

**HUZOOR'S TOUR OF CANADA**

**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2016**

**PART 5**

**A Personal Account**

*By Abid Khan*

## **Introduction to Part 5**

Part 4 of this personal account concluded with a reception held in Regina to mark the opening of the Mahmood Mosque. In this concluding part 5, I shall cover the final days of Huzoor's tour of Canada.

## **Travel to Lloydminster**

On 5 November 2016, Huzoor departed from Regina at 11.40am and travelled onwards to the small town of Lloydminster, which lies on the border of two provinces, namely Saskatchewan and Alberta. In fact, part of the town is on one side of the border and the other part is on the other side.

Lloydminster was 500km from Regina and so the journey took most of the day. We first had to drive back to Saskatoon, where the Qafila stopped for *Namaz* and lunch before driving onwards to Lloydminster. In this way, the itinerary seemed a little odd, because in effect, we drove from Saskatoon to Regina, then from Regina to Lloydminster via Saskatoon and after Lloydminster we would return to Saskatoon!

The Qafila arrived in Lloydminster at 5.55pm and we went straight to a hotel where we would spend the night.

## **Inauguration of Baitul Amman Mosque**

After a break, Huzoor proceeded to the newly built *Baitul Amman Mosque*, which he inaugurated by unveiling a plaque, offering a silent prayer and then leading the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers at the Mosque.

After Namaz, Huzoor inspected the Mosque site and asked where the ladies were. Huzoor was informed that due to a shortage of space, a separate hall had been booked at a nearby school, where members of *Lajna* had offered Namaz behind Huzoor.



Exhibiting his great love and concern for *Lajna Imaillah*, Huzoor immediately went to the school in his car and met the Lajna members who raised very passionate *naaray* (slogans) to welcome Huzoor and to express their heartfelt joy at Huzoor's presence.

### **An oversight**

The next day, on 6 November 2016, a formal reception was held at the *Lloydminster Agricultural Exhibition Centre* to mark the opening of the Baitul Amman Mosque.

In the morning, after *Fajr*, Huzoor asked the local *Sadr Jamaat* (President) if they had invited neighbours of the Mosque to the reception.

In reply, the local President said:

***“Huzoor, we have not invited neighbours, we have invited only dignitaries or personal contacts.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“At Mosque openings, it is essential to invite the neighbours as they are the people closest to the Mosque, and as our neighbours, they have rights over us and they are the people who are most likely to have questions or fears.”***

Upon this, the local President said that there was still time to invite them.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“Will you drag them out of their homes? The reception takes place in just a few hours and so you cannot expect them to come now.”***

Later when the reception took place, I noticed there were some empty tables at the back of the hall and so there certainly was room for another 30 or 40 people to attend easily.

Thus, the reason for not inviting the neighbours could not have been a lack of space and I can only imagine was an oversight.

## Meeting with dignitaries

Huzoor and his Qafila arrived at the *Exhibition Centre* at 12pm and prior to the main reception, Huzoor held an audience with several Canadian dignitaries and politicians.



Amongst those attending was Jason Kenney, who had served as Canada's *Immigration Minister* and *Defence Minister* in the previous Government. Huzoor knew Mr. Kenney well, as he had officially received Huzoor on behalf of the Government on previous tours.

Furthermore, one thing Huzoor had always appreciated about Mr. Kenney was that he had personally called Huzoor in London to offer his condolences following the 28 May Lahore attacks in 2010.

Mr. Kenney informed Huzoor that he had recently resigned as a *Member of Parliament* and was now running for leadership of Alberta's Conservative Party, with the aim of running for *State Premier* in the next election.

Addressing Huzoor, Mr. Kenney said:

***“Your Holiness, it is extremely generous of you to come all the way to Lloydminster, as it is very far and a small town.”***

With great humility and kindness, Huzoor responded by saying:

***“It is more generous of you to come from Calgary to attend our event.”***

Also present was the journalist, John Gormley, who had interviewed Huzoor in Saskatoon days earlier.

Upon seeing him, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Have you come to interview me again today?”***

In reply, Mr. Gormley said:

***“No, your Holiness, I am here today as a guest and have come to listen to your speech.”***

Mr. Gormley continued:

***“The interview I took with you was very popular and listened to in 34 different countries! This was certainly a record, as normally I struggle to get listeners outside of our State, never mind outside our country!”***

## **Formal Reception in Lloydminster**

The main reception commenced at 12.15pm and following a welcome address by Amir Sahib Canada, various guest speakers took to the stage to welcome Huzeer to Lloydminster.

During his keynote address, which Huzeer prepared a few days earlier at the same time he had prepared his notes for his address in Regina, Huzeer quoted various verses of the Holy Quran that required Muslims to promote religious freedom and tolerance and to show compassion to all people, irrespective of faith or beliefs. Huzeer said that it was with such a spirit that the Jamaat built its Mosques.

Huzeer said:

***“Our Mosques are built with the purpose of bringing people together and serving our neighbours and the local society. Our Mosques are beacons of light radiating peace, love and humanity. Wherever we have built Mosques or we have established Ahmadi communities we seek to alleviate the suffering of the local people. Our faith teaches us that our worship and our prayers are worthless if we fail to love, support and cherish those around us.”***

Speaking about the meaning of a Mosque, Huzeer said:

***“The Arabic word for Mosque is ‘Masjid’ and this word literally means a place for people to congregate in complete humility and submission in order to worship God Almighty. If a person enters a Mosque with this***

***meek spirit, considering himself to be worthless, he can never wish any type of harm on others or be the cause of discord or animosity.”***



Huzoor also informed the audience of some of the humanitarian projects being run by the Jamaat.

One example, Huzoor gave was of the *Water for Life* project, through which the Jamaat was providing clean, running water in remote villages in Africa and Asia. As a result, young children no longer had to travel for miles in order to bring water for their families.

Huzoor said:

***“Instead of carrying earthen vessels upon their heads for hours on end, those children are now being educated in schools that our community has established. We are seeking to free them from the bondage of their poverty and help them stand upon their own feet so that they can grow to serve not only their families but also their nations.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“We consider it to be our good fortune to remove the heavy weight of desperation from the shoulders of such disadvantaged people. This is true Islam, wherein apart from worshipping God Almighty, Muslims strive earnestly to provide comfort to others.”***

### **Impact of Huzoor’s words**

Following the conclusion of Huzoor’s address, I met with some guests, including an investment banker called *David Hennessy*, who said Huzoor’s message about serving humanity had resonated with him.

Mr. Hennessy said:

***“I grew up in difficult circumstances, whereby our means were extremely limited and we faced relative hardships. Thus, when His Holiness spoke about helping impoverished people it really made me emotional and I felt myself tearing up. Undoubtedly, he is a man of humanity who wants to make the world a better place. The Khalifa is like a ‘father-figure’ or an ‘older-brother’ for us all.”***

Another guest, *Daryl Wright*, said:

***“I never knew that Islam was such a loving and considerate religion. We have certain ideals of multi-culturalism, tolerance and respect in Canada and today I realised that these are also all Islamic values.”***

I also met a lady called *Sandra*, who said:

***“The Khalifa spoke to our heart and reminded us that we are all part of God’s Creation. He made me realise that the negative impression that some people have of Islam is a creation of the media and due to the acts of people who claim to follow Islam but who in reality do not.”***

Sandra continued:

***“His Holiness is quite right that we take water for granted and so we should count our blessings. The Caliph comes across as extremely generous and has a loving personality and I consider it to be a great privilege to have listened to him.”***

Gillian Henderson, the Vice President of a local college, said:

***“It is not every day you get to hear and meet a leader of the great stature of the Khalifa, yet at the same time when I saw him I was most impressed by his supreme humility and the way he conducted himself very humbly. There was not a trace of arrogance or superiority in his tone and later in his speech he said that being humble was part of Islamic faith. He is a true man of faith and he describes his beliefs clearly but also kindly.”***

A Church Minister, Paul Duval said:

***“I appreciated the honesty of His Holiness, wherein he laid out the picture of what is wrong with the world and acknowledged the violence in the Muslim world, but at the same time affirmed Islamic principles of being***

*loving and tolerant and a means of peace. I want more people to be exposed to the message of the Khalifa because there is intolerance and racism in this city, especially against the indigenous people. There is tension in our society and so we can really learn from the speech given by His Holiness about coming together.”*

### **Moving to Lloydminster?**

Thereafter, Huzoor graciously attended a *Press Conference* with local journalists and media. The journalists seemed fascinated by the fact that Huzoor was visiting Lloydminster, which was such a small town.

In fact, later one of the journalists told a member of the Canada Jamaat media team that it was the very first time she had ever attended a *Press Conference*, as such opportunities did not arise normally in the town!

Given this, one of the journalists asked Huzoor if he would consider encouraging more Ahmadis to move to Lloydminster.

In response, Huzoor said:

*“Yes, if there are suitable job opportunities in this area I would be happy for more Ahmadi Muslims to come and live here. In the past, our Community actively encouraged Ahmadis to come to Saskatchewan Province because of the work opportunities that were here. We desire to spread our Community to every part of Canada, so that all of the people come to know what true Islam is.”*

Upon being asked if he had any special message for the people of Lloydminster, Huzoor said:

***“It is my hope that this town becomes a role model and example for others in terms of its multiculturalism, its tolerance and the way in which people live together peacefully. It is much easier for small towns to reform and improve and to become a model for others to follow.”***



Huzoor continued:

***“Normally, the people in small towns are more warm and caring. If I were to live in Canada, I would prefer to live in a small town like this.”***

Upon this the journalist asked Huzoor:

***“Do you mean a town like Lloydminster?”***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“Yes, if you and your people accept me!”***

As Huzoor said these words, I have to admit that for a split second, the first thought that entered my mind was:

***“Am I moving to Lloydminster?!?”***

Of course, like so many other Ahmadis, it would always be my desire to live where Khalifatul Masih is. However, until that day, never in my wildest dreams had I imagined that Lloydminster was also an option!

