

HUZOOR'S TOUR OF GERMANY

27 August – September 10 2016

PART 1

A Personal Account

By Abid Khan

Introduction

On Saturday, 27 August, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) and his *Qafila* (entourage) embarked upon a 14-day tour of Germany, during which Huzoor graced the Jalsa Salana Germany with his presence.

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

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

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

Nadeem Amini from Bradford, Mohammad Ahmad from London and Sajjad Malik from Germany were also part of Huzoor's *Qafila*. They had each volunteered to drive their personal cars as *Qafila* cars and Huzoor had graciously accepted their request.

A couple of days prior to Huzoor's arrival, Mahmood Ahmad Khan Sahib (security staff) had been sent in advance to Germany and he had been accompanied by a Waqf-e-Zindighi serving in Private Secretary's Office, Athar Baig.

Never assuming - but being ready for duty

Sometimes, people assume that those fortunate enough to travel with Huzoor find out that they will be travelling many weeks, if not months, in advance. However, this is rarely, if ever the case. Normally, the *Qafila* members are informed a week to ten days before a tour but even this varies from visit to visit.

On this occasion, I was fortunate that five or six days before the Germany tour commenced, Huzoor hinted to me that I should be ready to travel with him. However, the actual official list of *Qafila* members was given by Huzoor to *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed sahib on Thursday 25 August just two days prior to travel. Until then, no member of the *Qafila* knew if they were travelling.

In fact, I remember that both Munir Javed sahib and Ahmad bhai had been wondering for several days when Huzoor would give the *Qafila* names, as tickets for the *Channel Tunnel* crossing into France had to be finalised.

I think the reason the *Qafila* list was finalised later than normal was because Huzoor had been so extremely busy with *Jalsa Salana UK* and meeting the thousands of Ahmadis who had come from different parts of the world. However, there were also good lessons for the *Qafila* members to bear in mind.

Firstly, that no one should ever take travelling with *Khalifa-Waqt* or any form of service to *Khilafat* for granted and secondly, that we should be ready for duty at the shortest possible notice.

Departure from London

Normally, my wife Mala would drop me to Masjid Fazl before departure for one of Huzoor's tours abroad. However, this time she and our two children, Mahid and Moshahid, had travelled to Hartlepool the day before to attend the wedding of my nephew, which was taking place later that afternoon.

Thus, a member of Khuddam's *Amoomi* team kindly came and picked me up at my home at 9.15am and we reached Masjid Fazl in good time, well before the scheduled departure at 10.30am.

At 10.30am, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*), came down from their residence and before departure, Huzoor led a silent prayer and then waved goodbye to the many Ahmadis who had come to see him off.

I was seated in Nadeem Amini's car, which I was happy about as Nadeem is enjoyable company and his conversation helps pass the time during long car journeys. Also, in our car were Mubarak Zafar Sahib and Mohsin Awan Sahib.

Different boarding times

We arrived at Folkestone at 12.10pm and as we crossed through the ticket area there was some confusion because the *Qafila* cars had been issued different travel times for some reason.

Huzoor's car was given a departure time of 12.53pm, whilst the rest of the cars were given a departure time of 1.06pm. Thus, Ahmad bhai and Nadeem

both went to the ticket counter to resolve the issue, whilst Huzoor waited in the main service area.

After a few minutes, Nadeem came back and Huzoor asked if the issue had been resolved. Thankfully, it was corrected and so the entire *Qafila* remained together and we took the 1.06pm shuttle.

Saving time

In the past, whenever I had been with the *Qafila* en-route to Germany, we had always stopped for lunch at a restaurant in Calais shortly after arriving in France. However, on this occasion Huzoor instructed that sandwiches should be packed from London and we should eat them in our respective cars.

I was very happy with this because the journey to Germany is very long and stopping for lunch invariably adds at least an hour to the journey, if not more.

Thus, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi ate sandwiches in their car, as did the rest of us.

Such incidents illustrate the simplicity and humility of Huzoor and his family. Whilst most world leaders are known for fine-dining and extravagance, Huzoor's life is extremely simple, whereby he is happy to eat packed sandwiches seated in his car.

Huzoor's choice of crisps

In our car, Nadeem Amini had placed a couple of packs of crisps for the journey.

One was a tube of *Pringles* and the other was a packet of plantain chips which he purchased from *Marks and Spencer*. When I saw the plantain chips, it immediately crossed my mind that perhaps Huzoor would enjoy them as plantain was very common in Ghana, where Huzoor had of course lived for a number of years.

By chance, Nadeem came to me and said he wished to present something for Huzoor and Khala Saboohi and so I told him that he could send the crisps. He therefore handed both the *Pringles* and the plantain chips to Ahmad bhai who took them to Huzoor's car. A few minutes later, Ahmad bhai returned the *Pringles* and said that Huzoor had kept the plantain chips.

