his residence after the Friday Sermon he asked Munir Odeh Sahib how the venue was and Munir Sahib mentioned that it did not seem great. With a smile, Huzoor said that it did not matter and that we should not expect that every venue will match Capitol Hill or the European Parliament!

Hearing these words, I realised that perhaps we had become too fussy and that in the scheme of things the setting did not matter that much.

It also showed Huzoor's humility and simplicity that he did not require grand locations or venues, rather Huzoor just desired for the opportunity to spread the true teachings of Islam and the message of Ahmadiyyat.

I have to say I learned an important lesson there and then.

### **Melbourne Reception – pre-meeting**

Huzoor arrived at the Princess Court Reception Centre at 6.50pm and initially Huzoor was taken to a separate room where he held a brief meeting with some of the main non-Ahmadi dignitaries, including Major-General Paul McLachlan.

During the private meeting, the various guests introduced themselves to Huzoor and gave briefings about their respective roles and responsibilities.

They all spoke of their pleasure at having the opportunity to meet with Huzoor and you could see from their faces that their sentiments were very genuine and sincere.

### **Melbourne Reception – main event**

After a few minutes, Huzoor was escorted to the main hall where the reception was being held. As we entered I saw that the hall was packed with non-Ahmadi and non-Muslim guests. It was very clear that many local people of influence had come to listen to the message of Huzoor.

### **An interesting introduction**

The event began with Tilawat and was then followed by an introduction by the local Sadr Jamaat, Safdar Chaudhry Sahib.

As he began his introduction he said the following words:

***“At the outset I record my respect and acknowledgement for the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered today and indeed to all of Australia’s indigenous people whose enduring culture has nurtured this Continent for tens of thousands of years.”***

When I heard him say these words, I have to admit I was a little confused. I realised he was paying tribute and giving respect to the Aborigines but I did not understand why he was doing so during the event.

My confusion, however, was based on my own ignorance because I later found out that in the majority of public events that take place in Australia it is customary for these or similar words to be spoken as a means to acknowledge the history and culture of Australia’s indigenous people.

### **Guest speeches**

After the welcome by the local Sadr Sahib a number of guests took to the stage to welcome Huzoor and also to pay tribute to the efforts of our Jamaat to promote peace and harmony in the world.

Whilst, there were many important National and State politicians attending, the most high profile dignitary was Major-General Paul McLachlan who ranks as one of the highest military officers in Australia and the most senior in the State of Victoria. He had huge experience having served as an Australian military commander during the Iraq War and also during the military coup of the Solomon Islands in 2000.

Addressing the audience, Major-General McLachlan said:

***“The Australian military is our country’s final resort against tyranny and extremism, whilst the message and teachings of His Holiness (Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad) and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community should always be our first resort. Certainly, the Ahmadiyya philosophy advocates peace and respect throughout the world and thus is an example for all.”***

The other guest speakers also spoke very well and from the heart. The local Mayor, Sandra Frankston said that if all people followed the motto of the Ahmadiyya Community of ‘Love for All, Hatred for None’ then ***“there would be no wars and only peace in the world”***.

A Federal MP, Anthony Byrne said that he wished Huzoor well not only during his tour of Australia ***“but for the rest of his life”***.

There were other guest speakers also and they all welcomed Huzoor to Australia and commended the Jamaat’s commitment to peace.

### **Huzoor’s address**

Huzoor began his speech at 7.25pm and spoke for just under half an hour, during which Huzoor analysed and reflected upon the war in Syria and also spoke of his fears that the world was moving towards a horrific world war.

When I heard Huzoor’s address, it made me think of how Allah guides the Khalifa.

More than any other of Huzoor's speeches during the tour the Melbourne address confronted directly the political state of today's world and the consequences of military interventions.

As far as I know, when Huzoor prepared his speech, he did not know that one of Australia's foremost military commanders would be in attendance. Yet, Huzoor's address was perfect for the occasion because it was made in front of a person who had a real strategic influence in Australia's military.



Speaking about Western countries becoming involved in wars in the Muslim world, Huzoor said:

***“The major powers have become involved in some of these (Arab Spring) conflicts by supplying weapons and money to the rebels in the name of assisting the people. However we have to question the result of such efforts because disorder and chaos continue to plague those nations.”***

Moving on to Syria, Huzoor spoke very movingly about how thousands of innocent people had been killed, whilst millions more had either been internally displaced or forced to seek asylum in Syria's neighbouring countries.



