

HUZOOR'S TOUR OF CANADA

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2016

PART 1

A Personal Account

By Abid Khan

Introduction

On 3rd October 2016, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) embarked on an extremely historic and blessed six-week tour of Canada, where he would attend and preside Canada's Jalsa Salana, deliver several historic addresses, meet with Canadian leaders and dignitaries, conduct dozens of media interviews and meet thousands of Ahmadi Muslims.

I can never be grateful enough to Allah the Almighty that I had the opportunity to accompany Huzoor during those blessed days. As I begin to write a personal account of the tour, I know for certain that no matter what, my words will never do justice to the astonishing scenes that I, and many others, were fortunate enough to witness during that blessed period.

Minute after minute, day after day, we observed the power, dignity, grace and love of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya.

Qafila members

Apart from Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*), there were 9 members of Qafila who travelled with Huzoor from London that day.

There were five security staff – Muhammad Ahmad Sahib (Ahmad bhai), Nasir Saeed Sahib, Sakhawat Bajwa Sahib, Mohsin Awan Sahib and Munawar Khan Sahib.

The office staff comprised of Munir Ahmad Javed Sahib (Private Secretary), Abdul Majid Tahir Sahib (Additional Wakil-ul-Tabshir), Mubarak Ahmad

Zafar Sahib (Additional Wakil-ul-Maal) and me travelling on behalf of the central Press & Media Office.

Huzoor also graciously accepted the requests of Nasir Amini from Bradford and Sajjad Malik from Germany to travel to Canada in their personal capacities and to do duty throughout the tour. Dr. Tanvir Ahmad, a US-based doctor, also was on duty with the Qafila throughout.

Preparing from London

You would think that in the days before such a long tour, Huzoor would perhaps take a little extra personal time to spend with his children and grandchildren and to prepare for the tour. However, if anything, the opposite was true.

In the two weeks that preceded the Canada tour, after Huzoor's return from Germany, I saw with my own eyes that Huzoor's schedule in London became even more busy than normal.

During the Canada tour, Huzoor would deliver six very historic addresses and so in the week or so before the tour, Huzoor prepared his notes for the first three events, which were to be receptions at the Canadian Parliament, York University and a Peace Symposium in Peace Village.

Alhamdulillah, I had the honour and privilege to type up Huzoor's notes for those events. Thus, in the days preceding travel, Huzoor would call me to his office and dictate notes, which I would type and later print out for him.

After printing them, Huzoor would go through them and make handwritten notes and adjustments.

Even on the night before departure, Huzoor called me and told me that he wanted to shorten one of his addresses. Thus, Huzoor went through the address line by line crossing out some parts and rewriting others.

I went and retyped and reprinted Huzoor's notes before taking them back to him the same evening. Huzoor had a final look and was satisfied that it was now the right length.

Those lines that Huzoor cut were also extremely beautiful and explained Islam's teachings in a very persuasive manner, however for time reasons Huzoor decided to leave them out.

At around 7.30pm, Huzoor sent me home and told me to do my packing and to get ready for travel.

As I walked out, Huzoor smiled and said:

"You wear almost the same clothes every day so it won't take you long to pack!"

When I got home, I told this to my wife Mala and she instantly agreed with Huzoor's analysis! Mala said:

"Huzoor is completely right! You wear the same style of clothes every day and perhaps it is time to update your wardrobe a bit!"

Distracting Mahid!

Before any tour abroad, the one part I find difficult is saying goodbye to my children Mahid and Moshahid. In particular, Mahid becomes upset and very quiet when he sees my suitcase packed.

As a means of distraction, as my family came to drop me off at Masjid Fazl on the morning of 3 October, I stopped at a nearby shop and bought a kid's magazine for Mahid. Alhamdolillah, he was immediately cheered up and became involved in the magazine. Hence, when I waved goodbye to him, he was completely fine and just wanted to get back to looking through his magazine!

As Mala and the kids returned home, I waited at Masjid Fazl for the Qafila to depart. With each minute that passed, the crowd of Ahmadis continued to increase.

Whenever Huzoor goes abroad you can always feel the sadness amongst the local Ahmadis in London, however on this occasion the feeling was even more acute. It was going to be an extremely long tour and so the local Ahmadis, so used to seeing Huzoor every day, were understandably extremely dejected.

An example of Huzoor's kindness

As, I stood by the gate, a member of Private Secretary Sahib's staff came up to me and handed me a box of chocolates. It was a gift from Huzoor for Mahid

and with his own blessed hand, Huzoor had written Mahid's name on the box.

I felt extremely emotional, thinking of how even on the morning of travel, Huzoor had remembered our family and knowing that probably Mahid would be the most affected he had sent some chocolates for him.

As Mahid had already left for home with his mother, I packed the box in my hand-luggage and kept it with me throughout the Canada tour and when we returned to London I gave it to Mahid and he was extremely delighted, especially when I told him the chocolates were from Huzoor.

Flight to Canada

A few minutes after 11am, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (Huzoor's respected wife) came down from their residence. Huzoor waved at the Ahmadis present and then led a silent prayer before departing at 11.10am.

The Qafila drove straight to Heathrow airport, where arrangements had been made for the Qafila to check-in and pass through security at the Windsor Suite before boarding the British Airways BA93 flight.

As we boarded the plane, I was initially seated next to Mubarak Zafar sahib, however soon a lady approached me and said that I was sitting in her place. We checked our boarding cards and it turned out that both of us had been allocated the same seat. Thus, we called a member of the cabin crew who came back and told me that it was in fact the lady's seat and there had been a misprint on my boarding pass.

I did not mind, as she said that due to the inconvenience, they would now seat me in *Economy Plus* where there was a little more leg-room!

The flight was scheduled to depart at 1.15pm but there was a short delay and so it actually took off at 1.35pm. As the plane ascended into the sky, I felt excited and nervous.

I prayed that the tour, which I believed was the longest visit by Huzoor to any single country during his Khilafat, would prove blessed in all respects and that I would not make any mistakes or do anything that caused displeasure to Huzoor.

Arrival in Canada

The flight proceeded uninterrupted until we landed at *Toronto Pearson Airport* seven hours later, which was 3.35pm local time in Canada.

As soon as the seatbelt sign came off, I grabbed my hand luggage and headed towards the main exit of the plane where I saw Huzoor and Khala Saboohi.

I then walked out of the plane just behind Huzoor, and as soon as he stepped out, Amir Jamaat Canada, Lal Khan Malik Sahib and Naib Amir, Dr. Aslam Daud Sahib were both present to receive Huzoor.

The very first thing Huzoor asked Amir Sahib was the time of sunset and whether it would be possible to reach Peace Village in time for Zuhr and Asr prayers. I was very surprised, as I had assumed Huzoor would have offered

Zuhr and Asr on the plane. Yet, I should have known better, as Huzoor never wastes any opportunity to offer Salat at the Mosque and in congregation.

Upon hearing that there was still ample time, Huzoor said:

“When we arrive at Peace Village, I will first go to my residence for a few minutes and during that time people can make their way to the Mosque for Namaz.”

After passing through immigration quickly, the Qafila headed to the luggage area. Whilst, most of the luggage came quickly, there was one suitcase that took a long time and so there was quite a lengthy delay, during which Huzoor and Khala Saboohi remained seated on a bench near the luggage carousels. Personally, I found that period of waiting the most tiring part of the entire journey!

Drive to Peace Village

At 4.40pm the last of the luggage finally arrived and so Huzoor and the Qafila members proceeded to the cars which were waiting directly outside the terminal.

The frustration of the past few minutes evaporated as I saw a full police motorcycle squad waiting to escort Huzoor from the airport directly to Peace Village.

It proved to be an amazing drive, whereby roads were blocked off during rush hour, so that the Fifth Khalifa of the Promised Messiah (as) could pass through the streets of this great Western city.

Never does Khalifatul Masih demand or even desire such protocol but as a normal Ahmadi, it is inspiring and joyful to see the local Government and authorities treat Khilafat with due respect.

For the duration of our stay in Peace Village, I was seated in the same car along with Mubarak Zafar Sahib and Mohsin Awan Sahib. As we drove, I noticed that Mubarak Zafar Sahib was scribbling some notes on a piece of tissue and so I presumed that he was making notes for a forthcoming *Nazm*.

Arrival in Peace Village

A few minutes later, at 5.15pm local time, we arrived in Peace Village and the scenes that greeted Huzoor's arrival were incredible, unforgettable and tremendously emotional.



Thousands of Ahmadis had lined the streets outside Huzoor's residence to welcome him. From a distance, we could see and hear them as they raised the most passionate *naaray* (slogans) expressing their joy at the arrival of their beloved Imam.



The speed of the Qafila cars slowed right down due to the masses of people and, as I looked out of my car window, all I could see were men, women and children desperate to see Huzoor. Tears flowed from the eyes of so many, whilst huge smiles adorned the faces of all.

As Huzoor exited his car, he smiled and looked around and waved to the Ahmadis who had come to receive him.

I noticed that many major news agencies were present and were covering his arrival. I also saw two helicopters circling the sky above, which I initially presumed to be police helicopters but later I found out were media helicopters from national Canadian news networks. This was something new for me that I had not witnessed before, and was an early sign that the media

interest in Huzoor's tour was going to prove extensive and far beyond our expectations.

After a few minutes, Huzoor came out again and I walked behind him as he proceeded to the Baitul Islam Mosque for Zuhr and Asr.

We had offered Fajr at 6am London time and now Zuhr and Asr was at 5.30pm Canada time and so, due to the nature of the journey, the gap between our Fajr and Zuhr had been over 16 hours. I wondered in my mind if I had ever experienced such a long gap before and could not recall doing so.

Joining the security team!

After Namaz was completed, Huzoor visited the Lajna and their emotions and passion were, if anything, even greater than had been witnessed amongst the men.

Huzoor then walked along the courtyard outside the Mosque, and as he did so, the local Ahmadis all sought to get as close to him as possible.