I was happy that my prediction had proved accurate!

Break at service station

Alhamdolillah the *Qafila* crossed safely into Calais at 2.40pm local time and waiting at a nearby petrol station was a car in which Amir Sahib Germany was seated and thereafter Amir Sahib's car escorted Huzoor and the *Qafila* onwards to Germany.

After driving almost another three hours straight, the *Qafila* stopped at a service station at 5.30pm.

Huzoor emerged from his car wearing an Afghani *topi* and then met the members of the Germany Jamaat who had come to receive him. After *Wudhu* (ablution), Huzoor led the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers at the service station.

Following *Namaz*, Huzoor called me for a few moments and asked me how my wife Mala and our children were. I responded that they were enjoying the wedding of my nephew.

Very kindly, Huzoor asked if everything was going well and enquired about who else had gone from London to attend the wedding.

I then had the chance to assist Ahmad bhai as he served tea to Huzoor and Khala Saboohi. Along with their tea, they also took a slice of cake.

Whilst, the rest of the *Qafila* members had a full meal of *fish and chips*, I was still quite full from the sandwiches and so I just had a cappuccino.

After about 15minutes, Huzoor walked out from where he had been sitting with Khala Saboohi and asked me if everyone was ready to leave.

A few people were still finishing their meals and so Huzoor stood and waited patiently until everyone was ready and only then did he walk back to where the cars were parked.

Huzoor's time is so precious and valuable yet I have seen on many occasions that he ensures that all those travelling with him have eaten properly, even if it means he has to wait.

Arrival in Frankfurt

Thereafter, the *Qafila* proceeded directly to *Baitus Sabuh* in Frankfurt, where we arrived in good time at 8.30pm.

As always, there were thousands of Ahmadi men, women and children present to welcome Huzoor to Germany. They raised extremely loud and emotional *naaray* (slogans) and some recited *Nazms* (poems) to express their happiness and gratitude that Huzoor had arrived safely.

Soon after arrival, Huzoor led the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers before returning to his residence. The rest of us then proceeded to the dining hall for our evening meal.

As we ate, Mahmood Khan Sahib, who had travelled to Germany in advance joined us. He was dressed in a very smart green *shalwar kameez* and *Masha'Allah* he seemed very happy.

As I left the hall after my meal, I had no idea or inkling of the fact it would prove to be the last time I saw him during the trip.

Some sad news

On the morning of 28 August, as I came down for breakfast I received some very worrying news.

After *Fajr*, Mahmood Khan Sahib had gone out cycling with Amir Sahib Germany. They were both very keen and experienced cyclists but unfortunately Khan Sahib had fallen off his bike at speed.

We realised straight away it had been a very serious accident and that Khan Sahib had broken several ribs and suffered a range of other serious injuries.

The speed he had been cycling meant it was only due to the *Grace of Allah* that it had not proven even more serious.

When Huzoor was informed of the accident he immediately asked about the injuries and prescribed homeopathy.

Nonetheless, it was clear Huzoor was upset by the fact that neither Amir Sahib Germany, nor Khan Sahib had taken permission from Huzoor for Khan Sahib to go out cycling.

In fact, Huzoor called Amir Sahib and said:

“Why did you take him out without my permission? This was completely inappropriate and wrong.”

Furthermore, Munawar Khan Sahib, from Huzoor’s security team, who was travelling as a member of Huzoor’s *Qafila* for the very first time, later told me that Huzoor had also spoken to the rest of the security team following Khan Sahib’s injury.

Very firmly, Huzoor said to them:

“I brought you here to do security duty.”

Though it was clear that Huzoor was unhappy that Khan Sahib had gone cycling without permission, his love and concern for the injured member of his entourage was similarly plain to see throughout the trip.

For the first few days, after almost every *Namaz*, Huzoor would enquire what the latest report was about Khan Sahib’s health and would continually give advice and prayers.

Unfortunately, Khan Sahib was unable to re-join the *Qafila* for the remainder of the trip and instead remained in hospital in Germany recovering from surgery. In fact, he did not return to London until a few days after Huzoor’s tour had concluded.

Thankfully, as I write this, Khan Sahib has made a good recovery and has now returned to security duty, *Alhamdolillah*.

Staying on-site

This entire incident had a very serious impact on the members of the *Qafila* and upon me as well. It reminded us all of the fact that it was a great privilege to travel with Huzoor and that along with this privilege came responsibility.

We were each present to fulfil certain duties and anything separate from those duties, no matter how trivial, ought not be conducted without the permission of Huzoor himself.

Just 10minutes walk from *Baitus Sabuh* are two supermarkets, *Lidl* and *Aldi*, and in the past when I had come to Germany with Huzoor, I would occasionally walk to those shops during breaks. However, after Khan Sahib's accident I was scared to even walk that far without Huzoor's permission.