Taking a very balanced approach, Huzoor said that neither Syria's Government nor the rebels were free from blame but that both parties had inflicted cruelties and injustices. Regarding the use of chemical weapons, Huzoor said that *"God knows better"* as to which party had used such horrific weapons.

Having given his analysis, Huzoor then proceeded to outline solutions that would help bring peace and he made it very clear that whatever he proposed were Islamic teachings based on the guidance of the Holy Quran.



Huzoor said that differences between the respective parties should be tackled through diplomacy and peaceful means.

Huzoor also spoke of the way such negotiations should be conducted when he said:

***"Islam teaches that when a third-party seeks to bring about reconciliation between two warring factions it should act impartially and with true justice."***

Huzoor concluded by urging all people to work towards peace and to strive to save the world from another world war.

Huzoor said:

***“May it be that your future generations come to thank and pray for you, rather than curse and abuse you for the legacy left behind.”***

I found this line particularly emotional – whereby Huzoor made it clear that if the people of today did not fulfil their roles and did not seek to end conflict, then their children and their grandchildren would come to curse them.

However, if they did play their respective roles and did achieve peace then their children and grandchildren would be eternally grateful and would pray for their ancestors.

### **A standing ovation**

As Huzoor concluded the entire audience rose to their feet. I remember looking around and seeing people applaud and smile with great appreciation and sincerity.

It was clear that Huzoor’s words had made a very powerful impact and this was proved true when Huzoor met the guests one by one a little later in the evening. Each and every guest met Huzoor with great love and joy.

Appreciation was etched on the faces of the guests to such an extent that I do not think I had ever seen before. Indeed some of the non-Muslim guests were even moved to kiss Huzoor's hand in the same manner that Ahmadis do.

### **Interviews with guests**

One Australian custom I became aware of during the evening was that it was quite common for guests to get up from their tables and go and meet other people during dinner.

In the middle of dinner, people were freely moving from table to table talking to their acquaintances and then returning back to their meals.

I decided to take advantage of this custom myself and so instead of waiting until after the meal, I went and met with some of the guests to find out how they had found the event.

The first person I met was a female member of the local Fire Brigade. She said she had found Huzoor's message to have been very clear – that the world stood in great danger and she hoped people would heed his message.

She also mentioned how in just one evening she had observed how much Ahmadis loved their Khalifa and that this relationship of love was very 'unique'.

I later met a Pakistani intellectual by the name of Rashid Sultan who was quite elderly and very well-spoken. He said he had been very impressed by Huzoor and that the message he was taking away from the evening was that until there was true justice in the world there would never be peace. He added that the '*dignity*' of the event surpassed anything he had seen before.

One rather interesting conversation I had was with Mr John Bellavance, who was a senior representative from a group known as the '*International Peace Federation*' – who in the past have been referred to by others as '*Moonies*' because they were founded by Korea's Reverend Sun Myung Moon.

Mr Bellavance said that regardless of differences of belief, he had found Huzoor's message to be one of genuine peace and one that all people could appreciate.

Another person I met was Roger Page, the Principal of a local Secondary school. He said:

***"It is amazing to see that whilst the rest of the Muslim world is fragmented and divided, your community is so united and together."***

In response, I said that the reason we are united is because of the Khalifa and because of his guidance and that it was directly because of a lack of such leadership that other Muslims were fragmented.

I spoke to various other guests and dignitaries and all of them spoke about how the evening had been very memorable and extremely positive. A number of people said that they could not find a single point from Huzoor's address that they could not agree with.

Another interesting person who I met was Ingra Peulich MP. She had come to Australia as an immigrant from Bosnia and was now a well-known member of Victoria's State Parliament.

She had the honour of sitting next to Huzoor during dinner and she told me afterwards that she had really enjoyed getting to know Huzoor on a personal level. She said she had learned that Huzoor had two children and three grandchildren.

She also asked Huzoor what type of food he liked and Huzoor had responded by saying he liked seafood. Upon this, Mrs Peulich said she wished the event had been held at one of Melbourne's famous seafood restaurants!

Speaking about Huzoor, Ingra Peulich added:

***"What a truly lovely, wonderful and compassionate man His Holiness is. I am determined that His Holiness should come to Victoria again so that I and other Parliamentarians can host him and request him to address us directly in our State Parliament."***

The Jamaat had estimated that the event would finish by around 8.30pm but the number of people who wished to meet Huzoor and to speak to him in person was so long that the event did not conclude until after 10pm. Huzoor stood patiently and happily met all of the guests until each and everyone had been satisfied.