From all directions and all angles, people swarmed towards Huzoor, as security tried to hold them back. It became quite chaotic and even a little dangerous and Huzoor's security team and the Khuddam security were very tense as they sought to ensure that no accident took place.

Upon seeing this, Mubarak Zafar sahib grabbed me and linked arms with me and we then linked arms with the security guards in order to increase the

size of the human-chain around Huzoor. I was stood directly behind Huzoor and there were people literally trying to climb over me to get near Huzoor!

It was at that moment that I got into full security mode and tensed my arms as much as I could to try and ensure that no one would pass through!

Despite the chaos, Huzoor remained completely calm and continued to wave at the Ahmadis before returning to his residence after a few minutes and as he did I saw the security teams breathe a collective sigh of relief in the knowledge that Huzoor had returned to his residence safely.

Having said that, Ahmad bhai was angry that the chaos had occurred and so he immediately held a meeting with the local Jamaat officials where it was decided to place barriers on either side of Huzoor's route to the Mosque. In this way, Ahmadis would have the opportunity to see Huzoor and Huzoor would see them but without the risk of anyone getting injured.

Staying at 2-Bashir

After Namaz, the Qafila members were taken to the Jamaat guest house located at 16 Bashir Street, where we were all due to stay. I was taken to my room and did not waste any time in unpacking.

However, a little while later, Ahmad Bhai called me and told me that Huzoor had instructed that I stay in the guest house known as '2-Bashir'.

I was extremely honoured and grateful to receive this message, as this was the guest house that directly linked to Huzoor's own residence and was the

building in which Huzoor had himself stayed during his first couple of visits to Canada.

I quickly threw my clothes back in my suitcase and walked across a few dozen metres to 2-Bashir. Alhamdolillah, my stay in the guest house proved to be extremely enjoyable and blessed.

For the first few days, I was alone in the building and so someone asked me if I felt scared being the sole occupant! I replied that Huzoor is my neighbour, security is all around, and I am living in a neighbourhood where almost every single resident is an Ahmadi and so, Alhamdolillah, I am ok!

A few days later, Huzoor also instructed for Dr. Tanvir Ahmed Sahib to move into 2-Bashir and so I enjoyed his company thereafter.

An informal meeting in the Mosque

Later that evening, Huzoor returned to the Mosque to lead the Maghreb and Isha prayers. However, rather than turn to lead the prayers immediately, Huzoor sat down and talked informally with many of the Ahmadis present.

Initially, Huzoor asked the people at the back of the Mosque if the sound system was working properly and if they could hear him clearly.

The last time Huzoor had visited Peace Village in 2012 there had been many problems with the sound system and so I think Huzoor took an early opportunity to gauge whether there had been any improvement in the four years since!

Thereafter, Huzoor asked several Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada students about their studies and asked some of the younger students if they had started learning Arabic.

Addressing the students, Huzoor said:

“It is very important that you have a strong foundation in Arabic and so work diligently and strive to improve your Arabic language skills as much as possible. This will help you in other aspects of your studies.”

Huzoor then talked to a number of Ahmadiis who had come from Pakistan and asked where they were originally from and enquired about their families.

One Khadim told Huzoor that he had acquired a degree from Pakistan but was unsure about what to do next.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“You should do further studies here in Canada and make sure you work hard and try to excel as much as possible.”

A young boy told Huzoor he was part of the *Waqf-e-Nau* scheme and so Huzoor asked what he would like to pursue when he became older and the boy replied by saying he wanted to pursue ***“sports”***.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“As a Waqf-e-Nau you should pursue studies in something that will prove beneficial for the Jamaat. We do not need sportsmen, we need workers in various professions like teachers and doctors.”

As the informal and entirely spontaneous meeting concluded, it was apparent how delighted every single person in the Mosque was to have had the opportunity to sit with Huzoor and enjoy his blessed company.

It was particularly gracious of Huzoor to give that time to the Jamaat considering the very long day and travel he had endured.

Over 1,300 Mulaqats

On 4 October 2016, Huzoor held the first session of family Mulaqats of the tour. Ahmadis are very fortunate that Huzoor conducts Mulaqats wherever he travels, yet the sheer volume of Mulaqats in Canada was incredible.

During the six weeks that followed, Huzoor met over 1,300 families in family Mulaqats and in this way personally met over 6,000 Ahmadis.

Despite there being so many Mulaqat sessions, the number of Mulaqat requests greatly outnumbered the amount of Mulaqat slots and so priority was given to those people who had never met Huzoor before.

Huzoor's office, where the Mulaqats took place, was situated on the second floor of *Aiwan-e-Tahir*, a large three-storey building, a couple hundred metres from the Baitul Islam Mosque.

The ground floor has various halls, the second floor is an office block and the upper third floor is home to Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada.

Emotions of Ahmadis

That morning, I met some of the Ahmadis following their Mulaqats and listened as they narrated their emotions and experiences.

I met *Hafeez Ahmad (70)* who was originally from Dera Ghazi Khan in Pakistan.

Speaking to me about his Mulaqat, Hafeez sahib said:

"I am 70 years old and today was the first time I have ever met Khalifa-Waqt and so you can say that I waited a lifetime for this opportunity. Those moments in Huzoor's company were the most precious of my life and when I held Huzoor's hand it felt as though the entire world had stopped. I did not want to withdraw my hand from his blessed hand as I did not know if I would ever have this chance again. You can count all the blessings of my life together and still they would not equate to one-millionth of the blessings I received today."

Thereafter, and to my surprise, Hafeez sahib grabbed hold of my hand and tears begin to fall from his eyes.

As he held tightly to my hand, Hafeez sahib said:

“When the time was finished I had to let go of the hand of my beloved Imam and so now I am holding your hand as you are close to him, you see him and you know him.”

I remained quiet and did not know how or what to say. Seeing how this elderly man desired to hold my hand, even though I was a child in comparison to him, was extremely emotional. At such moments, you realise how deep the bond of love is between each Ahmadi and Khalifa-Waqt.

I next met a young boy, *Mudassar Malik (15)* who had met Huzoor along with his parents.

Mudassar said:

“When I met Huzoor it was incredible. I felt the truth of Ahmadiyyat through him because when I saw Huzoor’s purity, I knew that this is a person who could never ever tell a lie. That moment was life-changing and I will now forever try to remain fully obedient to the institution of Khilafat.”

Ahmad Bhai’s office!

With the *Grace of Allah*, in Canada, the Jamaat has been blessed with a lot of facilities, including plenty of office space. Hence, Ahmad bhai had also been allocated an office as *Afsar Hifazat* (Head of Security), which he seemed to appreciate!

Indeed, as the Mulaqats continued, I saw Ahmad bhai video-calling his wife Farhat baji via *FaceTime* and showing her his office with rare pride!

I do not think he used the office hardly at all, as his duties were not really office based, but still it was nice to see the smile on his face!

I was also allocated an office in Peace Village and having my own space was useful in some ways but I have to admit I missed the company of Mubarak sahib and Majid sahib with whom I often share an office during Huzoor's different tours.

Huzoor meeting his relatives

There are a number of members of the family of the Promised Messiah (as) who live in Canada, as well as other relatives of Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (Huzoor's respected wife).

Furthermore, many other relatives of Huzoor, came from the United States to attend the Canada Jalsa.

Therefore, during his stay in Peace Village, Huzoor would meet his relatives on certain evenings each week after Maghreb and Isha prayers in the lounge of the 2-Bashir guest house where I was staying.

I would also have the blessed opportunity to attend these Mulaqats and they were an opportunity to see Huzoor in a more relaxed and informal environment.

A few blessed moments

Furthermore, after each Mulaqat with his relatives, Huzoor would very graciously call me to a small room which joined his residence with the 2-Bashir guest house. In that room were two chairs and so Huzoor would sit on one and permit me to sit on the other.

On a personal level, those private moments at the end of the day with Huzoor proved to be some of my most joyful memories of the entire tour.

That evening, I mentioned the vast media coverage that greeted Huzoor's arrival in Canada.

In response, Huzoor asked me who was responsible for the media coverage and so I mentioned that much of the work was being done by a very young team of Khuddam and Huzoor seemed pleased to hear that Canada's youth were taking a leading role.

I had travelled with Huzoor to Canada in both 2012 and 2013 and on both occasions the media coverage was comparatively weak. However, on this tour, the Jamaat worked much harder and Allah blessed their efforts many times over.

I also mentioned to Huzoor that a producer working for Peter Mansbridge, considered the foremost journalist in Canada, had contacted our media team and said they were interested in an interview with Huzoor. However, they had sought immediate exclusivity until their interview was broadcast. Such

terms were difficult to accept because an interview with Global News had already been scheduled. I thus sought Huzoor's guidance in this regard.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

"We should not cancel what is already agreed. After tomorrow's interview we will see what happens."

Huzoor's advice was very profound, whereby he made it clear that it was not right to cancel an interview we had agreed just because a better opportunity had arisen. Of course, every decision of Khalifatul Masih proves to be extremely blessed and so, despite not cancelling the *Global News* interview it was not the last we heard from Peter Mansbridge.

Meeting with Torstar Chairman

On the morning of 5 October 2016, Huzoor met with Mr. John Honderich, the Chairman of the Board of the Torstar Corporation, which is Canada's largest and most influential media group. The corporation owns hundreds of Canadian media outlets, including one of Canada's biggest newspapers, the *Toronto Star*.

A few weeks before Huzoor's tour, the *Toronto Star* had published an article about alleged extremism within Canadian Mosques. The article was published alongside a stock photo of our Baitul Islam Mosque and so our Jamaat registered a complaint on the basis that such a photo could give the false impression that our Jamaat was, *God forbid*, linked to extremism.

When the Toronto Star was made aware of this they were extremely apologetic and so, apart from immediately removing the photo, they published a written apology and clarification noting that the Jamaat was an extremely peaceful organisation with no links to terrorism or extremism.