Instead, I used to walk either within the *Baitus Sabuh* complex or otherwise directly around the compound.

Foundation Stone laying ceremony in Pfungstadt

On the afternoon of 28 August 2016, Huzoor travelled to lay the foundation stone for a new Mosque in *Pfungstadt*, which is a very small town located at around 40km from Frankfurt.

Having departed from Baitus Sabuh at 5.45pm, we arrived at the site for the new Mosque at 6.15pm.

Immediately, the formal ceremony began with a welcome address by Amir Sahib Germany, followed by short addresses by both the current and previous Mayors of the town.

The current *Mayor of Pfungstadt*, Patrick Koch said:

“This event in which you are laying a foundation stone for your new Mosque is a symbol that you are noble and peace loving people.”

Former Mayor, Horst Baier said:

“Recent events have made people think that Muslims are the cause of terrorism, however I have seen and I truly believe that those people who conduct terrorist attacks have nothing to do with Islam but are people who have no respect for human values.”

Huzoor’s address

Thereafter, Huzoor addressed dozens of guests, as well as the local Ahmadis.

Huzoor spoke about the fact that he had learned that *Pfungstadt* had in recent years welcomed Ahmadi Muslims to its town.

Speaking about this, Huzoor said:

“The people of this town have opened their hearts to members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and so it is now the responsibility of the Ahmadi Muslims to treat the local people like their close friends and relatives and to look after and serve the local community.”

Earlier, the guest speakers had praised the Jamaat for its charitable activities and during his address, Huzoor made it clear that such service was part of

Islamic teachings.



Huzoor said:

“The charitable work of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in this town was mentioned earlier. It should be clear that we are not imparting any favour through such work, rather it is our duty and obligation to serve the creation of Allah the Almighty.”

Huzoor continued by saying:

“Indeed, in a Persian couplet the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community said it was his mission and purpose to serve humanity. Hence, it is incumbent upon every Ahmadi Muslim to serve mankind.”

Huzoor also referred to a comment made by Amir Sahib Germany in his welcome address, where Amir Sahib had said that the local people should not worry or be fearful as the Mosque would not to be “too big” and “nor would the minarets be too tall”.

Huzoor said:

“Our National President said that you should not worry as it will neither be a large Mosque and nor will the Minarets be extremely high. However, the truth is that if someone wants to create disorder or to spread hatred then it does not matter whether the building is large or small.”

Huzoor continued:

“Personally, I believe that the larger the Mosque the more love and compassion that we can spread to the wider community. I believe that the larger the Mosque the more we can spread peace amongst humanity!”

As Huzoor said these words, I could not help but look in Amir Sahib’s direction. He smiled, knowing that Huzoor had corrected him in the most beautiful possible terms.

Following the conclusion of his address, Huzoor laid the foundation stone for the new Mosque.

Thereafter, Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor’s respected wife*) also laid down a stone, followed by some *Jamaat* officials and local non-Ahmadi dignitaries.

Impact of Huzoor’s address

Later, I took the opportunity to meet some of the guests. Thankfully, most spoke in English, though I was also assisted by a local *Khadim* who translated whenever the guest or I struggled to understand one another.

The first person I met was a local politician, *Mr. Gerhard* who said he had been moved by Huzoor's address.

Mr. Gerhard said:

"I thought it was amazing that he takes such interest in even small towns like ours. He is a world leader and yet the fact he came here and met us is testament to his humility. His words were like a charter for humanity or a code of peace for mankind."

I met a local German lady, *Mrs. Hildurn*, who said:

"Today I learned that Islam is a very interesting and special religion. I learned that the root of Islam is broad-mindedness and love for humanity. I also learned that Islam does not place so many restrictions as I thought before."

Mrs Hildurn continued:

"Just the presence and personality of your Khalifa had a big impact on me. He has a special attraction, authority and high status that you can feel."

I met the *ex-Mayor of Pfungstadt, Horst Baier*, who had addressed the event earlier.

Speaking about meeting Huzoor, the ex-Mayor said:

“It is right to call the Khalifa ‘His Holiness’ because he really is a very holy man and I could see this in just a few minutes. Whatever the Khalifa says he says it from his heart and that’s why his words reached the inner parts of our hearts.”

The ex-Mayor continued:

“I felt great pride sitting next to such a great and wise man and these precious moments I will treasure for a long time and will inspire me forever.”

I also met the *Deputy Mayor of Pfungstadt, Mr. Eldelman*, who said:

“The Khalifa speaks with love and in a very soft way which I really liked. The point he made that all religions are from God was beautiful and magnificent and has touched my heart. This one point proves that it is logical to respect one another.”

I met an elderly lady, *Ms. Hasse*, who lived nearby who told me Huzoor’s address had had a profound effect upon her.