With the Grace of Allah, the event had proved to be blessed in all respects and I felt embarrassed as I reflected on my feelings of 24 hours before when I was worried about the venue.

And so as we drove back to the Jamaat centre our hearts were filled with great happiness and joy and we were thankful to Allah for having the opportunity to witness such a wonderful event.

### **Patience of Ahmadis at the Mosque**

By the time Huzoor arrived at the Mosque to lead the Maghreb and Isha prayers it was 11.10pm. Even though it was so late the Mosque was full and many of the Ahmadis had waited for hours.

This was yet another sign of the love Ahmadis have in their hearts for the Khalifa wherein they saw the opportunity to sit and wait for Huzoor as a blessing and a favour of God Almighty.

### **Khala Saboohi's love and care for Lajna**

One thing I have learned on tours is that Huzoor's respected wife also has a very busy schedule and meets with Lajna and Nasirat members. This also has a very great impact.

Many men have told me how much their wives and daughters enjoyed being able to meet Khala Saboohi and to learn from her.

A few Ahmadi ladies in Melbourne wrote down the benefits of this aspect of Huzoor's tours.

Mrs Kaukub Nasir wrote:

***"One of the highlights of Huzoor's tour was the time we were able to spend with our beloved Sayyeda Aapa Jaan.***

***I was fortunate enough to meet Aapa Jaan at Jalsa Salana Sydney and later during the visit to Melbourne.***

***Aapa Jaan lovingly came to meet groups of Lajna twice, where she would graciously answer any questions asked by the Ladies.***

***Her unmistakable simplicity, knowledge, confidence and kindness instantly made her a much-loved figure among Lajna."***

Mrs Noma Saeed wrote:

***“One main highlight of Huzoor’s visit was being able to meet Aapa Jaan. The informative sessions she held gave us guidelines for our daily lives.”***

Shazia Tahir Sahiba wrote:

***“During Huzoor’s tour in Melbourne, the Lajna had the opportunity to meet Appa Jaan and those times with her were priceless.***

***Aapa Jaan's way of explaining things and answering questions made you understand and want to listen more.***

***Aapa Jaan radiated love for us all - I looked up at her as a motherly figure who had unconditional love for her children.”***

### **A Day Out**

Australia’s Jamaat had set aside 12<sup>th</sup> October as a day where they could take Huzoor out and show him some local sites in Melbourne.

I have to admit I had been looking forward to the day out all week.

Whilst, I was excited to see some of Melbourne’s landmarks, I was happier at the prospect of Huzoor having some time to enjoy the local attractions and the fact that I was fortunate enough to accompany Huzoor on such a visit.



## **Visit to Royal Botanical Gardens**

We left the Mosque at 12.30pm and first went to the 'Royal Botanical Gardens' where Huzoor was given a guided tour of various different types of gardens.



Huzoor walked through the different gardens and took video on his personal video camera.

I found some of the flowers and gardens on display to be extremely beautiful, whilst some I found less so.

However, I do not think I was the right person to fully appreciate them because each of the shrubs and flowers had some type of history.

There were some shrubs that looked quite ordinary but they were part of a collection that illustrated how plants had evolved over millions of years.



I think given Huzoor's background as an agriculturalist he clearly had the most knowledge and interest in the various plantations.

### **Briefing Huzoor**

After walking round for nearly an hour, Huzoor came back to the entrance area. The Jamaat had booked a room at the Gardens to offer Zuhr and Asr and whilst it was being readied Huzoor sat on a bench.

Huzoor looked in my direction and called me over. He asked how I had found the Reception in Melbourne the previous evening. I said I felt the response of the guests to Huzoor's presence and address had been wonderful and I narrated a few comments of the guests to Huzoor.

During that moment I also mentioned that an Ahmadi friend in America had sent me an email asking whether America was better or whether Australia was better!

Huzoor smiled and said that I should tell him that the American Jamaat is bigger in terms of its numbers and experience, but nonetheless the Australian Jamaat was trying its very best and with the Grace of Allah was doing very well.

### **Salat at the Botanical Gardens**

After a few moments Huzoor was informed that the room was ready for *Salat* and so he proceeded to the room.