Further, the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Honderich, considered one of Canada's most influential people, came to the Mosque to personally apologise to Huzoor for the error.

As gracious as always, upon receiving the apology, Huzoor said:

"I thank you for your apology, however I consider this incident to have been a blessing in disguise because through this you are now visiting our Mosque and are more aware of our Community."

Hearing this, Mr. Honderich said:

"Thank you, Your Holiness, and it is certainly a great honour and privilege for me to meet you."

Mr. Honderich also asked Huzoor about his views on Canada.

In reply, Huzoor said:

"Canada is a multicultural society and it is quite a tolerant nation that is willing to absorb immigrants from other nations."

Mr. Honderich replied by saying:

“Yes, I agree – in my opinion these are the qualities that make Canada unique!”



Mr. Honderich informed Huzoor that the Toronto Star was the first national newspaper in Canada to have a regular Muslim columnist.

In response, Huzoor said:

“You should use Ahmadi Muslims as columnists. Some of our Ahmadis here are talented and have the potential to write well.”

The meeting continued in a very friendly and cordial manner. Mr. Honderich said that the *Toronto Blue Jays* baseball team had just won an important play-off match against the *Baltimore Orioles*. He seemed extremely pleased by this result and said that Huzoor had brought ***“good luck”*** to the city.

In response, Huzoor said:

“In the UK, they play football more and Manchester United is a very famous team. However, in our Community we hold our own sports tournaments in different countries in which our youths participate.”

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Honderich said that he was unable to attend the forthcoming Canada Jalsa Salana because he was attending a *Thanksgiving* event in Canada.

Huzoor smiled and responded by saying:

“Our Jalsa is also a means of thanksgiving – where we give thanks to our Creator for all of the blessings He has bestowed upon us.”

Emotions of Ahmadis

Following the meeting, Huzoor held another session of family Mulaqats.

One family fortunate enough to meet him for the very first time were *Mirza Tawqeer Yasin*, his wife *Bushra Tawqeer* and daughter *Amina Taqweer*.

Speaking about meeting Huzoor for the very first time, Tawqeer sahib said:

“I am so overwhelmed and joyous. I was left astounded by how friendly Huzoor is and how he treated us like we were his close relatives. I have never met anyone so loving in my entire life.”

His wife, Bushra sahiba said:

“For the past 30 years at least, I prayed that I would be able to meet Khalifa-Waqt and I truly believe that Allah enabled us to come here from Pakistan so that this prayer of mine could be fulfilled. I have never seen such purity and radiance on the face of anyone else as I saw on Huzoor. Khilafat is the centre of everything that is good in the world.”

Their daughter, Amina sahiba said:

“I cannot stop smiling! I took a list of questions to ask Huzoor and he listened to them all very patiently and answered each and every one until I was fully content. The only question he did not answer was when I asked him which his favourite perfume was!”

I also met Adeel Ahmad (35) who had just met Huzoor for the very first time along with his wife Arifa Ahmad.

Speaking about the positive effect of Huzoor’s visit, Adeel sahib said:

“I am a local Qaid for Khuddam and I have seen the huge impact Huzoor’s presence has already had on our Jamaat. There are Khuddam who normally do not come to the Mosque but who are now here constantly and I see tears flowing from their eyes when they see Huzoor walk past. The Khuddam who were previously inactive are now themselves calling me up desperately asking if they can volunteer and do duty.”

His wife, Arifa sahiba added:

“We have come from Pakistan and we are part of that generation in Pakistan who have been deprived of being physically close to Khilafat throughout our lives. Thus, the Ahmadis in parts of the world where Huzoor can travel easily should know how fortunate they are. No Ahmadi should ever take the blessing of Khilafat for granted.”

Interview with Global News

Later that morning, Huzoor held his first media interview of the tour with *Global News*.

The person who interviewed Huzoor was a well-known and respected journalist called Alan Carter.

Early in the interview, Huzoor mentioned that world leaders and governments should tread “*carefully*” because the world was becoming increasingly unstable and uncertain.

In a follow-up question, the journalist asked:

“Is caution the same as inaction?”

As I heard this, I remember thinking that it was an odd question, as there was a clear distinction between displaying caution and doing nothing.

In response to the question, Huzoor said:

“Being cautious does not mean to do nothing. It means that governments should be careful because the world is extremely volatile and so they should not make any policy that can inflame the situation. The key is to act with justice and fairness.”

The journalist asked Huzoor if the missionary work of our Jamaat could be compared with the role of evangelical Christians who also sought to spread their faith.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“There are Christians who are preaching and who have established missions but the difference is that Jesus (as) came to reform the lost sheep of Israel and the Bible never claimed that Jesus (as) was a universal Prophet.

However, the Holy Quran clearly states that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) was sent as a mercy for all of mankind. Thus, the evangelical Christians are not duty-bound by their faith to spread to all parts of the world but we, who follow the Quran, are.”

Thereafter, Huzoor was also asked about the persecution of the Jamaat and the rise of terrorism and extremism perpetrated in the name of Islam.

In response, Huzoor said that those people who had become radicalised were “*completely ignorant*” to Islam’s true teachings.

Huzoor also said that certain Western nations were producing weapons that were being used in the Muslim world and in this way they were guilty of fuelling such wars.

The journalist ended by asking Huzoor what Canada could do to reduce violence and hatred in the world.

Very beautifully, Huzoor said:

“Governments have made various policies and laws in order to stop violence and terrorism. In fact, it can be said that you have exhausted all worldly options and the only thing you have not tried is to try to bring peace by using Islamic principles.”

Huzoor continued:

“In today’s world, it is Ahmadi Muslims who are portraying the true teachings of Islam and we say that there should be absolute justice and that leaders should set aside all vested interests for the sake of the greater good. Islam teaches that if you have to give evidence or testimony against yourself or your loved ones you should do so. That is the standard of justice required to solve the problems of today.”

Very boldly and beautifully, Huzoor explained that Islam was the solution to the world’s problems, rather than the cause.

Alhamdolillah, Global News aired a 6-minute report based on Huzoor’s interview that was widely viewed.

Question about the consequences of war

In the evening of 5 October 2016, Huzoor again met some of his family members after Maghreb and Isha.

One relative took the opportunity to ask Huzoor a question. He said:

“Huzoor, in your speeches you often say we are close to another world war and in the Quran, Allah says that He will protect His dear ones. And so my question is whether we Ahmadiis will be saved from the calamitous effects of such a war?”

In response, Huzoor said:

“If you want to be saved then you should become the dear one of God by following His teachings and commands. Further, a person should constantly seek Allah’s forgiveness for his mistakes and shortcomings.”

A few moments with Huzoor

Thereafter, I had the opportunity to meet Huzoor for a few minutes in the room that linked his residence to the building in which I was staying.

Mentioning the interview with *Global News* earlier in the day, Huzoor said:

“The interview took place at the end of the Mulaqat session and by then I was quite tired and so if it had been held at the beginning it would have been better.”

Upon hearing this, I felt regret because on a previous tour, Huzoor had mentioned his media interviews should, as much as possible, be scheduled at the start of either the morning or afternoon sessions, rather than after meetings or Mulaqats. This had been conveyed to the local Canadian team but for some reason the interview had still been scheduled at the end of a long session.

During the interview, Huzoor had been seated in a very deep single leather sofa chair but Huzoor told me that he preferred not to sit on such chairs as it was difficult to stay upright in them. He said he preferred much simpler chairs that easily maintained one's posture.

Hearing this, I felt very sorry the chair had been a source of discomfort and said that we would change it for future interviews.

Giving a personal insight into the way he conducts interviews, Huzoor said:

“When I get asked questions by journalists often I do not answer their question straight away and people may think I misheard, however I do it on purpose as a means of Tabligh. I prefer to take the opportunity to tell them about the advent of the Promised Messiah (as) and how he came in fulfilment of the prophecy of the Holy Prophet (sa). Only when I have conveyed this message do I answer their questions.”

This was something I have noticed myself over the years. Indeed, in earlier years, I sometimes did think that perhaps Huzoor had not heard a particular question. However, I soon came to realise that Huzoor would, more often than not, first speak of the advent of the Promised Messiah (as) and the need

to fulfil the rights of Allah and of His Creation and only then Huzoor would answer the question at hand.

In this way, it is Huzoor who directs the way the interview is conducted, rather than the journalist and so Huzoor uses such interviews to spread the basic teachings of Islam before moving onto more specific issues.

I mentioned to Huzoor that I thought it was unnecessary for the journalist to interpret Huzoor's call for world leaders to be "*careful*" as "*inaction*".

Hearing this, Huzoor smiled and said:

"Yes, the journalist did try and trip me a couple of times!"

As he got up to return to his residence, Huzoor told me that earlier in the day he had prepared some of his notes for his address to Lajna at the forthcoming Jalsa.

When I heard this, I wondered when Huzoor would have found the time, as the entire day had been spent in meetings or Mulaqats. I concluded, that Huzoor will have prepared his notes either extremely early in the morning, before he came to the office or perhaps during his lunch break. Either way, Huzoor's continued capacity to work puts the rest of us to shame.

First ever Live MTA News

On Thursday 7 October 2016, *MTA News*, for which I am responsible, broadcast what we think was the first ever live episode of *MTA News*.

Certainly, it was the first live broadcast that had occurred during the three and a half years I had served in MTA.

In the past, we had always broadcast recorded reports but the evening before, Munir Odeh sahib (*Director Production, MTA International*) suggested to me that we broadcast some live reports during the Canada tour. Thus, I sought Huzoor's permission for this which he graciously granted.

In truth, it was not one of our best broadcasts, as it was all a little bit last minute.

For example, just two hours before the broadcast, I was still searching for a presenter. Initially, my mind turned to Safwan Chaudhry from Canada's media team, however he was busy in Toronto with work. Thankfully, he suggested a good alternative, *Frasat Ahmad*, a Jamia Ahmadiyya student, who came and presented very well.