Anyway after a few minutes’ reflection, and unlike some of the local Canadian Ahmadis who became very excited by Huzoor’s comment, I did not reach the conclusion that Huzoor was moving to Canada or specifically to Lloydminster!

I think Huzoor was simply making a more general point that his personal preference was for quieter and smaller towns, rather than large cities.

In this respect, the way Huzoor lives, is a prime example of how he has completely set aside his personal preferences for the sake of the Jamaat, whereby he continues to live in a very small flat, in one of the largest and busiest cities in the world.

### **A lesson in hospitality**

For many years, *Idrees Bhatti* has been a member of the *Ziafat* (hospitality) team in Canada.

Following the Lloydminster event, he told me of an incident that reflected Huzoor's particular attention to hospitality.

Idrees sahib said:

***“When dinner was served after the Regina event, we had placed only water on the table and so Huzoor called me and said there should also be soft drinks present. Thus, we brought some Coke and a carbonated ginger flavoured soft drink and Huzoor took some of the latter.”***

Idrees sahib continued:

***“At Lloydminster, we had placed the soft drinks from the beginning and so whilst serving, I asked Huzoor if he would take some. In reply, Huzoor said: ‘No, I will just drink water. The other day I was doing your training and reminding you that hospitality for our guests should be of a high standard and so I took some soft drink, otherwise generally I prefer just water’.”***

### **Departure from Lloydminster**

Following the event, Huzoor returned to the Mosque to lead *Zuhr* and *Asr* Namaz before departing from Lloydminster.

After Namaz concluded, and as Huzoor exited the Mosque, many Ahmadis tried to join him so they could wave goodbye to him before he left.

In the rush, many did not have the time to put on their shoes and upon seeing this, Huzoor stopped them because it was raining outside and he did not want them to get wet. Instead, Huzoor himself went back into the entrance of the Mosque and led a silent prayer inside so others would not need to come out.

We arrived back in Saskatoon on the evening of 6 November 2016 and returned to the same hotel where we had stayed a few days earlier.

### **A precious afternoon**

On 7 November 2016, Huzoor spent the morning and early afternoon in a session of *family Mulaqats*, whilst later in the day he held two separate classes with male and female University students.

During the afternoon interval at 4.15pm, Huzoor called me to a small room he was using as an office at the hotel where he was staying, and I was able to spend the next couple of hours in his blessed company.

During this time, Huzoor prepared his notes for his forthcoming address at the *Calgary Peace Symposium* and I was fortunate enough to take dictation for the address.

Huzoor was wearing a *shalwar kameez* and a sleeveless sweater and looked extremely graceful. As he prepared his notes, Huzoor read through a passage of *Al-Fazl* and made a series of notes with a pencil.

On a few occasions, Huzoor got out of his chair and stepped towards a bookshelf attached to the wall. The books Huzoor wished to consult were on the lower shelves and so he would crouch down on one knee and find the relevant book.

At one point, as Huzoor was working at his desk, he accidentally knocked his reading glasses with his hand and they fell to the floor. As soon as they fell, I rushed from my seat on the opposite side of the desk so I could retrieve them but before I could get to them Huzoor had already reached them and picked them up.

In my mind, I thought that Huzoor is so self-sufficient and quick that we do not even get the chance to offer these tiny forms of service to him!

As he worked, Huzoor mentioned the events of the past few days and said that he used the notes he had prepared for Lloydminster in Regina and the notes he had prepared for Regina in Lloydminster. He said that the points he covered in both speeches were similar, however after checking his notes he felt it appropriate to switch his addresses.

By the time Huzoor had concluded dictating the notes it was 6.30pm and he had still not had a break for evening tea and had to return to the Mosque for the student's classes.

Thus, as Huzoor returned to his room, I said:

***“Huzoor, your work and schedule is never ending!”***

Huzoor just smiled and returned to his room for a few moments before returning to the Mosque.

I thought to myself, how sometimes people may think, that when Huzoor returns to his residence in the afternoon or evening he will be resting or relaxing, when the truth is that much of Huzoor’s personal time is also occupied in service to the Jamaat and fulfilling his duties as Khalifatul Masih.

That evening, I stayed behind at the hotel, as Huzoor permitted me to stay back and to do some work that he had given me. I later learned that, apart from the student’s classes, Huzoor also visited the under-construction Saskatoon Mosque, which was nearing completion.

### **Departure from Saskatoon**

The next morning, on 9 November 2016, the Qafila departed from Saskatoon and travelled to Calgary for the final stage of Huzoor’s blessed 6-week tour of Canada. It felt strange that the tour was nearing its end, as it was now beginning to feel like the Canada tour was a part of normal life!

At breakfast, Ahmad bhai (*Huzoor’s head of security*) had told me we would be departing at 9.25am from the hotel, whereas *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed sahib told me to be ready at 9.45am.

To be on the safe side, I left my room at exactly 9.25am and as I did, I saw Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*) come out of their room at the same time.

Upon seeing me, Huzoor asked if I was ready and I said that I was, before briskly walking down to the hotel lobby before Huzoor came down.

In the lobby area, apart from the Qafila members, there were dozens of local Ahmadis who had come to see off Huzoor.

A few moments later, Huzoor came down and waved at the Ahmadis and personally met some of them.

Thereafter, Huzoor led a silent prayer and just as I was about to put my hands up to pray, I realised that Mubarak Zafar sahib (*Additional Wakil-ul-Maal*) from the Qafila was not present.

I alerted Ahmad bhai and when the *dua* was completed he informed Huzoor who said we should send someone to his room.

Thankfully, after a minute, Mubarak sahib came down. He looked a little red in the face and I imagined that, after learning that Huzoor was waiting, he would have raced down as quickly as he could.

In the car, Mubarak sahib said that he had been told the departure time was 9.45am and had been ready sitting in his room waiting for the time to pass.

### **Waiting for departure**

The Qafila departed at exactly 9.35am and proceeded to *Saskatoon Airport* where we arrived at 10am. After quickly passing through security, Huzoor and the Qafila members proceeded to the main waiting area near the boarding gates.

The flight was not until 11.15am which was not ideal at all, as Huzoor's time is extremely precious and was being wasted. It was clear that Huzoor was somewhat irritated by the fact that the Jamaat had brought him to the airport needlessly early. In fact, on a couple of occasions, Huzoor looked out of the window and noted that our plane had not even arrived at the airport yet.

In the end, Huzoor chose to give that time to the local members of the Jamaat from Saskatoon and the national office bearers who had come from Toronto.

Huzoor stood amongst them and told them stories and jokes and listened to their stories and the jokes of an elderly Ahmadi from Saskatoon. Huzoor even sat for photos with several local Ahmadis.

During this period, Huzoor did make it clear that the organisation and itinerary planning for the past few days had not been to his satisfaction.

Huzoor said:

***"We went from Saskatoon, to Regina, back to Saskatoon, to Lloydminster and then back to Saskatoon. We could have travelled from Lloydminster by car to Edmonton and then travelled to Calgary from there. In this way,***

***I would have been able to meet the members of Edmonton Jamaat and we would not have been coming back and forward needlessly.”***

As we stood in the waiting area, a local Ahmadi informed Huzoor that some indigenous people, known as ‘First Nation’ people had commented that meeting Huzoor in Saskatchewan had been a very emotional experience for them. In fact, one of them said he had not been able to sleep the entire night after meeting Huzoor due to the emotions he felt.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Our Jamaat should also make a plan to visit the lands of the indigenous people and try to help them and bring them closer to Islam.”***

It was also the day of the Presidential election in the United States and so Huzoor asked me if there was any update. I replied that during voting hours, the media was restricted in how much it could report but that most media outlets and commentators were continuing to predict that Hillary Clinton would win. However, Huzoor noted that the polls had been tightening in recent days and that a Donald Trump victory was possible.

### **Flight to Calgary**

At around 11am, we were finally called to board the plane for our flight to Calgary. The entrance to the plane was extremely low, whereby even I had to duck down to enter. I thought how it would be difficult for Huzoor to enter, as he would be wearing his *paghri* (turban).

I was originally seated quite far back but Nasir Saeed from Huzoor's security team asked me to switch seats with him. He had originally been seated in the row directly behind Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*). Thus, during the flight, I was seated next to Ahmad bhai directly behind Huzoor.

After a few minutes, a flight attendant offered a drink and biscuits to those on board. Huzoor took water but did not take any biscuits. I was hungry and so I did take a biscuit and Ahmad bhai handed me his biscuit as well. After a few further minutes, Dr. Aslam Daud (*Naib Amir Canada*) came forward with multiple *Kit Kat* chocolate bars, which were offered to Huzoor and Khala Saboohi, however they did not take them and so rather than take them back, Dr. Aslam sahib handed me all the *Kit Kats*. Hence, over the course of the flight I earned my fortune in biscuits and chocolates! I put the extra snacks in my bag and ate them gradually over the next few days.

Ten minutes into the flight a very odd and loud 'chugging' sound begun. It was the same noise that my car made just before it completely ran out of fuel several years ago!

Thus, I was rather perturbed and so I looked at Ahmad bhai and said:

***"I am very glad Huzoor is on this plane because this does not sound very healthy!"***

The chugging noise continued for the rest of the journey, however, apart from a bumpy landing, the journey continued without incident.

A couple of times during the flight, Huzoor looked back at me. On the first occasion, I think he was surprised to see me, as when he had entered the plane, Nasir Saeed sahib been seated where I now was.