Stood in rows directly behind Huzoor were all of the men, whilst further back Khala Saboohi and a few Lajna members also offered their *Salat* behind Huzoor.

### **Lunch at 'The Hillz'**

Having eaten only *desi* food since we had arrived in Australia, I was very much looking forward to lunch on that day. I had no idea what we would eat but I guessed it would be different.

However I soon heard a rumour that the Jamaat had made packed lunches of *biryani*. Although I like *biryani*, I have to admit the prospect of it on that day did not appeal very much and thankfully it turned out to be a false rumour!

From the Botanical Gardens we drove for quite some time through country and mountain roads. None of us were quite sure where we were going but we presumed it had all been arranged and so we sat and enjoyed the drive.

After some time it became apparent that the local Jamaat were lost and had gone the wrong way. They parked on the side of a country road and from my car I could see various Jamaat officials and Khuddam engaged in frantic discussion.

The local Jamaat was particularly unsure of where to eat lunch because the restaurant they had booked had cancelled our reservation because we were somewhat late.

As the confusion of the local administration continued to increase and as they struggled to reach any decision finally Huzoor himself decided that we should eat a restaurant called 'The Hillz' which was located next to where our cars were parked. This proved to be an excellent decision, Masha'Allah.

### **An example of Huzoor's love for his Khadims**

We entered the restaurant and Huzoor and Khala Saboohi were seated at a table on one side, whilst the rest of us were seated on the other side of the restaurant or on tables outside.

Apart from Huzoor and his Qafila the restaurant was completely empty.

After a minute, Huzoor called Mubarak Zafar Sahib and instructed that the cost of the meal would be paid by Huzoor rather than the local Jamaat and secondly Huzoor instructed Mubarak Sahib to make sure that every single person was well fed and that not a single person should be left hungry. Huzoor was particularly concerned that the Khuddam on duty outside were not forgotten.

We had the opportunity to eat out on a few other occasions during the rest of the tour and on each occasion Huzoor gave Mubarak Sahib the same two instructions.

### **A pizza lunch**

Having looked at the menu it was decided that to save time pizzas would be ordered for everyone. Thus over the next hour freshly cooked pizzas were served to everyone.

We were all very hungry and so we really enjoyed eating fresh slices of pizza where the melted cheese was dripping from the sides of the crust!

We had ended up at the restaurant randomly after getting lost but in the end we enjoyed lunch a great deal.

### **Stop at Sky High**

After lunch, Huzoor was taken to Mount Dandenong which stands at an altitude of more than 2,000 feet and from where the city of Melbourne could

be viewed from a vantage point known as 'Sky High'. This was the same place where we were meant to originally have eaten lunch.

Huzoor walked around and looked at the view from different spots and took video footage with his camera.



### **Visit to the Bird Park**

It had been the plan to visit a local bird park but as we left Mount Dandenong the local Khuddam said the bird park had now closed and so we should return to the Mosque.

However, despite this, I heard Ahmad bhai, who was seated in Huzoor's car, saying on the radio that Huzoor had said we should still drive past the Bird Park and check. When we heard this we all realised that Huzoor desired to visit the bird park.

Soon we arrived and exited the cars. Immediately, a flock of birds flew towards us and so Huzoor was handed some grains and he started to feed the birds with his own hands.

One bird landed on the shoulder of a local Khadim and Huzoor started to feed that particular bird. Later on the Khadim told me he could not believe how lucky he had been that the bird had landed on him so that Huzoor's attention was turned towards him. He described it as one of the happiest moments of his life.



As Huzoor fed the birds he was smiling and it was very apparent that Huzoor was enjoying the occasion, Masha'Allah.



Upon seeing Huzoor and his Qafila the owners of the bird park said they were happy to keep the park open and so we entered the enclosure. As we did so there were many more birds eager to be fed.

### **Taking video of Huzoor feeding the birds**

As we entered the enclosure Huzoor handed me his video camera and told me to take video whilst he fed the birds.



For a minute I became very nervous because I was not sure how to use Huzoor's camera and I so I was unable to widen the zoom. In that moment I panicked and so started praying and thankfully a few seconds later I found the correct button and was able to zoom out so that I could properly capture Huzoor feeding the birds.



Over the next 4 or 5 minutes Huzoor fed different birds with his blessed hand.

It so happened that one bird ate happily from Huzoor's hand, but when some of our Khuddam tried to feed her she refused to take it. They mentioned this to Huzoor and so Huzoor put out his hand again and the bird started eating happily again!