Similarly, I sought two guests to interview and so I initially called Asif Khan (*Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija Canada*) and Farhan Kokhar (*Naib Amir, Canada*) but Farhan sahib got waylaid somewhere and so literally five minutes before we went live, I saw our Jamaat's Missionary in Bolivia, Attaul Mannan sahib walking along the street and called him and asked him to be in our live broadcast. He was kind enough to accept the request and both he and Asif sahib spoke well.

There were also some technical problems, as Munir Odeh and his team liaised with our Transmission team in London but *Alhamdulillah*, despite the teething problems, the broadcast went out successfully.

Though it was not perfect by any measure, it was an historic milestone for *MTA News* and we were also able to broadcast further live reports during different stages of Huzoor's tour.

Inspection of Langhar Khana

On the evening of 6 October, Huzoor conducted an inspection of the *langhar khana* (kitchen) for the Jalsa Salana. Whilst, most departments of Jalsa Salana were based at the Jalsa site in Mississauga, the *langhar* was based in Peace Village.

As Huzoor came out of his residence, I approached him and mentioned that *Global News* had broadcast a report of his interview from the previous day and so Huzoor watched the clip at the entrance of his residence.

Thereafter, Huzoor walked along *Ahmadiyya Avenue* to the *langhar* which was based on some land owned by the Jamaat at the end of the street.

As Huzoor walked, Ahmadis ran alongside on both sides of the street waving and raising *naaray* (slogans), whilst Huzoor waved back at them.

Upon reaching the *langhar*, Huzoor checked the different cooking stations and gave instructions about how the food should be prepared. He asked the ratio of lamb to potato in *aloo ghosht* and also checked the tenderness of the meat.

Similarly, Huzoor checked the *roti* (flatbread) and asked what the expiry date was to ensure that nothing out of date was being served at the Jalsa. At

such times you see how Huzoor guides the Jamaat in such minute detail. Huzoor sacrificed his precious time in order to try and ensure that the guests of the Promised Messiah (as) were all well-looked after.

An affectionate moment

Huzoor walked along and met some of the volunteers and as he did so, he noticed a Khadim holding a parrot. As soon as he saw this, Huzoor turned his attention towards him and petted the parrot with tenderness and great affection.

Immediately, I recalled the scene in Australia in 2013, when I had seen Huzoor lovingly feed a number of birds during a visit to a bird park.

Blessing the car of a Khadim

After visiting the *langhar*, Huzoor sat in a different car to normal and drove the short distance to the Mosque. The car he sat in was a *Tesla* electric car owned by a Canadian Khadim, who before the tour had requested that Huzoor sit in his car during the tour.

Despite being so busy, Huzoor did not forget the request of the Khadim and so at that moment fulfilled his desire.

Not only did Huzoor sit in his car but Huzoor also took interest in the fact that *Tesla* cars were purely electric and so Huzoor asked details about how the car works and its differing functions.

Formal session at Jalsa Inspection

At 7.30pm, Huzoor arrived in the Baitul Islam Mosque, where the volunteers of Jalsa were present. Thus, during a subsequent formal session, Huzoor addressed the volunteers about their duties.

During his address, Huzoor said:

“Always remember that no one forced you to do duty, rather you have yourselves volunteered with enthusiasm so that you can serve the guests of the Promised Messiah (as). Thus, it is incumbent upon you to treat everyone with love, care and to show the best possible manners at all times.”



Huzoor continued by saying that the best means of learning one's duties was through practical experience. He said Ahmadis in Rabwah were once the most trained in Jalsa duties but sadly, now a full generation of Ahmadis there, had been deprived of holding Jalsas and so doing duties.

Thus, those countries, like Canada, where our Jamaat could hold Jalsas were extremely fortunate and should not underestimate the blessings of serving others.

Huzoor continued:

“Under all circumstances our Jalsa volunteers and duty workers must show the best possible morals and etiquettes and try to keep a smile on their faces at all times. Even if the guests are not entirely co-operative, you should happily tolerate it in the way that a mother tolerates the demands of her child.”

Informal moments with Jalsa volunteers

Following the conclusion of Huzoor’s address, Huzoor sat down in front of the Mehrab and did *Zikr-e-Ilahi* (remembrance of Allah) for a few moments.

Thereafter, Huzoor spoke to various Jalsa duty workers and asked them questions about their respective departments.

It would be a stretch to say that the various *Nazimeen* had all the answers to Huzoor’s questions and certainly it was apparent that Huzoor’s questions had highlighted some weaknesses in their planning.

For example, Huzoor asked the *Nazim Accommodation*, how many guests were expected and the Nazim did not know.

Thereafter, Huzoor asked where guests were to be accommodated and the number of beds available. Huzoor was told that the Jamaat had prepared for just 400 guests and it was expected that most of the guests would find their own accommodation.



Huzoor asked the *Ziafat* (hospitality) department how much food was being prepared. Huzoor instructed that there should be a surplus at all times so that people are not left hungry or forced to queue for hours.

Huzoor then asked about the arrangements for toilets at the Jalsa and whether adequate arrangements had been made to ensure they remained clean and hygienic.

Huzoor asked the *Officer Jalsa Gah* if he had seen the standards of toilets at the UK Jalsa this year.

Upon this, Officer Jalsa Gah said:

“Huzoor, Insha’Allah the standards of cleanliness will be better than at the UK Jalsa.”

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“The standards of cleanliness should be one hundred times better because here you have a permanent structure and properly built toilets, whereas at the UK Jalsa everything is makeshift.”

Thereafter, Huzoor asked how many toilets there were and indicated that he felt the numbers were not enough.

It so happened, that despite the fact that Huzoor had specifically warned those responsible for accommodation, food and toilets about the need to improve, significant weaknesses were observed during the Jalsa, particularly in terms of food and toilets.

It was a reminder that when Khalifa-Waqt highlights something it means there is a weakness, whether those responsible appreciate it or not.

This is something I have seen from personal experience as well on many occasions. For example, I remember a few years ago during the month of Ramadan, I became somewhat lazy in reciting the Holy Quran. Though, I was reciting it every day, it was much less than I should have been and in my heart I knew this but still laziness overtook me.

After a few days, suddenly and completely out of the blue, Huzoor asked me:

“Abid, how many parts of the Quran have you read so far in Ramadan?”

I remember, I felt extremely embarrassed as I admitted that I had not read much. Most graciously, Huzoor did not admonish me but reminded me that I should try to read one part every day in Ramadan.

I have many other personal examples, where Huzoor has asked me a question or said something to me which highlighted a personal weakness in me of which I may or may not have been aware.

Huzoor then asked all the Jamia students in the Mosque to stand up and asked them where they were doing duty during Jalsa.

Upon hearing that some of the students were doing duty in the Jalsa Salana office, Huzoor said:

“Our Jamia students should be allocated duties that are physically tough and they should set the example for hard work for other Khuddam.”

Addressing the Jamia students directly, Huzoor said:

“Have you ever experienced being awake for two nights consecutively due to Jamaat duties? This is also a part of training that our Jamia students should pass through at some point.”

Driving on the wrong side!

On 7 October 2016, Canada's 40th Jalsa Salana began as Huzoor led the Friday Sermon from a large conference centre in the city of Mississauga, known as the *International Centre*.

The drive to Mississauga, which is around 30miles from Peace Village, was itself quite memorable. Throughout the journey, the Qafila was given a full police escort and watching their professionalism during the journey was fascinating. There was heavy traffic and yet the police enabled the Qafila to avoid it, as they blocked off public roads until the Qafila had passed.

As we reached near the Jalsa site, the traffic suddenly reached total gridlock.

In addition to normal traffic, thousands of Ahmadis were converging towards the International Centre and so at that point, I thought that there was no option left for the police squad and that the Qafila would be delayed for a long time.

However, I had underestimated the Toronto police, because a minute later I saw them guide the Qafila cars across lanes till they reached the other side of the main highway.

Thereafter, they blocked all the traffic on the opposing side and escorted the Qafila on the 'wrong' side of the road and so we were driven unimpeded to the Jalsa site. In this way, Huzoor was not delayed and arrived exactly on time for Jumma.

Friday Sermon at Jalsa Canada

The Jalsa site comprised a series of extremely large halls that the Jamaat had rented at the *International Centre*.

Upon arrival, Amir Sahib escorted Huzoor to the main stage and thereafter Huzoor inaugurated the Jalsa with his Friday Sermon.



Huzoor spoke about how the Promised Messiah (as) had established the Jalsa Salana as a means of increasing the spirituality and knowledge of his followers.

Huzoor said that through Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyyat, the mission of the Promised Messiah (as) continued and so Jalsa Salanas were now held in all parts of the world.

Huzoor also mentioned the fact that the Canada Jamaat was celebrating its 50th anniversary and that Amir Sahib Canada had particularly requested Huzoor's presence in Canada due to this anniversary.

Huzoor said:

“You are giving special significance to this year, however it will only prove truly special if it leads to a spiritual change in every Ahmadi living here in Canada, where each of you seeks to fulfil the conditions of your Bai’at with your heart and soul. If this is not the case then there is no significance or value to the fact that it is your 50th year.”

Huzoor continued:

“Many of you were given permission to live here by the Canadian authorities so that you could escape the persecution that Ahmadi face in Pakistan. Thus, you are here because you are an Ahmadi and so it is incumbent upon you to live here peacefully and to fulfil your pledge of being a good Ahmadi Muslim.”

Before narrating some excerpts from the writings of the Promised Messiah (as), Huzoor instructed that all Ahmadis listened carefully to his words and that even if they were tired they should endeavour to pay full attention.

It was the first time I could remember Huzoor particularly instructing Ahmadis during a sermon to listen carefully.

Perhaps, Huzoor had said this before, but I could not recall it, and so I put down my own notebook and just listened as carefully as I could to the rest of the sermon.