Huzoor noticed that I had been using my phone and asked what I had been reading. Often, when people come out of *Mulaqat* they tell me that they 'froze' in front of Huzoor and were unable to speak and on this occasion, I also froze, as my mind went entirely blank.

After a few seconds, finally I said:

***"Huzoor, I was just reading a news article."***

Huzoor then asked me what the article was about and again I remained confused! I had just been scrolling different pages to pass time, without really paying attention to what I was looking at.

I replied by saying:

***"Huzoor, just some general stories."***

Huzoor smiled and returned to his normal position, whilst I felt embarrassed that I had not given proper responses to Huzoor's questions. At the same time, I felt grateful to have the opportunity to sit near Huzoor on the plane and to have the opportunity to speak him at all.

One of the questions I am most often asked is whether I still get nervous speaking to Huzoor and the answer is that I most certainly do.

The more you meet Huzoor and spend time with him, the more you appreciate the great status of Khilafat and your own total insignificance, and so, if anything, with time the nerves increase.

Before every Mulaqat, as I wait outside Huzoor's office, I always feel as though my heartbeat is rising and as the door opens to Huzoor's office my nerves reach a peak.

As soon as Huzoor responds to my *salam*, normally the nerves lessen but still remain present throughout the Mulaqat.

As the plane began to land, one of the flight attendants asked Huzoor if he was returning to the UK the same day.

In response, Huzoor said:

***"No, I am going to stay a few days in Calgary, before returning to London."***

And what a wonderful and blessed few days they proved to be!

### **Instant recognition**

As Huzoor exited the plane and entered the airport terminal, I saw a Canadian lady rush towards Huzoor, along with her family and the happiness and excitement on her face was clear to see.

The lady approached Huzoor and said:

***“Can we have our photo with you? We saw your interview with Peter Mansbridge!”***

Most graciously, Huzoor accepted their request and stood for a photo.

Thereafter, the lady said:

***“Thank you very much and thank you for your message of peace.”***

Thereafter, some of the airport staff and security also came forward and requested to have their photos taken with Huzoor.

That incident was just one illustration of how Huzoor’s message had, *Masha’Allah*, reached a vast audience during his tour of Canada through the media.

Thereafter, Huzoor grabbed my arm, and with Amir Sahib Canada standing nearby, Huzoor said:

***“Abid, this was a one hour journey that was equivalent to five hours!”***

Huzoor was right! Whilst the Canada Jamaat had proposed flying from Saskatoon to save time, considering the travel to the airport and subsequent waiting time, it had proven to be a long and tiring journey nonetheless.

In reply, I said:

***“Huzoor, I have always wondered why you drive from UK to Germany, instead of flying but today I got my answer!”***

### **An inappropriate act**

We waited at the airport for a few minutes and as we did, I showed Huzoor a photo I had been sent of the *Janaza* (funeral) of an elderly relative of Huzoor who had recently passed away.

Upon seeing the photo, Huzoor noticed that the relative had been placed in his casket with a wig, which he had worn in his later years.

Immediately, Huzoor expressed his regret at this and said:

***“This is not at all appropriate and so convey my message to the family members that this was wrong and that we must never deviate from Islamic practices or traditions in any way.”***

Thankfully, upon conveying the message, I was informed that the wig had been removed prior to burial.

Over the years, one comment I have heard from time to time, is that perhaps members of the family of the Promised Messiah (as) are given ‘*special treatment*’ within our Jamaat. Always, this comment has been made with a negative connotation.

I cannot speak for the conduct or attitudes of other Ahmadis, however in terms of Khilafat, I can say that I have seen first-hand that there is no concept of special treatment or favouritism from Khalifa-Waqt.

For example, during the tour of Canada, I was present when one of Huzoor's relatives asked him if he could do the *Azan* (call to prayer) at *Jumma*.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“This is the decision of the local Jamaat and so they will decide this.”***

As Khalifatul Masih, Huzoor could easily have granted permission and no one would have the right to question it, but he left it to the local administration to decide according to their own criteria.

Of course, like any other person, Huzoor has a natural affinity and love for his family members, yet, if anything, in terms of following the teachings and traditions of Islam and the *Jamaat*, Huzoor is even more particular with the members of the family of the Promised Messiah (as).

### **Arrival at Baitun Nur Mosque**

The Qafila departed from the airport at 12.10pm and drove directly to the beautiful Baitun Nur Mosque in Calgary, which Huzoor had inaugurated in 2008.

Thousands of Ahmadis had lined the streets outside the Mosque to welcome Huzoor. It was a truly beautiful and emotional scene.

Upon exiting his car, Huzoor waved at the Ahmadis and especially walked towards where the Lajna members were standing so they could see him from nearby.

### **Working and eating at the hotel**

Huzoor and his security team stayed at the Mosque, whilst the rest of us stayed at a nearby hotel. Thus, after collecting our bags, we went to the hotel to check in. Later, the other Qafila members returned to the Mosque but I had taken permission from Huzoor to stay at the hotel so I could complete some work Huzoor had given me.

Thus, for the day, I sat at a desk in my room working. As afternoon passed into evening, I began to feel hungry and wondered what I should do for my evening meal.

I felt embarrassed to ask someone to pick me up just so I could go to the Mosque and eat and so instead I went to the lobby of the hotel and asked if there was any food available. They informed that there was a restaurant and so I went in and ordered a beef steak with French fries. The cost was \$40 dollars which I thought was extremely high, but as the tour was coming to an end and I still had some Canadian dollars left, I felt I could justify it!

Unfortunately, as soon as I tasted the steak, I regretted my order! It was hard, chewy and had a very off-putting taste. It was a tiny piece of meat covered mostly by thick chunks of fat! I could hardly eat it and so I ended up paying forty dollars for a portion of French fries!

## **An election and its aftermath**

During the day, every hour or so, I would switch on the television to see if there was any update in the US election. Until the polls closed, most analysts continued to predict a victory for Hillary Clinton, however as soon as the election ended there was a shift in tone.

As the minutes progressed and turned into hours, it gradually became clear that the United States was about to embark upon an era of President Trump.

As this happened, I began to receive a steady stream of messages from family members and friends in the United States asking for Huzoor's prayers for their country. They each conveyed a sense of panic, shock and worry for the future of their nation.

At the first opportunity I had, I conveyed their sentiments to Huzoor and his response was, as always, filled with wisdom and profound.

Huzoor said:

***“May Allah have mercy. Perhaps, it was necessary for this to happen in order for the Muslims of America to morally and spiritually reform and also as a means to humble the United States as a nation, as it has long considered itself the leader of the world.”***

I thought long and hard about Huzoor's words. On the one hand, he expressed the hope that Muslims in America would realise the need to shun materialism and to become closer to their *Creator*.

On the other hand, Huzoor articulated a hope that America as a nation, would now come to realise that just because it was an extremely powerful country did not make it a better or superior country to others.

In the past, media and commentators have poked fun at the intelligence of leaders of certain non-Western nations and criticised their style of government. Yet, now we are seeing the same mocking and accusatory tone being used to describe the *President of the United States*. In this way, Huzoor's words about America being 'humbled' are already proving true. We can only pray that Huzoor's hope that the Muslims reform also comes to pass.

The next morning, on 9 November 2016, Huzoor held a *Press Conference* and a one on one interview with *City News*. All major Canadian news networks were present, including *CTV*, *CBC*, *Calgary Herald*, *Calgary Sun* amongst others.

Unsurprisingly, the entire Press Conference revolved around the election of Donald Trump, where forsaking any sense of originality, every journalist asked Huzoor his reaction. To be fair to the journalists, even the Jamaat members present were extremely eager to hear Huzoor's reaction.

Rather than display any sense of concern or panic, Huzoor's response was a model in trust in Allah. Huzoor smiled and remained entirely relaxed throughout.

When he was asked if he would be willing to meet President Trump, Huzoor joked with the journalist by saying that if she could set up the meeting he would gladly attend.

With a smile, Huzoor even mentioned a tweet he had seen by the documentary maker Michael Moore in which he wrote: *“In June, Britain voted to leave Europe. Yesterday, America voted to leave America”*.



Huzoor's message was essentially one of *“Wait and see”*, whereby he repeatedly said that he would wait to see what policies Trump implemented before judging him. Huzoor said it was still possible that he could pull back or modify some of his campaign policies or that the other branches of the Government, namely *Congress* or the *Judiciary*, could curtail some of the more extreme plans.

Nonetheless, Huzoor warned that if the President tried to discriminate against segments of the population, such as Muslims or Mexicans, it would harm US interests and lead to resentment amongst the targeted groups. Huzoor said that Governments and political leaders should try to make inclusive policies and never discriminate based on nationality or ethnicity.

Huzoor's demeanour throughout the interviews were extremely reassuring and illustrated his firm faith in Allah under all circumstances.

### **Guidance to USA Jamaat**

During the day, the USA Jamaat also contacted me to ask how they should respond to election result to the media and so I sought Huzoor's guidance and he instructed that we should reiterate that Ahmadi Muslims were peaceful and law abiding and would not take to the streets or take part in any action against the State.

Further, he instructed that before reaching any judgement, we would wait to see what policies the President would enact.

If there were any good policies Ahmadis would support him and if there were discriminatory or divisive policies Ahmadis would register their disapproval through appropriate and lawful channels.

Upon seeing the clips of Huzoor's Press Conference and receiving his guidance, many members of the US Jamaat, who had earlier messaged me their fears, told how they suddenly felt at ease and reassured.