### **Feeding the birds**

After a few minutes, Huzoor took the video camera from me and told me to start feeding the birds. I took some of the grain and nuts into the palm of my hand and started feeding them, whilst Huzoor took video with his camera.



It was a truly memorable moment for me, *Alhamdulillah*. Whilst the birds pecked away at my hand, I could see Huzoor taking video and smiling.

As we walked back to the car, I said to Huzoor ***“Jazak’Allah for this opportunity”*** and Huzoor responded by saying that ***“You have grown up in cities and so you will not have fed such birds before.”***

Huzoor was absolutely right - I had not fed such birds before. I have never been the most ‘outdoors’ type of person and so even feeding birds was a new experience for me.

I had very rarely felt such joy and happiness. The reason for my joy was not feeding the birds, but the fact that Huzoor was there and it was on his direction that I fed the birds.

I could go to the same bird park again a million times but I would never experience the feelings I did on that afternoon.

It seemed as though Huzoor had very much enjoyed the half an hour we spent in the bird park and seeing this meant everyone was in high spirits, Masha’Allah.

### **Huzoor’s continuing Jamaat engagements**

During Huzoor’s visit to Melbourne, apart from the main public events, Huzoor conducted long Mulaqat sessions with local Ahmadiis and also held a series of classes with the Waqf-e-Nau, Waqfat-e-Nau and Ahmadi male and female students.

Whilst the Australia Jamaat had suggested that all of 12<sup>th</sup> October be allocated to sightseeing, upon our return to the Mosque Huzoor held separate Waqf-e-Nau classes with both boys and girls.

During the classes, Huzoor would answer the questions of young Ahmadis and give guidance to them both individually and collectively. Thus, throughout the week in Melbourne the local Ahmadis had many opportunities to see Huzoor, to meet him and to learn from him.

### **Huzoor's guidance about Waqf**

During the Waqf-e-Nau Class in Melbourne, Huzoor explained the purpose of Waqf to the children. Huzoor said:

***“Waqf-e-Nau does not mean that you will certainly remain here in Australia and work here. Rather once you have completed your studies you should inform the Jamaat and be ready to go wherever I send you. That is a real Waqf.”***

### **Reflections of a young Waqfat-e-Nau**

A very young 9 year old child, Umna Saeed attended Huzoor's Waqfat-Nau class in Melbourne. Afterwards she shared her experiences and said:

***“The fact that Huzoor has been in Australia has made me feel extremely joyful and seeing Huzoor has taught me how to be a better Ahmadi.***

***The highlight was the Waqf-e-Nau class because I got to ask Huzoor a question and then the next day we had a family Mulaqat and Huzoor remembered me from the class - that made me so happy. What I learned on this trip is that we should listen to everything Huzoor says.”***

### **Reflections of Melbourne’s Ahmadis**

I spoke to many other members of the Jamaat and the impact of Huzoor’s week in Melbourne was very clear.

Abdul Qadeer Razi Sahib in Melbourne, said:

***“The fact Huzoor was here amongst is indescribable. Whilst Huzoor was here I felt we were living in a different world... During Huzoor’s tour we saw the faces of Ahmadis who we had not seen before and they have become closer to the Jamaat. I am Secretary Wasiyya and since Huzoor’s visit dozens of people have joined the Wasiyyat scheme in our local Jamaat.”***

A local Khadim, Haider Masood, who was serving the Jamaat as a local Qaid and Secretary Taleem, spoke very movingly about Huzoor’s tour. He said:

***“Huzoor being in Australia was the biggest moment of my life. Even now I have tears in my eyes that a person like me had honour to meet Huzoor and to see Huzoor in person. Huzoor’s trip has changed me as a person... There comes time when something triggers and your belief in Jamaat weakens or you take a back step or you don’t want to give as much time as you should. Just by looking at Huzoor all those feelings disappear.***

***My life, my heart, my money, my family, everything lay at Huzoor's feet. I am so blessed that I met Huzoor. Hundreds of Ahmadis much better than me in countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh wish every day to get the opportunity that Allah gave me."***

Dr Salman Ahmad from Melbourne Jamaat said:

***"During Huzoor's tour I had my first ever Mulaqaat with him. The day I saw Huzoor for the first time instantly the feeling that entered my heart was why I had not met Huzoor in the past. I felt that I had really wasted those years.***