Sound issue

During *Namaz*, for a few seconds the sound failed but thankfully was restored very soon.

After Jumma, Huzoor enquired from the local Jamaat why it had failed and no one was sure. Huzoor then asked Munir Odeh sahib, who informed that the audio was being controlled by a non-Muslim engineer and after the completion of Jumma Namaz he thought the proceedings were completed and did not realise that Asr Namaz was to follow. Thus, he had switched off the audio.

Hearing this, Huzoor turned to Amir Sahib Canada and firmly said:

“How could we expect a non-Ahmadi to know when everything was completed? What kind of poor organisation was this? There should always be an Ahmadi with the non-Ahmadi engineers or technicians who can explain to them what is happening.”

Press Conference

The Jamaat had arranged for a Press Conference straight after Jumma and so Huzoor was then escorted to another hall at the International Centre. Many journalists, from the national, regional, local and ethnic media were in attendance and were all eager to ask Huzoor questions.

A journalist from Canada’s national *CTV* asked Huzoor about the belief that Islam, God forbid, promoted terrorism or extremism.

In response, Huzoor said:

“We follow and seek to spread the true message and teachings of the Holy Quran to the best of our abilities. Islam does not permit aggression or violence and so the killing of innocent people through suicide bombings, beheadings or by any other means is completely opposed to its teachings. In fact, Islam says that to kill even one person unjustly is akin to killing all of mankind.”



A journalist from the *Toronto Star* asked Huzoor what was the need and importance of leadership within the Muslim Community.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“In today’s world militant and extremist groups have formed, who are seeking to fulfil their vested interests falsely in the name of Islam.

They are committing brutalities against their own people in Muslim countries and are also perpetrating the most horrific terrorist acts in the West as well. Thus the need for Muslim leadership is obvious – to guide

Muslims towards the right path and towards Islamic values of peace and justice and away from all forms of extremism.”

A journalist from City News asked Huzoor about the Jamaat’s message of ‘Love for All, Hatred for None’.

In response, Huzoor said:

“You may wonder why we raise the slogan of Love for All, Hatred for None – The answer to this is that the Founder of Islam (sa) taught that Islam’s teachings were to fulfil the rights of one’s Creator and of his fellow beings and so Love for All, Hatred for None is the basis of Islam’s teachings.”

A journalist then raised the persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan and asked Huzoor how he felt knowing that he was free to practice Islam in Canada.

Huzoor’s answer was truly wonderful and highlighted the great difference between religious people and politicians. I am quite sure that if a politician was asked this question, he or she would praise Canada to the hilt and seek to win public acclaim and popularity.

However, Khalifa-Waqt never exaggerates or strays from the truth and so Huzoor’s answer was much more matter of fact.

Huzoor said:

“Ever since I was elected as Khalifa in 2003, I have lived in London and there is freedom of religion there as well and so I have practised my

religion without any problem or obstacle. In fact, throughout the Western world we have religious freedom. Hence, being here in Canada is not a new experience for me as I have been living with religious freedom for the past thirteen years!”

After presenting the facts, Huzoor did add:

“Just as I can in London, I am also able to practice and preach my faith here in Canada and I am happy that Canada is a multicultural society where all people have freedom of religion and freedom of belief.”

I could not help but smile when I heard Huzoor’s answer. It was a lesson for me and my team as well. There is nothing wrong with praising others but one should not divorce himself from reality in order to please others.

Before listening to Huzoor’s answer, if I had been asked this question, I am sure I would have responded by praising Canada as a beacon of freedom, whilst forgetting that I had been born and raised in a country where similar freedoms also existed.

Thereafter, the journalist from *Toronto Star* asked Huzoor about the Jamaat’s efforts to combat extremism.

In response, Huzoor said:

“We have no power in worldly terms and so all we can do is continue our mission of peacefully preaching Islam’s true teachings. It is a slow process but I hope that one day we will win the hearts of many people

and that the brutalities that are taking place in the world will come to an end. One thing I can assure you is that we are very determined people and will never give up our task.”

Huzoor continued:

“Our Community was established when, more than a hundred years ago, a single man, living in a small village of India, stood up and claimed that he had been sent to reform Islam. When he died 108 years ago, he had hundreds of thousands of followers and now today his community is established in 209 countries of the world. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people in Africa accept him and people are also accepting him in other parts of the world.”

Meeting with Premier of Ontario

Immediately, after the Press Conference, Huzoor held a meeting with the *Premier of Ontario*, Kathleen Wynne, who had especially asked to have the opportunity to come and welcome Huzoor to the Province.

The *Premier* was accompanied by the *Provincial Minister for Transport* and other dignitaries and staff members.

During the meeting, the *Premier* spoke of how it was a great honour for Ontario that Huzoor was visiting and she also commended the Jamaat for its continued promotion of peace in Canada.

In response, Huzoor said:

“We all need to promote peace in the world because otherwise mankind is marching towards a great destruction. All people of all faiths and beliefs should set aside their vested interests for the greater good and for the sake of the peace of mankind.”

The *Premier* then asked Huzoor for his guidance for her Provincial Government in light of increasing uncertainty in the world.

In response, Huzoor said:

“The answer to the uncertainties of today is absolute justice. Why are certain so-called Muslim groups able to radicalise other Muslims and to instil hatred for the West?

One reason is that they feel that some Western Governments are interfering in their own countries. For example, they may be helping Muslim rulers who are treating their own people with contempt and not fulfilling their rights. When the people rise up against their own leaders they also come to bear hatred for those who have helped them.”

Walking in Peace Village

By the time the meetings were concluded it was 3.45pm and so Huzoor and Khala Saboohi did not return to Peace Village for lunch until after 4pm. I cannot speak for them but certainly most of the Qafila members were extremely hungry by the time we got back.

During our stay in Peace Village, one thing I enjoyed a lot was walking. Whenever, I used to get a few minutes spare, I would walk along different streets, observing the way people had decorated their homes in happiness at Huzoor's presence.

One home, which was particularly well known was situated a few hundred metres from the Mosque and was distinguished by enormous photos of the Promised Messiah (as) and Huzoor that the owners had displayed outside their home. It actually became somewhat of a 'tourist destination' for Ahmadis, whereby I often saw Ahmadis taking selfies or general photos outside the house.

The entire atmosphere of Peace Village during those days was wonderful. Sometimes, I would walk and some young Khuddam would come out of their houses and join me.

Whilst I did not know them personally, they would say that they had seen me near Huzoor or had read some of my diaries. Thereafter, they would keep me company and invariably would ask questions about Huzoor and his life.

Another advantage of being in Peace Village is that you felt very safe. In London, I would not normally walk on the streets at 11pm but in Peace Village I would often walk late at night, sometimes on my own or sometimes with Dr. Tanvir sahib and burn some of the calories that I had ingested during the day.

In terms of food, I controlled my diet to some extent and so would not eat huge amounts of *langhar* food. However, in my office, the local Jamaat had

placed a large bowl of cashews, honey-roasted almonds and dry fruit and they proved to be my downfall. Without even realising, I would eat large quantities and the bowl would be empty at the end of the day but then the next day it was full again!

Similarly, Fateh Malik sahib, who was looking after the guest house in which I was staying, learned that I had a sweet tooth and so every few days, he would, very kindly, leave a bar of chocolate on the kitchen counter which I just could not resist!

At home, I often try to stop Mahid from eating too much chocolate but my wife always reminds me that he is just copying me and so if I want him to eat less sugar then I should set a better example for him! Needless to say that is easier said than done!

Visiting Khala Roofo

During the days of Jalsa, I met a lot of my family members and relatives, as many of them had come from the United States to attend.

Further, my wife's maternal aunt Amatul Raoof sahiba, daughter of the late Sahibzada Mirza Waseem sahib, who we call Khala Roofo, had recently moved to Canada with her family and was now living in Peace Village.

She is an excellent cook and so many of our family members congregated at her home during those days and enjoyed her hospitality. I also went a couple of times and enjoyed her home-cooked food a lot.

Delayed departure

On the second day of Jalsa, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi came out of their residence at 11.10am. However, for some reason, Huzoor's car was not ready and was still parked in the garage.

Upon this, Huzoor asked if he had mistaken the time of departure, however the scheduled time of departure was 11.10am and so Huzoor had come out exactly on time.

Anyway, it took the cars a few minutes to get ready and so as he waited, Huzoor called Private Secretary, Munir Javed sahib and checked his latest office mail and wrote down instructions whilst standing on his doorstep.

Address to Lajna at Jalsa Canada

Once the cars were finally ready, the Qafila proceeded directly to the Jalsa Gah, where Huzoor addressed the members of Lajna Imaillah.

Once Huzoor entered the Lajna Hall the rest of us Qafila members remained nearby. Some listened to Huzoor's sermon via their phones, however I managed to find a TV in the nearby Jalsa *bazaar* and so Mubarak Zafar sahib and I each pulled up a chair and watched the ladies session from there.

During his address, Huzoor spoke about how it was the duty of Ahmadi mothers to protect the future generations of the Jamaat by raising their children in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

Huzoor said:

“In the Western world people have moved away from religion and a fundamental reason for this is that parents have not paid attention to the religious training of their children. However, Ahmadi mothers must prioritise the moral and religious training of their offspring so that their children never become those who give precedence to worldly matters over their faith.”

Huzoor also reiterated the importance of *Purdah* and said that often when non-Muslim female guests attended Jamaat functions they covered their heads with headscarves as a gesture of courtesy.

Speaking about this, Huzoor said:

“Just because they do not cover their heads normally, it is wrong to say that those guests who cover their heads at our functions are acting hypocritically. Rather, they are voluntarily respecting our traditions without any fear or apprehension.

Thus, if they who have not been raised with such teachings do not bear a complex about wearing a headscarf, then why should any Muslim feel inferior or embarrassed when they observe their faith. Remember, our task is to lead the world towards goodness and virtue, rather than to follow behind others.”