Later in the day, I discussed the election result again with Huzoor and I mentioned how some commentators were speculating that it could stoke up anti-Muslim or anti-immigrant sentiments and give people the licence to be racist or hateful.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Yes, that is why in the Press Conference earlier, I also mentioned that the challenge faced by Ahmadi Muslims has increased, as now it is our duty even more than before, to spread the true and peaceful teachings of Islam. It is our duty to make people aware that Islam is nothing to be feared and so I hope this election inspires the members of our Jamaat in the USA to increase their Tabligh efforts.”***

### **Student’s classes in Calgary**

In the evening of 9 November, Huzoor held two separate student’s classes with male and female Ahmadi students.

During both classes, students made presentations before having the opportunity to ask Huzoor questions.

One student asked Huzoor what Ahmadis should do if they were called up for military service to fight in wars.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“If in any country an Ahmadi is called up for compulsory military service during a period of war then they are obliged and duty-bound to serve that nation faithfully. If they think that the war is wrong and they cannot bring themselves to fight in it then their only option is to migrate elsewhere. However, whilst they live in a country they must follow its laws.”***

Another student asked Huzoor when the cruelties and injustices of the Muslim world would come to an end.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“As long as Muslim leaders, governments and groups continue to bow down before materialism rather than before Allah they will continue to be destroyed. This horrific state will continue until the Muslims come to accept the truth of the Promised Messiah (as) and so it is our duty and great challenge to spread true Islam far and wide.***

### **Emotions of Ahmadis**

On Thursday, 10 November 2016, Huzoor held a session of *family Mulaqats* and one of the people to meet Huzoor was a young Khadim called *Damian Binder (19)* who had converted to Ahmadiyyat in 2015. I was fascinated to hear how he had come to accept it at such a young age.

Telling me about his journey to Islam, Damian said:

***“In my heart, I accepted the truth of the Promised Messiah (as) when I was just fifteen but it was a year later when I decided to do Bai’at. I met my father and told him of my desire to become an Ahmadi Muslim and, in response, he said that I should wait until I am eighteen and then he would not stop me. In the meantime, he told me to stop going to the Mosque and my Ahmadi friends said I should obey my father. Hence, I did stop coming to the Mosque and waited until I was eighteen but during this interval my faith became even stronger and so I did Bai’at in August 2015.”***

Damian continued:

*“I was raised as a Christian but I never really understood its teachings or practiced it, but I did believe in God. At school, I had some Ahmadi friends, who I had known since elementary school, and through their acts and words they seemed different to me than other people. We live in a society which is indulgent of many vices and wrongs, yet my Ahmadi friends were moral and decent.*

*In 2012 one of them mentioned the Promised Messiah (as) to me and started showing me some Question and Answer sessions of the Fourth Khalifa (rh) and everything I read or saw seemed very logical and sensible to me. I began to fall deeply in love with the Jamaat and with Khilafat.”*

Speaking further, Damian said:

*“My Ahmadi friends never pressured me but they did say that I should pray and continue to do research. Soon, I felt total contentment in my heart and I felt my life was improving because of my prayers. Whenever, I applied an Islamic teaching or principle to my life, I saw that my life improved.”*

Damian continued:

*“When I was sixteen, I bowed down in prayer and whilst I was in Sajdah (prostration) I felt what seemed like a surge of electricity pass through me, which was totally unique and faith inspiring.”*

Speaking about seeing Huzoor, Damian said:

***“Since Huzoor arrived in Calgary it has been amazing and extraordinary. It feels surreal and overwhelming. During the student’s class, Huzoor asked me my name and it felt so emotional to have that direct contact with Huzoor. Similarly, praying behind him is unlike anything I have ever felt before.”***

Damian continued:

***“Our Khalifa is the most important and blessed person on earth today and out of billions of people, I am one of the few blessed to meet him. I swear I will try to live my life being fully obedient to Khilafat. If we follow his example in everything then we can make the world a much better place.”***

### **Huzoor’s time management**

During the week in Calgary, I spent some time with Qamar Suleiman sahib, my Khalu (uncle), who had come from Pakistan on the invitation of the Canadian Jamaat in his capacity as Wakil-Waqf-e-Nau. Qamar sahib is also Huzoor’s cousin.

As the days passed by, it appeared that Qamar sahib, who I knew as Khalu Babbi, was getting to know Canada and enjoying his stay. For example, on the morning of 11 November 2016, we sat together in a car on the short journey from our hotel to the Mosque. However, prior to arriving, Qamar

sahib asked the driver to drop him off at that quintessential of Canadian places, *Tim Hortons*, so he could get an *Iced Capp* coffee!

Qamar sahib shared some of his experiences of the tour and, in particular, his own observations of how Huzoor worked.

Qamar Suleiman sahib said:

***“The thing that has surprised me and confused me the most is Huzoor’s time management. I really cannot understand how he is able to manage his time and fulfill all his duties. Huzoor has the same 24 hours in a day that we have, and here in Canada, we have been moving to different time zones and people naturally become jet lagged, yet I have never seen any tiredness on Huzoor’s face. He is always smiling and extremely welcoming to all.”***

Qamar sahib continued:

***“Every day, Huzoor meets so many families in private Mulaqats and then conducts the Aameen ceremonies of 40 or 50 children each day. If we look at the Mulaqats, Huzoor stands up whenever a family enters, he greets and receives them, talks to them and guides them, and then after two or three minutes Huzoor stands up again and has a photo with the family.”***

Continuing, Qamar sahib said:

***“Apart from his public activities, Huzoor must go through his normal mail and there can be 2,000 letters each day from Ahmadis, as well as so***

*many official letters from Jamaats, which Huzoor reads and gives instructions. Thus, we must pray for Huzoor constantly because he is giving every minute of his life to serve the Jamaat. It is our duty to listen and obey him and to become sincere Ahmadis so that we can at least lessen the heavy burden on his mind and be a means of joy and ease for him. Huzoor is the one who is trying to help us, he is the one who guides us to the right path, who tells us to be truthful and so it is in our interest to follow and obey him always."*

### **A few blessed moments**

On the afternoon of 9 November 2016, Huzoor called me at 4pm to his residence at the Calgary Mosque. A couple of days earlier, Huzoor had dictated his forthcoming address at the *Calgary Peace Symposium* to me and so he instructed me to bring a print out of the address.

Over the next hour, Huzoor read through the printed notes, whilst I looked over the same text on my laptop. Very carefully, Huzoor read through his address and instructed for some changes to be made. Huzoor cut some parts, whilst, he also dictated a few further sentences.

Once satisfied, Huzoor instructed me to print out the final copy, which I did and handed to him later in the day.

Thereafter, Huzoor took out his *iPad* and looked through some of the latest news stories. Some of the news items were very weird and even scarcely believable and Huzoor laughed and smiled as he read them to me and observed my reaction.

Huzoor also asked me if I was up to date with the latest news in the UK and I mentioned that I had not seen it since the evening before and so Huzoor checked the UK news.

The first story that appeared was about Prince Harry complaining about press intrusion into his private life and very kindly, Huzoor read the entire report out to me.

Thereafter, we discussed the election of President Trump again.

Speaking about the election period, Huzoor said:

***“When the Peter Mansbridge interview took place, I said it is a ‘big if’ if Trump gets elected but then in subsequent interviews I said ‘if’ Trump is elected. The reason was that in the final few days it became apparent to me that there was a real chance that Trump could win. Ever since the Hillary Clinton email scandal reached a peak the signs were that Trump could be elected.”***

As I left Huzoor’s office, I asked if I would be permitted to go shopping the next morning so that I could purchase some gifts for my kids and family.

In response, very kindly, Huzoor said:

***“Zaroor” meaning “Certainly”.***

## **Friday Sermon in Calgary**

On 11 November 2016, Huzoor delivered his weekly *Friday Sermon* from the Baitun Nur Mosque in Calgary.

During the sermon, Huzoor gave the annual report of the *Tehrik-e-Jadid* scheme and gave various faith inspiring examples of Ahmadi Muslims who had made great sacrifices for the sake of their faith. It was the first time that the announcement of the new year of *Tehrik-e-Jadid* had been made from Canada in the history of the Jamaat.

Whilst much of the world was consumed by materialism and attaining wealth, Huzoor said that Ahmadi Muslims realised that the true purpose of our Creation was to seek the Rewards and Pleasure of Allah the Almighty.

Huzoor said that avarice and the pursuit of wealth and luxury was now very common in Muslim countries and, as an example, he mentioned a scoop of 'luxury' ice cream that was being sold in Dubai for more than \$800. Huzoor said that a poor family could survive for weeks or even months with such money, which Muslims were frittering away senselessly.

In contrast, Huzoor informed how the Jamaat was spending whatever finances it had for the betterment of mankind and the propagation of the true teachings of Islam.

In terms of *Tehrik-e-Jadid* collection, Pakistan was once again ahead of all other Jamaats, with Germany in second place, the United Kingdom in third, followed by the United States and Canada.

## **Recollections of a memorable tour**

Huzoor's tour was drawing to a close and all those who had been present could bear witness to the blessings that had been witnessed throughout.

Three people who were heavily involved in the organisation of the various aspects of the tour were Farhan Kokhar (*Naib Amir*), Asif Khan (*National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija*) and Sabih Nasir (*National General Secretary*) and each of them shared their own recollections and reflections of Huzoor's tour with me.

Farhan sahib served as *Officer Jalsa Gah* during the days of Jalsa and was also involved in the planning of various other events throughout the tour.

Speaking about the effect of Huzoor's visit on the Jamaat, Farhan sahib said:

***"This was a visit like no other. Huzoor's meetings with families of martyrs were life changing. His meetings with Arab and Syrian families were life changing. Furthermore, Huzoor met thousands of people during family Mulaqats and no matter how hard the Jamaat office bearers work over the years, our impact can never come close to the impact Huzoor had on families in a mere two minutes. People appeared to be floating in the air after meeting him."***

Speaking of his own personal interactions with Huzoor, Farhan sahib said:

***"I remember each and every interaction with Huzoor and each time he spoke to me. I recall coming home late at night and telling everyone in***

***my family how lucky I am that Huzoor spoke to me. He knows my name! There are millions upon millions and he knows my name! How amazing is that! Huzoor's visit was like a beautiful dream from which I did not want to ever wake up."***

In the Canada Jamaat, the person I have known the longest is *Asif Khan*. He has a quality of appearing relaxed and calm, even when he is stressed and this ensures that he is always pleasant company.