***Huzoor's presence benefits all Jamaats. People sometimes have some ambiguities towards Jamaat but listening directly to Huzoor's speeches removes all those false beliefs. I know Huzoor's presence has changed the whole scenario of Melbourne Jamaat. Because of Huzoor's visit our Jamaat has become closer to each other and our mutual love has increased. Also during Huzoor's visit most of us tried to be regular in Namaz and now that has become part of our lives."***

Tahir Ahmad Sahib from Melbourne said:

***"Huzoor's presence in Australia created so much enthusiasm for every single soul that everyone now feels it their duty and obligation to serve the Jamaat with utmost responsibility, dedication and love. Since Huzoor's tour we understand better the importance of conveying the message of Ahmadiyyat to others and our Tabligh department has become much more active."***

Dr Muhammad Malik Majoka Sahib in Melbourne said:

***“Spending a few days close to Huzoor, I learnt that he lives a simple life, I learnt of Huzoor's kindness and his love, I saw that he was very tolerant and understanding of any shortcomings or mistakes that we may have made, and he corrected us in a loving manner. My bond with Khilafat has become even stronger and it will be a great day when Huzoor again decides to come to Australia.”***

### **Departure from Melbourne**

Huzoor departed from Melbourne on the morning of 14 October and flew back to Sydney.

As Huzoor left the Jamaat Centre in Melbourne many Ahmadis came to wave him off and they were visibly emotional and upset to part with him. Even though Huzoor still had two weeks of his Australian tour left many of the local Ahmadis would not see Huzoor again during this tour.

As we sat in our respective cars I reflected upon how blessed Huzoor's few days in Melbourne had been.

### **Return to Sydney**

Huzoor arrived back at Sydney's Baitul Huda Mosque at 2.25pm and after lunch and Zuhr and Asr prayers soon Huzoor's routine of Mulaqats began again. On that evening alone Huzoor met more than 40 Ahmadi families.

### Very sad news

Whilst we had been in Melbourne, Ahmad bhai had informed me that his mother, Sahibzadi Amatul Mateen Sahiba, was very seriously unwell in Rabwah. Thereafter, each day I asked how she was and it was clear that her condition was very serious.

On the morning of 15 October as I got ready for Fajr I received a text message from Mala saying that Khala Mateen had now been taken very seriously ill and her state was critical. After Fajr I went to see Ahmad bhai and asked how she was. Ahmad bhai seemed understandably distracted, and just said ***“Yes it’s serious”***.

As I went back to my lodge after Fajr, I began to fear the worst and just a few minutes later I received a text message informing Khala Mateen had sadly passed away.

I felt very sorry and sad - Khala Mateen was a very respected elder of the Jamaat. She was the daughter of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) and Hazrat Choti Aapa and was also the aunt of beloved Huzoor.

After a couple of hours I returned to the Mosque with the intention of going to meet Ahmad bhai and to do *ufsos* but the person driving my car, Akhlaq Sahib, mentioned he had taken Ahmad bhai to the airport an hour or so before and that he was on his way to Pakistan. Hearing this I hoped that Ahmad bhai would arrive in time for Khala Mateen’s *Janaza* and thankfully he did.

Ahmad bhai remained in Pakistan for just over a week. Whilst he was away I used to send him messages on 'WhatsApp' to tell him about some of the events that were taking place in Australia. I thought I could not help him in any way but perhaps he would feel still part of the tour if he knew what was taking place.

I think my messages had the desired effect because one day when we were in Japan, Ahmad bhai particularly mentioned that he appreciated the fact that we were in contact whilst he was away.

During his Friday Sermon that week, Huzoor led the *Janaza* prayer of Khala Mateen in absentia and Huzoor paid tribute to her and prayed for Khaloo Mahmood and their children.

### **Eid-ul-Adha**

When we had left the UK almost a month before, a number of people presumed Huzoor would return to London by Eid. However, on 16 October 2013, for the first time in his Khilafat and for only the second time in history, a Khalifa of the Promised Messiah led the Eid prayers from Australia.

### **London people missing Huzoor**

Normally when Eid takes place in London, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi host a barbeque in the afternoon in which they invite family members and various guests.



With the Grace of Allah, Mala and I have also been invited to the barbeque and it is always a very happy occasion. However, as Huzoor was out of the country Mala told me that she and other people who are normally invited to the barbeque were absolutely confused about how they should spend their Eid afternoon! Hearing this, I was even more grateful that I was able to once again spend Eid close to Huzoor.