Visit to Jalsa exhibitions

Following the conclusion of Huzoor's Jalsa address, he visited some of the exhibitions set up at the Canada Jalsa, including the Al-Qalam project that was being co-ordinated by the Review of Religions.

Huzoor also stopped at the work area of Canada's media team and asked them about the coverage received so far in the tour and Huzoor seemed pleased that the team comprised young Ahmadis, the majority of whom were in their early to mid-twenties.

Meeting with Bangla delegation

Later in the day, Huzoor met a large delegation of Ahmadis and guests of Bangladeshi origin who had travelled to attend the Jalsa from the United States.

During the meeting, which took place in *Aiwan-e-Tahir*, all those present had the opportunity to introduce themselves to Huzoor and to seek his prayers and guidance over various matters.

A young man, studying Psychology, informed Huzoor that he was a member of the Waqf-e-Nau scheme.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“Are you sincere in your desire to fulfil your pledge of Waqf or do you consider Waqf-e-Nau as a mere title?”

Without hesitation, the student replied:

“Huzoor, I have full intention to fulfil my pledge of being a Waqf.”

Huzoor smiled and said: ***“Insha’Allah”***.

An elderly man then told Huzoor how he converted to Ahmadiyyat. He said:

“In 1959 my father accepted Ahmadiyyat in Bangladesh. At the time I was a young student but I did not accept Ahmadiyyat immediately just because my father did. Instead, I studied it over the next year and only once I came to fully accept its teachings did I do Bai’at the following year. Since then I have seen how Ahmadiyyat has blessed my life in countless ways.”

As the meeting drew to a close, Huzoor graciously accepted a request to have his photo taken with each family individually.

After about 10minutes, the photos were finally completed but just as he was about to leave, Huzoor noticed that the leader of the Bangla delegation, who had been busy making sure that all members of the group came forward for a photo, had not had his own photo taken with Huzoor.

Thus, Huzoor said:

“You did not come for a photo with your family and so you can call them now and have your photo taken.”

Upon this, the Ahmadi, replied:

“Huzoor, your time is extremely precious and valuable and my family has had some photos with you in the past and so we have been greatly blessed already.”

Very affectionately, Huzoor again indicated that he could call his family for a photo, however the Ahmadi said:

“Huzoor, all we need are your prayers.”

As I watched this scene, I thought that some people might think that the Ahmadi was foolish for not taking the opportunity, whilst others might think that it was disrespectful for him to not come for the photo once Huzoor had invited him.

Personally, I was touched by his response and considered it a display of selflessness.

I have seen other delegations in the past, where the person leading the group had ensured that their photo was taken first, whereas this Ahmadi called the other members of the group but when it came to his turn he requested Huzoor's prayers only in order to save Huzoor's time.

Concluding session of Jalsa Salana Canada

The concluding session of Jalsa Salana Canada commenced at 12pm on 9 October 2016.

Before Huzoor's concluding address, a number of politicians took to the stage, including an Ahmadi, Muhammad Fiaz MLA, who recently became the Jamaat's first elected politician in Canada. He was elected as a Member of Saskatchewan's Legislative Assembly in April 2016.

The *Mayor of Toronto*, John Tory also addressed the Jalsa and welcomed Huzoor to Canada.

Mayor John Tory said:

"I would like to welcome His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad to Canada and to thank him for his leadership over the years. He has selflessly served mankind and promoted a message of peace throughout the world. His message is a message for all people to listen to and to take to their hearts."

Thereafter, Huzoor delivered the concluding address of the Jalsa Salana, in which he spoke about fundamental Islamic values, such as freedom of belief and tolerance.

Huzoor said that throughout history, war had been a mechanism for personal gain and conquest and had nothing to do with religious teachings.

He said that many people were all too ready to blame Islam for the wars and violence, yet they forgot that non-Muslim countries had engaged in numerous battles and wars through the ages.

Huzoor said:

“Was religion the cause of either of the two world wars that took place in the 20th Century? Or were those abhorrent wars based upon a desire for power, conquering lands, geo-political gains and greed? The reality is that injustice is the root cause of today’s wars.”



Huzoor continued:

“Just a couple of days ago, I said to a journalist here that Western countries have used every possible means to bring peace in the world and each one has failed. The only option they have not tried is to follow Islam’s teachings, which advocate justice and say that you should not look to fulfil your own rights but should seek to establish the truth, even if it causes you personal difficulty.”

Alhamdolillah the Jalsa concluded successfully with a silent prayer led by Huzoor. Thereafter, he announced that over 25,000 people had attended the Jalsa and that 32 countries had been represented.

After Jalsa, Huzoor attended a lunch with hundreds of dignitaries and guests at the Jalsa site, during which Huzoor spoke to the guests seated near him and answered their questions.

A chaotic scene

Once lunch was completed, Huzoor came forward so that guests could meet him personally. Normally, when such meetings occur there is some sense of order but for those few minutes such decorum was absent.

Many people, including several Ahmadis, came rushing from different directions, pushing one another, in order to get near Huzoor.

Huzoor's security team were extremely agitated as they tried to control the crowd and prevent any accident. I was stood about a metre from Huzoor and I could feel a throng of people behind me pushing me forward and it was quite uncomfortable.

All the while, Huzoor patiently waited and continued to try and meet some of the guests. For example, a group of non-Muslim Indian ladies met Huzoor and sought his prayers.

Afterwards, I saw them talking to one another and they were each extremely emotional and kept saying:

"He (Huzoor) talked to us and blessed us! We do not need anything else."

Finally, after a few very chaotic minutes, Ahmad bhai requested Huzoor to

turn around and to leave the hall from the exit.

As we headed towards calm, Ahmad bhai turned to me and said:

“I knew when I asked Huzoor to leave the hall there was a chance he would not like this suggestion but as the security officer I felt it my duty to take that risk and step in because it no longer seemed safe to remain present.”

A chill factor

Until the day before, the weather had been extremely mild and even warm during our first few days in Canada, but on Saturday evening it suddenly became much cooler and as we returned to Peace Village on Sunday afternoon, it became colder still.

I did not want to take any risk and so I immediately took out my warm overcoat and scarf. Later in the day, when Huzoor came out for Mulaqats, he looked in my direction and smiled. I could tell that he had noticed that I had not wasted any time in taking out my winter clothes.

In fact, as Huzoor walked to his office, he again looked at me and said:

“There is definitely a chill factor here in the air today.”

Huzoor added:

“It is good that you have taken out your coat as it could get even colder.”

Emotions of Ahmadis

Rather than any time for rest after the conclusion of Jalsa, Huzoor spent that evening meeting Ahmadis in Mulaqat.

A few moments after her first ever Mulaqat with Huzoor, I met a lady called *Shibra Shajar* who had recently moved to Canada from Pakistan.

Shibra sahiba told me:

“My only motivation to move to Canada was so that I might have the blessed opportunity to meet Huzoor and, Alhamdulillah, just four months later, Allah has fulfilled my heartfelt desire. When I saw Huzoor, I felt so emotional and it feels as though I have attained the entire world.”

I also met a Latvian Ahmadi convert, *Olga Mubashar* who had just met Huzoor for the second time since she did *Bai’at*.

Speaking about her Mulaqat, Olga sahiba said:

“I accepted Ahmadiyyat ten years ago and over time I have learned how lucky we Ahmadis are to have Khilafat because Huzoor is guiding us to the right path. I learn from him every day and there is a bright light that surrounds him that cannot be explained. He is like a shining star in the sky, which if we follow we will never get lost.”

An example of determination and devotion

That evening I also met *Dr. Mamoon Bukhari (48)*, a doctor living across the border in the United States. I was genuinely amazed as I listened to his efforts to attend the Jalsa and to pray behind Huzoor as much as possible.

Dr. Bukhari sahib said:

“Today, I have made three trips from the United States already. I woke up at 3am and crossed the border into Canada and arrived at Peace Village in time for Fajr. The journey time is around two and a half hours but can take longer if there is traffic or any delay at the border.

After Fajr, I immediately drove back to the hospital where I work in the US because I had to do a morning medical round of patients. As soon as I was done, I got back in the car and drove back and attended Huzoor’s concluding address at the Jalsa.”

Dr. Bukhari sahib continued:

“When the Jalsa was completed, I drove back to America and did my afternoon round and now I have come back again to Peace Village so I can offer Maghreb and Isha behind Huzoor. After Namaz, I will return home and will come back for Fajr and in this way, I will have made four trips from the US within a period of 24 hours.”

As Dr. sahib told me this, I felt my jaw drop!

I asked him what his motivation was and in reply, Dr. Sahib said:

“My motivation is to pray behind Huzoor because when you see Huzoor walk past it instantly removes any tiredness you may feel.

In the time of the Promised Messiah (as) people used to walk for miles and endure very long and tough journeys in order to meet him, yet now Allah has blessed us with cars and so many comforts and so if we still do not avail them then we are very unfortunate people. I believe that cars and other means of modern transport are a gift from Allah so that mankind can be physically close to Khalifatul Masih.”

Dr. sahib continued:

“It was impossible for me to get time off from work and so if I did not make this extra effort then my children would see that I had placed my work and worldly needs ahead of my faith.

I would have been guilty of setting a bad example for them, whereas I want them to know that staying close to Khilafat is more important than anything else. I also want my grandfather, who was a companion of the Promised Messiah (as), to be happy in heaven knowing that his faith in Ahmadiyyat has continued down his generations.”

Speaking about the impact of Huzoor’s tours, Dr. sahib said:

“Huzoor is changing the world for the better. I used to do some public affairs work in the USA for the Jamaat and so I saw first-hand how much

impact Huzoor had on very well-known and senior US officials and dignitaries. You could see that they were spell-bound by Khilafat and those experiences proved to me that that the effect of Khilafat was not limited to Ahmadis but was felt by all people of all beliefs.”

Short changing a bride!