It was very interesting to hear his personal memories of the tour, as he and his *Umoor-e-Kharija* team, had been involved in arranging the public receptions and events that took place during the tour.

Asif said:

***"Being around Huzoor enables one to be better and to fully appreciate Huzoor's stature and his position. When you see Khalifa-Waqt carry on his daily routine and watch his disposition and continually see him with a glow and the ability to smile and be patient, your only conclusion is to admire and love Allah and his chosen Khalifa."***

Reflecting upon the impact of Huzoor's presence in Canada, Asif said:

***"I believe, and I hope and pray, that Huzoor's tour has awoken a sense of pride of being a Muslim and, especially being an Ahmadi Muslim, amongst the Jamaat. Previously, due to the state of Islam generally, some people may have felt slight unease identifying as a Muslim here in the West, however those feelings can no longer be present. Just seeing and***

*watching Huzoor here in Canada gives you instant pride and delight. Furthermore, the way Huzoor was received by guests, by government officials and of course the media has surely invoked in everyone a desire to stand up and say proudly – “I belong to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.”*

Speaking about Huzoor’s kindness to him personally, Asif said:

*“I was very hesitant to ask for a personal Mulaqat with Huzoor as I had seen how busy he was and because I had the opportunity to be near Huzoor on various occasions. However, I felt that my wife and children would greatly benefit from being close to Huzoor. Thus, I asked you (Abid) if it would be possible for me to bring my family near Huzoor’s residence so they could see him as he walked by.”*

As Asif said this, I recalled the incident he was referring to, which occurred on the final full day of Huzoor’s stay in Peace Village. Asif asked if I could seek permission for his family to stand near Huzoor’s residence so that they could see him once from close by.

Despite being so busy, when I made this request, Huzoor said:

*“Tell Asif he can bring his family for a Mulaqat in my office this evening.”*

Thus, whilst the request had been merely to see Huzoor as he walked past, Huzoor graciously called the family to meet him in his office.

As *General Secretary*, Sabih Nasir, was involved in the day to day planning of the tour and preparing the daily programme, which was submitted to Huzoor for approval each day.

I sometimes felt sorry for him, as if ever anything went wrong, more often than not, Sabih sahib was the first person people would question! I too was guilty of this myself as well on a couple of occasions.

Speaking about Huzoor's tour, Sabih sahib said:

***"No previous tour of Huzoor has been of this duration or breadth and in my humble opinion, Huzoor's visit was desperately needed. There was a huge surge in everything. The environment was so charged during that period."***

Sabih continued:

***"On a very personal level, everything has become different for me since the tour. There has not been a single day since Huzoor flew back to England that I have not had a conversation with Huzoor in my thoughts."***

***Not a single day has gone by that I do not reflect on those precious moments that I witnessed with Huzoor and the fact that I was blessed to offer Namaz immediately behind him a few times."***

***If I can sum up my feelings in one sentence, I would say that before the tour, I would say "hamaray Huzoor" ("our Huzoor") and now I say "meray Huzoor" ("my Huzoor")."***

### **Meeting with Dignitaries in Calgary**

On the evening of 11 November 2016, Huzoor departed from *Baitun Nur* at 5.05pm and drove to the nearby *Genesis Centre*, where the *Calgary Peace Symposium*, the sixth and final major reception of the tour, was to take place that evening.

Upon arrival at the centre, Huzoor held a meeting with various dignitaries, including Mrs. Elizabeth Cannon, the *President and Vice Chancellor* of the *University of Calgary*.

She asked Huzoor about his address at York University earlier in the tour.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“My message is the same wherever I go, that for peace to emerge in the world there has to be justice.”***

Another guest said that the Jamaat’s message of ‘*Love for All, Hatred for None*’ was ***“compelling, powerful and a message that we all appreciate during these difficult times”***.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

***“It is indeed a message of peace, love and harmony, but it is not enough to merely appreciate this message, we need people to practice it.”***

## **Meeting with former Prime Minister Stephen Harper**

Following the conclusion of the meeting, Huzoor personally met with, Stephen Harper, who served as Canada's Prime Minister from 2006 until 2015. Huzoor had previously met Stephen Harper in 2008, when, as Prime Minister, he attended the inauguration of the Baitun Nur Mosque.

Apart from that occasion, during his period as Prime Minister, Stephen Harper attended various other Jamaat functions as well.



It was clear that Huzoor had appreciated these gestures and the fact that he had continued his association with the Jamaat even after leaving office. Similarly, Stephen Harper's respect for Huzoor was also very evident.

Referring to his visits to Jamaat events, Huzoor said:

***“You are the only Prime Minister to have attended so many of our Jamaat functions whilst in office, including the opening of the Calgary Mosque in 2008 when I was here. I remember that you delayed your departure for***

***a G8 Meeting in Japan so that you could attend our Mosque opening and I always remembered and appreciated this gesture.”***

In reply, Stephen Harper said:

***“Your Holiness, my party and I will always continue to support your efforts to promote peace in the world. If ever I can be of assistance to you then it would be my pleasure.”***

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

***“A few years ago, you came to London to address the Houses of Parliament and you conveyed your greetings and wishes to me through our Ahmadi member, Lord Tariq Ahmad. He conveyed your message, which was very kind of you and which I appreciated.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Whenever you next come to London, I hope you will inform us so that we can meet there as well.”***

It was clear that meeting Huzoor again had a great effect on Stephen Harper. Upon accepting the Jamaat’s invitation to the event, he had informed that he would have to leave immediately after Huzoor’s speech because of another engagement. However, as the event concluded, it was apparent that he remained in his seat next to Huzoor and stayed throughout dinner discussing a range of issues with Huzoor.

Later, Huzoor told me he had mentioned to Stephen Harper that he had heard that he had another engagement and so he should not feel bound to remain.

In reply, Stephen Harper said:

***“Your Holiness, having this opportunity to listen to you and to seek your guidance is wonderful and I am ready to stay here all night if it means I can continue to enjoy your company.”***

Later, Amir Sahib Canada also told me that he had also asked Stephen Harper about his change of plan.

In reply, Stephen Harper said:

***“If I am sitting next to His Holiness, then I am ready to stay here forever.”***

### **Calgary Peace Symposium**

The formal reception commenced at 5.35pm and following a welcome address by Amir Sahib Canada various guest speakers took to the stage.

The *Mayor of Calgary*, Naheed Nenshi said:

***“The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community understands that building the community together every single day ultimately enriches every single one of us.”***

Former Prime Minister, Stephen Harper said:

***“Throughout my term as Prime Minister, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was among one of the best partners that we ever worked with... As elsewhere in the world, Ahmadi Muslims in Canada are known for their devotion to peace, universal brotherhood and the will of God - the true principles, the core principles of true Islam. And for serving the greater good in so many ways, not just in Canada, but wherever Ahmadis live in the world.”***

Thereafter, in front of an audience of more than 800 people, including over 650 dignitaries and guests, Huzoor delivered the keynote address at the Calgary Peace Symposium.

Huzoor spoke of the increasing uncertainty in the world and warned of the risks of a *Third World War*.

He condemned Muslim extremists and terrorists in the strongest terms and quoted from the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet (sa) to prove that Islam was a peaceful religion, as well as also citing references of non-Muslim scholars in relation to Islam.

Huzoor said:

***“Some of you may question what a Muslim leader can say about establishing world peace, given that the disorder in today’s world revolves primarily around Muslim countries or so-called Islamic groups... However, before casting judgement, it is essential that people***

***are familiar with Islam's true teachings. No one should assume that the acts of extremists or terrorists are in accordance with Islam."***



Huzoor spoke of how the failure of Muslim Governments to uphold the rights of their people, along with the subsequent rise of terrorism, had led to the breakdown of a number of Muslim countries.

On the other side, Huzoor said the blame for the world's conflicts could not be completely pinned on Muslims and that certain non-Muslim nations had manufactured and sold weapons to Muslim nations, which were being used to fuel wars.

Huzoor said:

***"Instead of bringing an end to the wars plaguing the Muslim world, the major powers are actually further igniting them. Rather than prioritising peace, they have continually sought to influence and even profit from warfare."***

Speaking of his fear that the world was moving towards another world war, Huzoor said:

***“Storm clouds forewarning us of a Third World War are getting heavier by the day. The effects of such a war would last for decades to come. Generation after generation of children would, more than likely, be born crippled or with genetic defects due to the lasting effects of the radiation.”***



Without once mentioning the name of the newly elected *President of the United States*, Huzoor addressed the lack of wisdom and inherent danger of one of the President’s campaign policies.

Huzoor said:

***“It is the urgent need of the time for mankind to work towards safeguarding our future. Instead of only blaming Muslims for the global disorder, the world’s major powers should also take a step back and look at themselves. Rather than publicity-seeking politicians stating their***

***intentions to ban Muslims from entering their nations, the world needs leaders who are sincere in their efforts to bridge the differences that divide us.”***

Concluding, Huzoor said:

***“Governments and policy makers should realise the immense weight of their duties as custodians of the world. They should strive earnestly to ensure that those who follow us are not born disabled or raised in a broken world, but are born healthy, happy and into a world of ever greater peace and harmony.”***

### **Impact of Huzoor’s words**

Following the conclusion of the event, I met various guests, all of whom were extremely moved by Huzoor’s words.