### **Eid Namaz and Sermon**

The Eid prayers began at 10am and more than 2,000 Ahmadis had gathered to pray behind Huzoor.



During his sermon, Huzoor praised the sacrifices of Hazrat Ibrahim (ra) and his family and said that true Muslims should learn from their example.

Huzoor also spoke about the ritual of 'Eid Qurbani' by saying:

***"Allah deems that it is the piety of a person's heart that reaches Him – not the ritual slaughter of an animal... Without righteousness no worship or***

***sacrifice is of any benefit. Thus we should strive to ensure that our Eids are based upon true righteousness.”***

At the end of his address Huzoor gave greetings of ‘*Eid Mubarak*’ to all Ahmadi Muslims across the world and thereafter led a silent prayer in which he asked Ahmadis to pray for their brothers and sisters who were suffering from persecution and difficulties.

### **Huzoor meeting Ahmadis after Eid**

After the Eid Sermon concluded, Huzoor walked around the entire premises and waved at the thousands of Ahmadi men, women and children who had gathered. On everyone’s face was happiness and delight.

A few times Huzoor walked up some stairs and the Ahmadis were amazed and shocked that Huzoor was walking past them.

Huzoor went wherever it seemed Ahmadis had gathered and so I think the vast majority of Ahmadis had the opportunity to see Huzoor in person and from close range on that day.

### **Doing ‘*Musafa*’**

As Huzoor returned to his residence, he very kindly stood and did *musafa* with his security staff and the other members of his Qafila. I also stepped forward at that point and met with Huzoor.

I felt a great deal of emotion at that moment thinking of how Allah had enabled someone very weak to work with Huzoor and to travel with him. I thought about how there were countless other people who were much more talented than I and it was only due to Allah's kindness that I had this opportunity.

Afterwards, Mubarak Zafar Sahib also mentioned how he had been very pleased to have the opportunity to meet Huzoor and to do a formal *musafa*. He said that in London he was always very busy helping to organise Huzoor's afternoon barbeque and so he normally did not have the opportunity to do *Musafa* on Eid.

### **Spending time with Huzoor and Khala Saboohi**

A couple of days before Eid, Khala Saboohi had very kindly invited me to spend lunch on Eid day with Huzoor and her. It was a great honour and something I was very much looking forward to.

At around 1pm, I went to Huzoor's home and as I entered I saw that Huzoor and Khala Saboohi were sat in a room adjacent to their lounge and dining room. Also present were a few other members of Huzoor's family who lived in Australia.

When I entered I was not sure where to sit and so I sat on a chair at the far side of the room but Khala Saboohi told me to pull up a chair and place it near where Huzoor was sat.

The atmosphere in Huzoor's home was very relaxed and as always very welcoming and warm.

Huzoor had his iPad in his hand and began showing me what he had stored on it. Huzoor literally had a full library on his iPad, including the Quran, its commentary, the entire collection of *Ruhani Khazain* and various other books. Huzoor also had many *Nazms* stored and the MTA app.

On Huzoor's iPad he also had some news apps. As far as I remember there was the BBC news app and also the CNN news app. As I sat there Huzoor scrolled through the apps and very kindly gave *me* an update of the latest news! Part of my job is to keep Huzoor updated of the latest news but here was our wonderful Khalifa informing his servant of the news.

Generally speaking whenever I give Huzoor briefings I have often found Huzoor knows the news beforehand and in fact he is frequently aware of stories that I am unaware of.

After some time, Huzoor picked up his video camera and started to look at some old videos he had recorded. Huzoor showed some footage he had taken in Vancouver earlier this year.

Then Huzoor decided to watch the video footage I had taken with his camera a few days earlier at the Melbourne bird park. I was very, very nervous being seated next to Huzoor as he reviewed my camerawork! I was hoping and praying that Huzoor was satisfied with the recording.

I knew the first minute would be poor quality as it took me some time to figure out the camera settings and as Huzoor looked through that portion my heart sank. I very quietly said ***“Huzoor, I think it gets better after a minute”***.

Thankfully it did get better and we began to see Huzoor feeding the birds and some close-up shots of the birds happily eating from Huzoor's hand. As the footage improved I began to breathe again and took a sigh of relief when Huzoor commented that one particular close-up had been well taken.