After Maghreb and Isha, Canada’s Missionary-in-charge led the Nikah (marriage) ceremonies of a number of Ahmadis. Most graciously, Huzoor remained present throughout and led the silent prayer at the end.

At one point, whilst leading the Nikahs, the Missionary-in-charge announced the *Haq Mehr* (dowry) to be just twenty-five dollars! Upon being alerted to this by Huzoor himself, the Missionary-in-charge said that he had accidentally misspoken and that the correct figure was actually twenty-five *thousand* dollars!

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and joked:

“It seems that you are in favour of the boy!”

Everyone present laughed a great deal and certainly I am sure the bride will have been particularly grateful that Huzoor noticed the mistake!

A few precious moments

Following Maghreb and Isha, Huzoor met with members of his family in the guest house where I was staying.

Huzoor's relatives, many of whom were from the United States, were particularly keen to hear Huzoor's views on the possible election of Donald Trump as President!

Thereafter, Huzoor told me to follow him to the room that linked the guest house with his own residence. However, when Huzoor went to open the door it was locked from the inside and so whilst, Ahmad Bhai went and opened it from the other side, Huzoor told me to come and sit with him in another room within 2-Bashir.

Huzoor told me a little about his preparation for his concluding address at the Jalsa.

Huzoor said:

“Until last night I was not at all sure what topic to deliver my concluding address about. However, last night I made a few notes and then this morning after Fajr I sat down and prepared the rest of my notes.”

I was taken aback by this because Huzoor's address had been extremely faith-inspiring, emotional and educational.

I mentioned that Huzoor had made certain points that he sometimes made to external non-Muslim guests when defending Islam from false allegations.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Yes you are right – I did this purposely because I want Ahmadis to also

understand how to defend Islam from the many allegations that people raise against it and I want all Ahmadis to be able to refute them.”

Thereafter, Huzoor made a comment that made me very emotional.

Huzoor said:

“I watched the Press Conference that took place after Jumma and though it was ok, I realised that at one point I used a particular word, whereas it would have been better if I had used a different word.”

Huzoor’s humility knows no bounds. After defending Islam in front of so many members of the national media, most of us would be guilty of, at least some element of pride, yet Khalifa-Waqt, who defended Islam in the most majestic way, instead remained completely humble.

Fire alarm at Fajr

On the morning of 10 October 2016, when I walked across the road to the Mosque for Fajr I was shivering as it was now bitterly cold.

From a distance, I could hear that a fire alarm in the Mosque had gone off and though, it was more than likely a false alarm, until the source was found it was a cause of concern.

With around three minutes remaining until Fajr, I heard security discussing whether the Mosque should be evacuated.

Thankfully, around thirty seconds later the alarm stopped and it was confirmed that it had been a false alarm after all.

A couple of minutes later, when Huzoor came to the Mosque, I noticed that he had also prepared for the cold weather. Huzoor was wearing a cream coloured overcoat, as well as a sweater and gloves. Huzoor looked incredibly graceful and beautiful in the overcoat, which he wore most days at Fajr during the rest of the trip.

Emotions of Ahmadis

Later that morning, Huzoor met dozens of families in Mulaqat.

One family to meet Huzoor were *Faisal Ahmed (37)*, his wife *Kunwal Chaudhry* and their two children. They were from the Windsor Jamaat and had never previously met Huzoor.

Speaking of his joy and excitement, Faisal sahib said:

“I have goosebumps and I am sweating because I cannot believe what just happened! I just met Huzoor! I saw him and he saw me. I listened to him and he listened to me. Then, I got to touch his blessed hand and that moment was the greatest moment of my life! Today my life has changed forever and by meeting Huzoor I feel that the doors to heaven have opened up around me.”

Speaking about her experiences, Kunwal sahiba said:

“I feel as though I have just had a glimpse of what it must feel like to enter Paradise. The one thing that overwhelmed me was Huzoor’s humility. He was so kind, so loving and talking to us as though we were his friends, even though he is the greatest person on earth. All I can say is Alhamdulillah.”

I also met with *Chaudhry Farooq Haider (47)*, who had just met Huzoor for the first time along with his family. He told me the last time he had met any Khalifa was as a child when he met Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) in Pakistan.

Chaudhry Farooq sahib said:

“It is not just us Ahmadis who need Huzoor but the whole world needs him. Huzoor is leading the Jamaat at a very challenging time because people are increasingly attacking Islam and he is single-handedly refuting the false allegations and lies that are being spread. No normal person could undertake this task, only a Khalifa can bear this burden.”

Chaudhry Farooq sahib continued:

“I think Huzoor’s smile is similar to the smile of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra), which I have seen in photos. I even mentioned this today in my Mulaqat and upon this Huzoor smiled and then I saw in real life that his smile truly does resemble the smile of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra)!”

Suddenly becoming emotional, Chaudhry Farooq sahib said:

“I never ever forgot the experience of touching the blessed hand of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (ra) when I was just a child. That moment stayed in my mind and heart for over 35 years and today finally once again I was blessed with the honour of touching the hand of the Khalifa-Waqt. I can never thank Allah enough.”

Nikah ceremonies

After the Zuhr and Asr prayers, Huzoor personally announced the Nikahs (marriages) of a number of people.

Prior to announcing the Nikahs, Huzoor made a brief address, during which he said that married couples should reflect upon the verses of the Holy Quran that are recited at the time of Nikah.

Huzoor said that if a husband and wife both followed the commandments in the verses then their marriages were sure to be happy and successful.

For example, Huzoor said that a common cause of conflict in marriages was the relations of a husband or wife with their in-laws. If such people followed the Quranic injunction of treating the relatives of their spouse with love then the chances of such issues arising would be far less.

Similarly, it was the duty of in-laws to welcome their new family members and treat them with kindness and consideration.

A fitness challenge!

As Huzoor walked out of his office that day, I noticed that two young Missionaries, *Sharrukh Abid*, posted in Calgary and *Asfand Suleman*, the Assistant General Secretary, were stood outside waiting for him and when Huzoor saw them he smiled and said:

“I thought you both might have been hiding from me today!”

In response, Sharrukh said:

“Huzoor, we both went out running this morning after Fajr!”

As I heard this, I was a little confused and did not understand why he had told Huzoor that he had been running!

Later, Sharrukh filled me in on the backstory. He said:

“As you can see both Asfand sahib and me are somewhat overweight and so yesterday Huzoor called us and told that for the rest of his stay in Peace Village we have to run around the block three times every morning after Fajr! And Huzoor said that we have to report to him each day to tell him if we have completed our daily run!”

I laughed out loud thinking how wonderful our Khalifa was! In the midst of such a busy tour, he still found time to ensure the physical well-being of two young Missionaries, who he wanted to be fit and healthy.

It is worth noting that Huzoor never asks others to do things that he himself does not follow. Thus, despite his relentless schedule, Huzoor finds the time to cycle indoors in his home most days after Fajr.

During the rest of the tour, from time to time, Huzoor would ask the two young Missionaries if they were following his training schedule and by the end of the month they both felt fitter and looked as though they had lost a pound or two in weight as well.

An example of the Help of Allah

In the evening of 10 October, Huzoor called me to sit with him for a few minutes in the evening after Maghreb and Isha.

During that time, I told Huzoor about an incident of the past few days that both the local Canadian media team and I had found very faith inspiring.

Most members of the Canadian media had been extremely keen to attend and cover the Jalsa, however one national newspaper, *The Globe and Mail*, had declined.

Safwan Chaudhry, in-charge of the Canada media team, told me that he had been very upset and hurt by their response.

Rightfully, he said that the media constantly said they wanted to hear from Muslim leaders who were promoting peace and tolerance, yet when the opportunity to listen to the message of Khalifatul Masih had arisen they passed it up.

The same weekend as the Jalsa, *The Globe and Mail* had decided to do a feature on Syrian refugees and so one of their journalists had contacted a Syrian family to ask them how they would be spending the Thanksgiving weekend.

It turned out, that by chance, they happened to contact some Ahmadi refugees. I have written 'by chance' but in truth, I do not believe it was by chance but am sure that it was the design of Allah. The refugees informed the journalist that they would be spending the Thanksgiving weekend at Jalsa Salana Canada and that he was welcome to join them.

Thus, the journalist Patrick Collins, attended the Jalsa and published a feature article in which he covered the Jalsa Salana in detail and displayed a photo of Huzoor. He also wrote that the Syrian refugees were most thankful to have escaped their war-torn country so that they could meet their beloved Imam at Jalsa Canada. The very newspaper who had not been interested in covering the Jalsa ended up writing one of the most interesting and lengthy articles!

As I narrated this, Huzoor was pleased and said that this was how Allah was helping the Jamaat.

A proposal for rest

I then mentioned to Huzoor that a couple of his relatives had asked me if Huzoor would take any rest during his Canada tour. In reply, I had said that I hoped so, but I had very seldom seen Huzoor take any rest or personal time, either in London or on tours abroad.

One of the relatives, then suggested that perhaps the Jamaat could table a *Shura* proposal asking Huzoor to take regular rest throughout the year!

I was not sure if this was appropriate and besides each *Shura* proposal ultimately goes to Khalifatul Masih for approval and so even if the Jamaat recommended it, Khalifatul Masih would never be bound by the advice of the *Shura*.

As Huzoor heard this incident he smiled and said:

“Canada’s Jamaat has actually set aside two or three days towards the end of the month for rest. However, I have some work in mind for those days and I will call you to assist me during those days.”

As Huzoor said these words, on the one hand I felt extremely honoured and grateful that *Insha’Allah* I would have the opportunity to assist Huzoor in some work but at the same time, I felt a little sad that Huzoor was not planning to avail the period of rest that the Jamaat had proposed.

I also told Huzoor about an Ahmadi convert, *Elaine sahiba*, who I had met that day.

I was introduced to her by *Fiona O’Keefe sahiba*, an Irish convert who now lived in the United States. Elaine sahiba had been stood in the corridor outside Huzoor’s office and had watched him walk past.