A Sikh guest, *Bravinder Singh Sahota* said:

***“Mirza Masroor Ahmad is an extremely sincere leader who wants to bring an end to the conflicts of the world. His words were perfect and were very much needed considering the situation in today’s world where there is so much confusion about Islam. Everyone is asking whether Islam is violent or is peaceful? No one else seems to be ready to answer these questions from within the Muslim Community except your Khalifa.”***

Another guest, David Gaskin said:

***“This was a message of peace, more peace and then even more peace! He showed that the Quran is not violent but teaches us about justice. He proved to me that 98% of Muslims are good and are following Islam’s real teachings, whilst the 2% terrorists are the ones who are acting against it. This is not unique to Islam because in every religion there are 2% of fringe members who give everyone else a bad name. You have to look no further than Northern Ireland where the Catholics and Protestants killed one another for many decades. Was that the fault of Christianity?”***

I also had an interesting conversation with a local politician, *Councillor Andre Shabot* who said that he had learned a lot about early Islam from Huzoor’s address.

He said that he had learned that only after years of persecution were the early Muslims permitted to go to war, yet at the same time, he felt that Christianity would never permit a defensive war due to its teaching of ‘*turning the other cheek*’. Given this, his conclusion was that Islam was a more ‘*logical*’ religion than Christianity but that Christianity was a more ‘*peaceful*’ religion.

I explained to him that the early Muslims had been permitted to fight back in order to defend *all* religions and not just Islam. I also said I did not agree with his belief that Christianity was more peaceful and constantly ‘turning the other cheek’ could cause for disorder to spread. I said that if a person was permitted to continually attack another without sanction, their cruelties and

violence would continue to escalate and spread further. Thus, permission to fight was given in Islam to *stop* cruelty and to establish peace.

Whilst he admitted this made sense, he was still not entirely convinced that Islam was more peaceful. He did though reiterate his belief that Islam was a more practical and logical teaching.

Councillor Shabot said:

***“I personally believe there is no sense in only being a punch-bag and there comes a point when you have to defend your values. If someone attacks me once or twice I might turn the other cheek but when he attacks me for the third time I will stand up and defend myself. Thus, I do not believe that ‘turning the other cheek’ can be sustained forever.”***

I then met another Canadian guest, *Bryan Littlechief* who said:

***“In the past, whenever I got on a plane and saw a person from the Middle East, I was worried they would do a terrorist attack but today I learned that there is no need to fear Muslim teachings. We needed this message because the world we live in is very troubled. He taught everyone that we must combat hate through compassion.”***

Another guest, *Anila Lee Yeun* said:

***“I really liked that His Holiness told the Western people, with a former Prime Minister of Canada seated next to him, to be honest and to reflect on their own roles in the problems in the world. He is quite right that the***

*world's problems cannot all be blamed on one side. I was particularly grateful that he spoke about Yemen and it was very emotional how he referred to the brutalities taking place against their people."*

### **Meeting with First Nations delegation**

Attending the *Calgary Peace Symposium* were several people representing the *First Nations* community, the indigenous population of Canada, including some of their tribal leaders and elders.

Whilst dinner was taking place, I was informed that Huzoor had approved a request to hold a private meeting with the *First Nations* people. Thus, a few minutes later, Huzoor proceeded to a small meeting room, where the indigenous people were already present.

The men appeared very distinctive as they wore traditional feather hats and upon Huzoor's arrival they gave Huzoor a unique welcome according to their customs.

They played drums, chanted in their own language and burnt a type of incense which set off a lot of smoke. All the while, very respectfully, Huzoor stood silently and waited for the welcome to reach a conclusion before sitting.

The welcome was something I will remember from the visit to Calgary, and though unique, it reminded me, to some extent, of the traditional welcome given to Huzoor by the Maori community in New Zealand in 2013.

As the First Nations people concluded their welcome, their leader said:

***“Your Holiness, welcome to our land”.***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Thank you for your kind gesture.”***



Thereafter, the leaders of the *First Nations* people informed Huzoor about the difficulties they had faced during their history and how they had been the victims of injustice.

They also informed that within the *First Nations* community were various tribes who had all borne a great deal of persecution.

Huzoor listened with interest and respect and expressed his sympathy for any wrongs that had been inflicted upon them.

At one point, one of the tribal leaders said that they considered themselves to be the ‘*stewards of the land*’.

In response and very beautifully, Huzoor said:

***“You are the caretakers of the land of God”.***

The *First Nations* people also mentioned that their community had never previously had any significant dialogue with the Muslim communities in Canada.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“I hope and expect that now our Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Canada keeps closer contact with you and that our friendship grows.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“I myself hope that I am able to visit your lands one day.”***

Upon this, the tribal leader responded by saying:

***“Your Holiness, this would be a great honour for us to be able to host you.”***

Another member of the *First Nations* community said:

***“Your Holiness, I was extremely moved by your speech earlier today. Your message was one of understanding and your words have opened my eyes to Islam because previously I had only heard that Muslims were extremists or terrorists. Now I know the truth.”***

I also noticed that amongst the First Nations people, the men sat at the front, whilst their wives and ladies, collectively known as the '*grandmothers*', sat behind them. It could not help but cross my mind that where Muslims separate their men and women it is considered '*misogyny*' or '*oppression*', but where such separation is practiced by other groups it is considered perfectly acceptable.

### **An affectionate moment**

As the meeting concluded, Huzoor left the meeting room to return to his car. As he crossed through the main hall, Huzoor noticed *Amjad Khan*, the *National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija*, from the United States, standing to one side.

Amjad had come from the US, along with another member of his team, to attend *Jumma* and the *Peace Symposium*.

Huzoor graciously met Amjad, who sought Huzoor's prayers for the United States following the Presidential election.

Describing those moments with Huzoor, Amjad said:

***"Allah blessed me to meet Huzoor for a few minutes as he departed from the reception hall in Calgary. Just days earlier, Donald Trump had been elected as President and so I mentioned to Huzoor the deep anxiety many Americans felt about the result, and I also asked for prayers for our USA Umoor-e-Kharija work, in light of the recent political developments."***

Amjad continued:

***“In response, Huzoor told me not to worry in the least and that the mission of Ahmadiyyat transcended any person, party or election and that we should remain focused solely on spreading Islam’s pristine message. Huzoor also said that he was confident that America would retain its immigrant population. Those few words penetrated my heart in such a profound manner that all my worries instantly evaporated. Huzoor’s wisdom and poise in those few moments left us all spellbound.”***

### **6 blessed receptions**

*Alhamdulillah*, with the conclusion of the *Calgary Peace Symposium*, the final public reception of Huzoor’s tour had concluded successfully.

During his address, Huzoor used the phrase ‘*Storm clouds forewarning us of a Third World War are getting heavier by the day*’ and, in essence, this was the message that Huzoor had spread to the leaders and people of Canada throughout his tour.

In each address, Huzoor had warned about the risks of another world war resulting from a lack of justice in the world and offered Islamic teachings as the solution and means for world peace.

With great confidence and wisdom, Huzoor conveyed true Islamic teachings in a way that only *Khalifa-Waqt* could ever do.

### **A moment with Huzoor**

Upon arriving back at the *Baitun Nur* Mosque, as Huzoor exited his car, he called me towards him. As he held my right arm, Huzoor asked about the event.

I responded by saying:

***“Alhamdolillah, it was another wonderful reception and the meeting with the indigenous people was also unique.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Unfortunately, in some parts of the hall the sound quality was not good and so some people could not hear the proceedings.”***

Hearing this, I mentioned that a couple of guests had also said to me that they struggled to hear.

I also mentioned my conversation with the guest who claimed that Christianity was more ‘peaceful’ than Islam because of its teachings of ‘turning the other cheek’.

Huzoor smiled and said:

***“In every aspect, Islam’s teachings are filled with wisdom and if ever it requires firm measures it is for the greater good of society and for reformation.”***

Despite the sound issues, overall Huzoor seemed pleased with the event, *Alhamdolillah*.

### **A determined young girl**

On the morning of 12 November 2016, Huzoor held a session of family Mulaqats. As the Mulaqats proceeded I saw a little girl, aged 8 or 9, seated on a chair in the Private Secretary's office.

It was rare to see a young child sitting in the office without their parents or elders with them and so I asked one of the security guards who she was. I was told that the little girl was called *Aania* and was the daughter of the local *Sadr Lajna* in Fort McMurray, which was a 10-hour drive away from Calgary.

I had heard of Fort McMurray before, because it had been in the news a few months earlier when much of the town had been destroyed by wildfires.

Anyway, upon arrival in Calgary, the girl's family had been told that due to a shortage of time, they would not have the opportunity of a personal Mulaqat with Huzoor. They were not the only ones of course, as there were several families unable to meet Huzoor due to the lack of time.

Upon hearing this the little girl became extremely upset and, with tears in her eyes, kept repeating the words "*I want to meet Huzoor*".

The Lajna Mulaqat team tried to explain to her the reason but she remained extremely upset and so they sent her to the Private Secretary's office in the hope that they could explain it better.

Upon seeing her, Private Secretary sahib told her to stand outside Huzoor's office so that she could see Huzoor as he walked past.

As the four-hour Mulaqat session finally reached a conclusion, Private Secretary, Munir Javed sahib went in and told Huzoor that the girl was outside.

Rather than only meet her as he walked out, Huzoor especially called her into his office and met the little girl in a personal *Mulaqat* which lasted a minute. Huzoor gave her chocolates and showed great affection before sending her out.

As the door opened, and she came out, little Aania's face was the picture of joy. Whereas, before she had cried relentlessly, now she was beaming with delight and happiness.