As Huzoor closed the video he looked at his watch and realised it was nearly time for *Namaz*. I quickly proceeded to the Mosque and after a few minutes Huzoor came and led the Zuhr and Asr prayers.

### **Eid lunch**

After *Namaz*, I returned to Huzoor's home for lunch. Again, I was entirely unsure where to sit and perhaps sensing my confusion Huzoor pointed to the seat to his left and so I went and sat there.

Huzoor's love was so great during the meal that I did not take anything with my own hand. Huzoor filled my plate with *Kebabs*, *Tikkay* and *Korma* and also broke off some *Naan* and handed it to me.

The plate Huzoor had made for me was very huge and under ordinary circumstances I would never have been able to complete but given that Huzoor had placed the food on my plate I did not want to waste a single morsel and so I ate every last piece.

In fact I was quite embarrassed because everyone else had completed their meals before me, even though I am known for eating very quickly!

During the meal, it was mentioned that Khala Mateen's *Janaza* prayer was being offered or perhaps had already been offered. I asked Huzoor that where a death happens so close to Eid should the close family members still celebrate Eid.

In response, Huzoor repeated the revelation of the Promised Messiah that:

***“Eid tu hai, chaa-hai karo ya na karo”***

that is –

***“It is Eid, celebrate it or not”***

Huzoor did not say anything further, but my own understanding, based on the fact that Huzoor had repeated this revelation, was that no matter what the circumstances Eid would always maintain the same status and importance.

I will never forget Huzoor's love and Khala Saboohi's kindness on that day.

I felt so grateful to Allah that not only did I have the chance to offer my Eid prayer behind Huzoor in Australia but I also had the opportunity to spend so much of the day in his blessed company.

### **Foundation stone laying for Guest House**

Later in the day, Huzoor laid the foundation stone for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Guest House on the premises of the Baitul Huda complex.



After laying the foundation stone and offering a silent prayer, Huzoor inspected architectural drawings of the Guest House and gave some guidance about the project.

### **A personal visit**

After the guest-house ceremony had been completed, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi drove to the home of Syed Sabih Ahmad, who is the maternal nephew of Khala Saboohi and is also the elder brother of Huzoor's daughter-in-law Hibba.

Upon arrival, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi went straight to Sabih's flat and spent nearly an hour with Sabih and his family.

Arrangements for the Qafila members had also been made in the home of an Ahmadi who was Sabih's neighbour. I went there briefly but saw that they had ordered a great deal of pizza. Feeling so full from my afternoon lunch, I could not contemplate eating any more and so I went back and sat in the car.

After about 45 minutes, Sakawat Bajwa Sahib called me and said I was being called to Sabih's home.

When I went inside I saw that Sabih had requested a photo of him and his family with Huzoor and Khala Saboohi and so I was handed the camera and I took a couple of photos.

Huzoor checked the photos on the mini-screen and noticed that they had come out a little dark and so Huzoor told me to re-take them.

After taking the photos Khala Saboohi asked me I had eaten anything. I said I had been offered some food but because I had over-eaten at lunch I had not taken anything. Upon hearing this, Huzoor recommended that I drink a little Pepsi to help with the digestion process. It was strange that as soon as I got back to the car there was a Khadim stood and the first thing he asked me was if I wanted some Pepsi!

Although I had met Sabih briefly in Pakistan many years ago and then again at Waqas bhai and Hibba's wedding, it was on this tour that I got to know him well. He and his family were very welcoming, very humble and kind.



Upon our return to London, I sent him a message asking him how it had felt to have Huzoor visit his home and also how it felt after Huzoor had departed from Australia.

In response Sabih said:

***“When Huzoor visited our home I was very much overwhelmed with humility and gratitude to Allah Almighty for blessing our home with the august presence of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih along with Khala Saboohi.***

***I also felt very much overwhelmed with humility and gratitude to Hazrat Khalifatul Masih and Khala Saboohi themselves for their kindness in coming to our home.***

***As the time for Huzoor’s departure from Australia drew closer I started getting a feeling of sadness day by day. And now anytime I go to the Mosque I get flashbacks of Huzoor’s presence and wish the time rewinds back again. Then I wish Huzoor visits Australia again soon, Insha'Allah.”***

We returned back to the Mosque for *Salat* and thereafter I went back to my lodge.

With the Grace of Allah, Huzoor’s tour of Australia continued to be filled with blessings and still there was another 12 days to go.

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