Throughout our conversation she struggled to control her emotions, in fact, tears streamed down her face constantly.

Elaine sahiba said:

“I did Bai’at a number of years ago but I have never met Huzoor in Mulaqat. Just to see him walk past has filled my heart with contentment and happiness. He is so pure, so peaceful and graceful.”

I had told Elaine sahiba that she should request a Mulaqat and I was sure that Huzoor would be happy to see her.

Hearing this, Elaine sahiba replied:

“I have purposely not requested to meet Huzoor because I know that when I sit before him I will break down in tears and will not be able to control my emotions. I do not want to burden him anymore as he already has the burden of the entire world upon his shoulders.”

After listening to this, Huzoor appreciated her sentiments.

As Huzoor got up to return to his residence, I mentioned that a number of the members of the Qafila were becoming sick with flu or severe colds. Thankfully I was ok but Munir Javed sahib, Majid sahib and a few others had been quite seriously unwell.

Hearing this, Huzoor advised me to take *Aconite 1000* every four or five days as this helped to prevent the onset of flu or colds. Later in the tour, I did develop a cold, but it was much milder than those experienced by others and so I am sure that Huzoor’s prayers and homeopathic remedy helped me.

Inauguration of Baitul Aafiyat in Scarborough

On 11 October 2016, Huzoor inaugurated the Baitul Aafiyat Mosque in Scarborough, a district in the Greater Toronto Area, where many Ahmadi families live.

After a short drive from Peace Village, Huzoor arrived at the Mosque at 1.30pm, where he was greeted by hundreds of local Ahmadis. Huzoor unveiled a plaque and offered a silent prayer to officially inaugurate the Mosque before leading the Zuhr and Asr prayers at the Mosque.

Following the conclusion of Namaz, Huzoor turned around and listened as a short report was presented by the local Jamaat President.

He informed that the building was originally a Church and had been bought by the Jamaat in 2008. As funds were raised, the building was slowly converted into a Mosque. He also informed that over \$1million dollars were contributed by members of Lajna Imaillah.

Thereafter, Huzoor asked about the size of the site and the size of the prayer halls. Huzoor was told that around 200 people could offer Salat at the Mosque at any one time.

After doing some calculations in his head, Huzoor said that the local Jamaat had underestimated the amount of people who could pray at the Mosque. Huzoor said that possibly around 450 people could worship at the Mosque and that the row markings, which had been made extremely wide, could be cut in order to make more space.

Hearing this, Amir Sahib Canada interjected and said:

“Huzoor, there will be some people who are very large and overweight and so that will reduce the capacity!”

In response, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Yes, but there were also be some very slim people like you as well to balance it out!”



In fact, based on the size of the halls and the average space required for an individual, a local Missionary worked out the capacity using a calculator and it turned out that there was space for 466 worshippers.

Huzoor then asked Amir Sahib Germany, who had come to Canada to attend the Jalsa, how he was and how he found the Mosque.

In response, Amir Sahib Germany said:

“Huzoor this Mosque is extremely beautiful – just like a German Mosque!”

Huzoor then turned to the local Missionary posted in Scarborough and asked him how many people attended Fajr each morning. In response, the Missionary said that just two or three attended.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“It is not just enough to build this Mosque and to remain satisfied. Rather, now it is your duty to ensure that this Mosque becomes fully occupied and to increase attendance at prayers.”

An internal event

Alhamdolillah, the opening of the Mosque had been a very blessed event for the local Jamaat, whereby the local Ahmadis were able to spend time in Huzoor’s company and to pray behind him in the new Mosque. However, I was a little surprised that the Jamaat had not invited any neighbours or non-Ahmadi guests to attend.

Normally, whenever Huzoor inaugurates a Mosque the local Jamaat hosts a reception in which guests are invited and it is a great opportunity for them to hear about the true teachings of Islam directly from Huzoor.

I later asked Amir Sahib Canada why it had been kept as an entirely internal event. I mentioned that in the UK, the Jamaat always invited external guests whenever there was a Mosque opening.

In reply, Amir Sahib Canada said that as Huzoor had already addressed guests at Jalsa Canada and was scheduled to address them at a forthcoming

Peace Symposium in Vaughan, the Jamaat felt it was not appropriate to ask Huzoor to deliver another address in the Greater Toronto Area.

Though, I felt some regret that such a reception had not taken place, I understood Amir Sahib's point.

Furthermore, some weeks after our return to London, Huzoor inaugurated a Mosque in Mitcham in London and the UK Jamaat held it as an internal event only. Hence, my claim that receptions are always held in the UK will sadly no longer be accurate in future!

An affectionate moment

Before he departed from Scarborough, Huzoor visited the Lajna side, before distributing chocolates to all the children present.

As Huzoor reached a young boy, aged just two or three, he very lovingly handed him a chocolate.

Upon receiving it, the little boy suddenly moved forward and with great love innocently wrapped his arms around Huzoor's legs in a tight embrace. As he did, Huzoor then put his own arm around the boy in a very loving manner. It was a beautiful and affectionate scene.

Huzoor's love of every Jamaat

That evening, Huzoor met some members of his family after Maghreb and Isha. During the Mulaqat, Huzoor asked Dr. Muneeb, my wife's Khalu (uncle),

where his home in Peace Village was and in reply, Dr. Muneeb said that it was very close.

Thinking that perhaps, Huzoor wanted some more detail, I mentioned specific directions of how to get to their home.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“Abid, this is the home of your in-laws! Roofo (Amatul Raoof sahibba) is your Khala-Saas (aunt-in-law) and so no wonder you know the direction so well!”

Thereafter, Dr. Muneeb’s younger son, *Hashir*, mentioned that their family had lived in Dubai for some time and he had found the Dubai Jamaat to be a very kind Jamaat.

In reply, Huzoor very affectionately said:

“Harr Jamaat bohat pyari hai”.

Loosely translated, Huzoor’s comment translated as:

“Every Jamaat is very beautiful.”

Another young relative, *Umair*, mentioned that he had attended the *Aameen* ceremony that Huzoor had presided before Namaz and thought that the girls seemed to be more proficient in reading the Holy Quran.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Yes you are right. Generally speaking, I have seen that young boys, even aged just five or six, start getting different priorities and want to go outside and play, whereas girls are more ready to stay with their mothers and concentrate more on reading the Quran.”

Sad news

Later, I was able to personally meet Huzoor for a few moments and Huzoor mentioned the sad passing earlier that day of both *Dr. Nusrat Jahan* and the former Missionary-in-charge of UK, *Bashir Rafiq* sahib.

Dr. Nusrat, who as a *Waqf-e-Zindighi* (life devotee) had served the Jamaat earnestly and with great devotion as a gynaecology specialist for several decades, had been ill in London for a few months. However, for a while her condition had stabilised before suddenly taking a turn for the worse again. I think Huzoor was also surprised at how quickly her health deteriorated.

Huzoor said:

“Today at 2pm, I received a message that Dr. Nusrat had been taken suddenly unwell and then just a couple of hours later I was informed that she had passed away.”

Huzoor asked me if Dr. Nusrat had assisted my wife Mala and me and I said that she had. In fact, we could never be grateful enough for her care and guidance, as we struggled in the early years of our marriage to conceive.

When we were finally blessed with children, she was genuinely delighted and it felt as though she considered our happiness to be a source of her own happiness. In the days and weeks that followed, we learned how this impeccable spirit of service and compassion displayed by Dr. Nusrat had touched many hundreds, if not thousands of families.

I also mentioned, how just a few months earlier, Dr. Nusrat had called me and told me that Huzoor had told her to read the diaries I had written about his recent tours abroad.

After informing me of this, Dr. Nusrat said:

“I consider anything that Khalifatul Masih says, even if it is said in passing, to be a direct instruction and so that is why I immediately sought your number. Thus, please send me all of your diaries and I will then Insha’Allah read them and send feedback to Huzoor himself.”

That was my last ever communication with Dr. Nusrat and I will always remember her with gratitude. May Allah reward her greatly.

Importance of hospitality

Huzoor then mentioned the opening of the Mosque in Scarborough earlier.

Huzoor said:

“Today, the Jamaat did not even offer any water, never mind any mathai (sweets) at the Mosque opening and I do not know if they provided any

food to the other Ahmadis in attendance.”

Huzoor’s words were very instructive and indicated that at such functions, at the very minimum, some sweets should be distributed in celebration. Huzoor was also particularly concerned about whether those who attended the function were provided any food.

Wherever Huzoor travels, he encourages the Jamaat to be as hospitable as possible, as this was the blessed example of the Holy Prophet (sa) and the Promised Messiah (as).

Failure to heed Huzoor’s warning

By now, Huzoor had started to receive some reports about the arrangements for the Jalsa Salana.

Speaking about some of the reports, Huzoor said:

“The evening before the Jalsa at the inspection, I warned the local Jamaat about the potential lack of toilets and from the reports I have received this proved to be a major problem. There were people who had to queue for over an hour and experienced extreme distress.”

As Huzoor said these words, I sensed disappointment and regret in his voice that the Jalsa administration had not acted upon his warning and that this failure had directly led to the distress of a number of Ahmadis.

Certainly, Huzoor feels the pain of every single Ahmadi and so he did not like the fact that they had been forced to endure such conditions.

As Huzoor stood up to leave, I informed him that earlier that day Mala had been invited to our son Mahid's first ever 'Parents Evening' at his nursery.

Very affectionately Huzoor asked how it had gone and so I informed that I had been extremely relieved because he got a good report! *Alhamdulillah*.

With that, Huzoor smiled and then retired to his residence for the evening.

A blessed week

We had now been in Canada for just over a week and due to the scale of Huzoor's activities it felt like we had already been there for many weeks!

As we passed through those days in the shadow of our beloved Khalifa, we all felt honoured and privileged.

Those first few days had been blessed in so many respects and I looked forward in eager anticipation to the days and weeks ahead.

End of Part 1

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