### **An example of Huzoor's love and care**

That morning, Huzoor called Safwan Chaudhry (*in-charge of Canada media team*) to his office and later, Safwan told me that he had been left completely astounded when he found out the reason Huzoor had called him.

Safwan said that days earlier, in Regina, his mother had a *Mulaqat* with Huzoor, which he had attended but because he had met Huzoor at various stages of the tour, he had remained quiet throughout. However, Huzoor had noticed an omission by Safwan, which he called him to correct.

Explaining, Safwan said:

*“After discussing different parts of the tour and the media coverage received, Huzoor told me why he had called me. He said that when I met him in Regina, I had not asked for a gift for my wife and that he had noticed this oversight on my part. Huzoor asked if I desired a gift for my wife and I promptly responded ‘Yes Huzoor, I would really appreciate something for her’. Huzoor opened his drawer and took out a beautiful ring, which he blessed it by touching with the ring of the Promised Messiah (as) and then handed it over to me.”*

Safwan continued:

*“With much concern, Huzoor said, ‘You are newly married and you have left your wife behind in Toronto. Do you call her regularly?’ Feeling extremely guilty for not calling as much as I should, I responded, ‘Huzoor she is very supportive and I will call her right away’. Having gotten married just two months before Huzoor’s tour, I had not yet developed a routine of checking in with my wife and so very affectionately Huzoor guided me in this regard.”*

Regarding his own reflections of the tour itself, Safwan said:

*“Huzoor’s tour to Canada was transformative and deeply faith-inspiring for me personally. Serving during Huzoor’s tour to Canada was the greatest honour of my life and an experience I will cherish forever. We experienced so many miracles, divine guidance and unimaginable successes with the prayers of Huzoor. Looking back and reflecting on this*

***tour, I can't help but think about the enormous responsibility we now have been tasked with of holding up the flag of Islam Ahmadiyya which Huzoor has raised in the minds of millions of Canadians."***

### **Waqf-e-Nau classes**

On the evening of 12 November 2016, Huzoor held two separate *Waqf-e-Nau* classes with boys and girls.

During the boy's class, a *Waqf-e-Nau* asked Huzoor about the concept of *tabbaruk*, meaning things that are considered to be 'blessed' because they have been used by Khalifatul Masih. The boy gave the example of a dish of food that Huzoor may have eaten from and asked if eating from such a dish was a source of blessing.

In response, Huzoor said:

***"For each person, this is a personal choice and feeling. It is not necessary to seek tabbaruk, nor is it a religious duty. However, if a person, due to his love and connection with Khilafat, considers tabbaruk as something good then there is no harm in this.***

***For example, I wear the ring of the Promised Messiah (as) as the Promised Messiah received a revelation that 'Kings shall seek blessings from thy garments' and this includes not only his clothes but also his rings and personal possessions. However, more than seeking tabbaruk the most important thing for all of us is to follow the teachings of the Promised Messiah (as).***

Another student asked Huzoor about euthanasia or ‘mercy-killings’ of the elderly or terminally sick.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“Euthanasia or mercy killings are completely wrong and against the teachings of Islam. It is the duty of children to look after their parents when they reach old age and wherever children take on this responsibility with sincerity and love then no parent or child would ever seek a mercy killing. However, in the Western world, increasingly people are failing to look after their elders and the result of this is that people are seeking to end their own lives.”***

### **Reflections of Amir Sahib**

During the tour, I had spent occasional moments in the company of *Lal Khan Malik*, Amir Jamaat Canada.

On one occasion, Amir Sahib shared with me one of his memories of the tour. He said:

***“In Regina, during the reception dinner, the Premier of Saskatchewan, Brad Wall, was sitting to the right of Huzoor and I noticed that during the dinner, Huzoor paid little interest to the food but was continuously conversing with the Premier. I could not hear everything but it appeared that Huzoor was explaining the teachings of Islam to the Premier.”***

Amir Sahib continued:

***“After the meeting ended, when I had a chance to be near Huzoor, he appeared to be very happy. As a passing remark, Huzoor told me that he had been preaching to the Premier throughout dinner. It was a lesson for us that we should be on the look out for every moment to convey the message of Islam.”***

### **A regretful comment**

It was 13 November 2016 and Huzoor’s tour of Canada had almost reached an end.

As Huzoor was flying back in the evening, the Canada Jamaat had not proposed any activities on that final day, however Huzoor instructed that a session of family Mulaqats be added so that as many Ahmadis as possible could meet him, as well as another session of *Ameens*.

Similarly, Huzoor also personally conducted the *Hifz (memorisation of the Holy Quran)* test of the grandson of Amir Sahib Canada in his office.

It was in light of this, and also of the past six weeks, in which I had seen how Huzoor had given every possible minute to the members of the Jamaat, that I was very shocked and upset when I was approached by a Jamaat office bearer that day. He specially came up to me and said that he had two things he wished to discuss with me.

Firstly, he said that when Huzoor arrived in Calgary there was a large crowd of Ahmadis waiting for him and they had waited for a long time to see Huzoor but, upon arrival, Huzoor did not spend long outside and after a minute went up to his residence and the same occurred in Peace Village when Huzoor arrived on the first day. He told me that some Ahmadis had been “*very upset*” by this and perceived it to be wrong.

Secondly, he said that during the tour, Namaz had “*often*” been offered “*late*” because of Huzoor’s schedule overrunning and he considered this to be against the status and importance of Namaz. He said he hoped I would convey this to Huzoor.

As he said this, I honestly felt my blood boil but I am glad I was able to control my anger so that I did not raise my voice.

In response, I said:

***“Do you think that you understand the value of Namaz more than Khalifa-Waqt? If you believe it then I will gladly forward your message to Huzoor but personally I do not think anyone else appreciates the value of Namaz more than Khalifatul Masih.”***

Just as I said these words, Huzoor came out of his office at the end of the Mulaqat session and so I said ‘*salam*’ to the person I was talking to and left, however for the rest of the day I felt very upset.

During the tour, I had seen first-hand, how much time Huzoor had given the Jamaat. I had seen how he had transformed the lives of countless Ahmadis.

He had healed the grief of the families of the martyrs of Ahmadiyyat. He had given time to the deprived members of the Jamaat and listened to their problems. He had prayed and given medicines to those who were ill, even whilst he was ill himself. He had guided children and students in different classes and answered their questions. He had travelled far and wide in order to spread the message of Islam and yet still there were people who were not satisfied.

There were people – Ahmadi Muslims – who thought that they understood the significance of *Namaz* more than Khalifatul Masih or thought that he had not fulfilled his duties to them because he had entered his residence ‘*too soon*’.

Later in the day at the airport, as Huzoor waited in a lounge for his flight, he called me for a few moments and at that time, I mentioned this conversation, though I did not mention, nor did I know, the name of the person who had made the complaint.

Upon hearing what had been said, it was clear that Huzoor felt regret and pain that such complaints had been raised.

Regarding his being late for *Namaz*, Huzoor said:

***“During the tour, I do not think I was hardly ever late for Maghreb and Isha. On a few occasions, I may have been a little late for Zuhr and Asr but never to the extent that has been described. Does he think that I was sitting in my residence or wasting time? If ever I was late, it was because I was meeting Ahmadis or guests or taking part in media interviews.”***

With regard the complaint that Huzoor had not spent much time with the Jamaat upon arrival in Peace Village or Calgary, Huzoor said:

***“Sometimes our people should have some understanding. After an eight-hour flight from London or travel across this country, it is not easy to stand outside for long periods. I am getting older and age is a factor in these matters.”***

As Huzoor said these words, I felt incredibly emotional. Huzoor’s stamina remains incredible and his schedule remains unbelievable, yet, still there are people who are not satisfied so that Huzoor is forced to remind us that he is a human being and that his age is increasing day by day.

As I thought about this, I was reminded of a conversation I had days earlier with a young Ahmadi convert in Peace Village called *James Sinclair*.

That day, James said:

***“The biggest fear in my life is that we, Ahmadi Muslims, do not realise how lucky and how fortunate we are. I see it with my own eyes that people take Khilafat for granted and forget that this is the greatest possible gift from Allah. If we do not value it and understand its importance it can only be described as shameful.”***

### **Love for Khilafat**

That day, I also met two people, who did understand the sacrifices being made by *Khalifa-Waqt*.

One person was *Ahmed Dervis (32)* from Syria, who had sought Huzoor's permission to travel to Calgary from Toronto in his personal capacity. Though he could have travelled without permission, he said he knew there could only be blessings in his trip if he travelled with the permission of *Khalifa-Waqt*.

Throughout our stay, I would see Ahmed sahib stand in the corridor, sometimes for an hour or more, simply so that he could get a glimpse of Huzoor walking past when on the way to his office or to the Mosque. Every time, he would become completely overcome with emotion and tears would stream down his face.

Explaining why he was even more emotional on that day, Ahmed sahib said:

***"When I left Syria, I travelled first to Turkey and then onto Canada and at the beginning I had to leave my family behind in Syria where the war was continuing. You cannot imagine my fears and grief as I left them behind, yet the grief and devastation I felt was not a fraction of the pain I am feeling today because my Khalifa is leaving Canada in just a few hours."***

Ahmed sahib continued:

***"Huzoor has given everything for us and since he was here I have thought of nothing else, other than Khilafat. I have forgotten my family and friends and my only focus has been to see Huzoor and to pray behind him because Khilafat is our means of salvation. I swear by Allah that I love Huzoor more than any member of my family, including my wife and***

***young children. No other relationship and no other love can compare to the love of Khilafat.”***

As he said these words Ahmed sahib started to weep on my shoulder, completely unable to control his emotions. He repeated that the reason he was grief-stricken was because Huzoor was leaving.

Later in the day, Huzoor led the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers at the Mosque before returning to his residence for one final time.

Thousands of Ahmadis had gathered at the Mosque and after *Namaz* they lined the streets outside, whilst others took their place in the lobby area. Everyone seemed emotional and desperately sad that Huzoor was leaving but at the same time there was a feeling of joy and gratitude that Huzoor's tour had been extremely blessed and successful in all respects.

I was stood at the entrance of the Mosque and suddenly an elderly Pakistani man, with a long, thick beard, who I had never seen before, came through the crowds and called me by my name.

As I looked at him, wondering who he was, I saw that he had tears in his eyes. He said:

***“Abid sahib, I have seen over the past few days that you are close to Huzoor and so I have just one request from you. Please request and try to persuade Huzoor to take some rest at times because, after all, he is a human being. Please, please, this is my sincere request to you.”***

With that, without even introducing himself, the man returned to his position in the crowd. Though, I do not know who he was, his words made me very emotional and even now continue to echo in my mind.

### **Farewell at Baitun Nur**

A few moments later, Huzoor came down from his residence and spent a few minutes standing on the steps outside the Mosque waving at the local Jamaat members.

The courtyard of the Mosque was covered in a sea of Ahmadis all desperate to see Huzoor and to experience first-hand the blessings of Khilafat for as long as possible.

Along with the Ahmadis, many media outlets were also present to cover Huzoor's departure, just as they had covered his arrival in Canada. Members of Lajna and Nasirat recited poems expressing their love for Huzoor, whilst men raised passionate *naaray*.

Unfortunately, when Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*) made her way out, there were many Ahmadi men who were in her way and did not move to the side. Thus, it was very difficult for her to pass through. Even though he was standing at some distance, Huzoor noticed this and immediately instructed Amir Sahib to tell the men to give way. Only then was Khala Saboohi able to walk to her car.

After an emotional silent prayer, Huzoor and the Qafila departed from the Mosque at exactly 6pm and drove directly to Calgary International Airport.

As the Qafila cars pulled away, I could hear extremely loud and emotional *naaray* from all directions and could see countless Ahmadis with tears in their eyes, whilst others ran along with Huzoor's car for as long as they could.

### **Stay at Calgary Airport**

Upon arrival at the airport, Huzoor and the Qafila members went through security. Though, they had passed through first, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi waited patiently for the rest of the *Qafila*.

Passing through security at airports is the one time when the Qafila members have no option but to take off their *topis* in front of Huzoor, as well as our coats and belts.

After a few minutes, as everyone cleared, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi walked ahead towards a lounge area and we all walked behind. At that point, suddenly Nasir Saeed sahib, from Huzoor's security team, realised that his belt had not passed through the security carousel and so he frantically waved at *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed Sahib and said:

***"My belt has not come"***

Munir sahib smiled and said:

***"It is too late, just leave it now!"***

Nasir sahib looked down at his trousers and gestured as though they were extremely loose before taking Munir sahib's advice and leaving behind his

trusted belt! As I saw this scene, I could not control my laughter but at the same time, I felt genuine sympathy for Nasir sahib, as he seemed concerned his trousers might fall to the ground. Thankfully, as far as I know, he arrived in London without any mishap!

Huzoor and the Qafila members spent the next 45 minutes in a lounge at the airport. During this period, I remained mostly seated at a table a couple of metres from where Huzoor and Khala Saboohi were seated. On a couple of occasions, Huzoor called me and asked me about my experiences over the past couple of days.

The Canada Jamaat had ordered a tray of finger food from a restaurant within the airport, however, when Ahmad bhai mentioned this to Huzoor and Khala Saboohi, they both declined to take anything and said that they would eat on the plane.

A few minutes later, Amir Sahib Canada arrived in the lounge, having been permitted to cross security, even though he was not travelling.

Amir Sahib called me and asked me to offer the food to Huzoor and Khala Saboohi. Upon this, I informed that Huzoor had already declined, but in his own extremely polite way, Amir Sahib insisted that the tray be shown to Huzoor at least once.

Thus, I took the tray to Huzoor and Khala Saboohi, feeling embarrassed as I knew that just moments earlier they had said that they did not want anything to eat. Thus, when I presented the tray, I mentioned that Amir Sahib had particularly requested that I show the food to Huzoor.

Huzoor smiled and looked at the food to satisfy Amir Sahib and then repeated that they would not be eating but others could do so.

A few minutes later, Huzoor was informed that it was now time to board the plane. As we walked towards a lift, Ahmad bhai handed me a big cowboy hat, which he had just purchased as a gift for his son *Harris* back in London.

As we entered the lift, Huzoor immediately noticed and asked me if I had purchased the cowboy hat. He seemed a little surprised at what he perceived to be my shopping! I kept quiet as I did not wish for Ahmad bhai to be embarrassed but after a second, Ahmad bhai himself clarified that it was his purchase and a gift for Harris.

### **Flight to London**

Moments later, Huzoor and the Qafila members boarded *British Airways* flight *BA 102* from Calgary to London, which departed at around 8.15pm.

On the way to Canada, my seat had been double-booked and so they upgraded me to *Economy Plus* and so as I took my seat, I was hoping they had made the same mistake again! However, it was not to be!

As the flight took to the sky, it felt strange to be returning to London after so long.

I was happy and excited to see my family again and to return to my home, but part of me was very sad that Huzoor's extremely blessed tour had come to an end.

The flight landed at London Heathrow at 11.30am the next morning, where Huzoor was greeted by Amir Sahib UK and other members of the UK Jamaat.

By the time, we left the airport it was 12.30pm and so we arrived at Masjid Fazl just after 1pm.

### **Arrival at Masjid Fazl**

A huge crowd of Ahmadis had gathered to welcome Huzoor home. Whenever Huzoor returns from a journey the Ahmadis in London are always overjoyed but on this occasion the sense of happiness and relief seemed even greater.

Indeed, during the days that followed, a number of Ahmadis in London remarked to me that they were fearful that Huzoor might have moved permanently to Canada!

Huzoor waved at the Ahmadis before returning to his home for a few minutes. As soon as Huzoor went up to his residence, I looked around to see if I could see my family. Suddenly, I saw my wife Mala and our two boys, Mahid and Moshahid, near the gate.

As soon as Mahid saw me, he took my hand and put it to his face and suddenly he began to cry uncontrollably. It was the first time he had ever reacted like this and it occurred to me that perhaps he thought that I had gone forever. On the other hand, our ten-month old child, Moshahid remained happily asleep in his pushchair, though I noticed he had grown quite a lot whilst I was away.

### **Huzoor's love and affection**

Normally, I would have proceeded to the Mosque as *Namaz* was soon but having seen Mahid's emotional reaction, I took his hand and stood a few metres from Huzoor's residence so that he would have the opportunity to see Huzoor as he walked to the Mosque.

A few minutes later, when Huzoor came down, he noticed us, even though there were a few people standing in between. Most lovingly Huzoor called Mahid and affectionately touched him on the cheek.



For me personally, that moment was extremely emotional and a source of joy.

Huzoor's grace knows no bounds, whereby even after such a long and tiring journey, he took that extra moment to show affection to the child of one of his Qafila members.

The tour had begun for me when Huzoor had given a box of chocolates for Mahid on the morning of travel to Canada and it concluded with Huzoor showing affection to him upon our return to London.

I hope and pray that when Mahid is older he understands and appreciates how lucky he is.

It was an emotional end to an emotional, faith inspiring and blessed tour.

### **Conclusion**

To try and summarise Huzoor's tour of Canada in 2016 is a futile exercise, as nothing can do justice to blessings of his tour.

In these five personal diaries, I have written over 400 pages, comprising almost 85,000 words, and yet I know that I have not even scratched the surface in terms of conveying the activities and faith-inspiring scenes that were witnessed during those six weeks.

I can never forget the way in which Huzoor conveyed the teachings of Islam to person after person. Whether meeting the Prime Minister of Canada, Federal Ministers, Provincial leaders, MPs, Mayors, famous journalists, a host of other influential figures or just the average common man, Huzoor's message was always the same. He explained to one and all what Islam's true

teachings were. Time, and time again, and with unique courage, wisdom and beauty, Huzoor responded to the false allegations made against Islam.

With the *Help of Allah* in front of him, behind him, to his left and to his right, we saw in Toronto, in Ottawa, in Saskatoon, in Regina, in Lloydminster and in Calgary, the magnificent way in which Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya manifested the truth of the Holy Quran, of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) and of the Promised Messiah (as).

Through the media coverage received, Huzoor's message was not limited to those cities but spread to every part of Canada and to many other parts of the world.

At a personal level, I can never be grateful enough to Allah the Almighty or to my beloved Khalifa for enabling me to be present during those blessed days.

I have been fortunate enough to travel regularly with Huzoor over the past few years and, whilst I have many treasured memories from different parts of the world, the Canada tour was extremely memorable and will always have a special place in my heart.

I will never forget the personal moments I shared with Huzoor or his love and kindness on countless occasions. Those Mulaqats in Huzoor's residence in the evenings at Peace Village or during other parts of the tour are etched indelibly in my memory.

Similarly, I was very fortunate to meet countless Ahmadi Muslims who shared with me their personal stories and inspired me with their faith and patience in the face of the most unimaginable adversity.

Perhaps most vivid in my mind, it is the daily scenes of young children, as well as men and women, running to and from the Mosque, desperate to get a glimpse of Huzoor that I continue to play in my mind.

I can never forget the beautiful way in which Huzoor would smile as he waved back towards them all.

As I witnessed, again and again, those scenes of mutual love between Khalifa-Waqt and his people, it felt as though I was living in a different world.

May Allah grant Huzoor a long and healthy life and may we all come to fulfil his expectations. *Ameen*

### **End of Part 5**

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