Ms. Hasse said:

“For 25 years, I have tried to bring people together but I have not succeeded, yet today the message of your Khalifa has brought the people together and united them.”

She continued:

“The Khalifa seems very humble and his character is pure and loving. You can see how much he loves humanity.”

A beautiful comment

As I returned to my seat, I met Shahid Latif Sahib, the *National Secretary Ziafat (hospitality)* in the Germany Jamaat.

During the past couple of years, Huzoor had told the German Jamaat to improve its hospitality for guests at such events.

Truth be told, before Huzoor drew their attention to this, the hospitality was quite weak.

Often guests, some of whom had come from some distance, were only given very light refreshments or some *mithai* (Asian sweets).

However, due to Huzoor’s guidance the hospitality was now much improved and the guests were provided a proper meal, in which there were both meat and vegetarian options.

Shahid Sahib told me that Huzoor had mentioned the improved hospitality to him as he served the head table.

In response, Shahid Sahib said:

“We are now trying to present the best hospitality within our resources.”

In reply, extremely beautifully, Huzoor said:

“Wasail bohat hain – asal baat hai dil bara karna”

Loosely translated, Huzoor’s comment was:

“There are more than enough resources – the key is to open your heart.”

I thought about Huzoor’s comment later and realised how profound his words were. The key to hospitality was the spirit which underpinned the service, rather than what was available.

If a person is determined to host others well, then no matter what their resources are, they can ensure that others are looked after and cared for and this is the Islamic spirit that has been a tradition of our Jamaat since the time of the Promised Messiah (as).

Emotions of Ahmadis

On 29 August 2016, Huzoor met dozens of Ahmadi families in personal Mulaqats and as they left Huzoor’s office, I met some of the people and heard about their experiences.

I met *Fehmeeda Ahmad* from East Germany moments after she met *Huzoor* for the very first time in her life. She said:

“Meeting Huzoor in person is totally different to seeing him on television. The spirituality and noor (radiance) on his face is unbelievable and his grace and kindness is incomparable. When you see Huzoor you know that Khilafat truly is a gift and treasure from Allah the Almighty.”

I met an Ahmadi called *Muhammad Sarwar (46)* and his wife *Asiya Parveen*, who had moved to Germany in 2012.

Muhammad Sarwar Sahib said:

“I am uneducated and consider myself to be nothing but even I have been able to persuade three guests to come to the Jalsa so they can listen to Huzoor’s address.

I made this effort only to please Allah and to please my Khalifa and this is an example of the blessings of Khilafat – that even uneducated and illiterate people can achieve things through the prayers of Khilafat.”

His wife, *Asiya Sahiba*, had just met *Huzoor* for the first time and as we spoke tears rolled down her face continuously.

Every few seconds she would pause and compose herself before continuing to narrate her emotions.

Asiya sahiba said:

“I have waited all my life for this opportunity. When I was in Pakistan, I used to think if I would ever have this opportunity but never imagined that this deepest desire of mine would ever be fulfilled.”

Asiya sahiba continued:

“Some of my children are still in Pakistan, whilst another, who is Waqf-e-Nau, is stranded in Greece. All I desire is that they can come here and be safe so that they can fulfil the pledge that we made for them before they were born.”

Another couple I met were *Irfan Saif (35)* and his wife *Tayyaba Irfan*, who had come to Germany from Pakistan in 2015. When I met them, they had both just met Khalifatul Masih for the very first time.

Speaking about meeting Huzoor, Irfan sahib said:

“I honestly feel as though this was a life-changing moment for me and my family. I felt as though I was in a different world meeting Huzoor. In fact, even this statement is not enough – I felt as though I was in a different universe!”

Tayyaba sahib continued:

“Like my husband, I found it impossible to speak in front of Huzoor. I feel sad because I wanted to ask for his special prayers for me and my two

sisters because all three of us are married but none of us have been blessed with children yet. Thus, if you ever have the chance I would request that you convey this request of mine for prayers to Huzoor.”

I met a lady called *Majeeda Noreen*, who had just met Huzoor with her husband and children.

Extremely emotional throughout our conversation, Majeeda sahiba said:

“When I was a very young child my father died. In fact, I was so young that I do not even remember him now. However, even then I remember I used to think that I will be ok because my physical father has passed away but my spiritual father is still alive and one day I will meet him.”

Majeeda sahiba continued:

“Today, for the very first time, I met that spiritual father who loves me even more than my physical father did and all the pain I felt through the past few decades went away in just a few seconds.”

I met *Khalid Mubashar Kahlon (45)* who had just met Huzoor for the second time in his life. He said:

“When you pray behind him you feel as though Allah will answer all your prayers because the condition of your heart changes. Our Khalifa’s greatest gift to us is that he has shown us the true value of the worship of Allah.”

A few moments with Huzoor

At the end of the *Mulaqat* session, Huzoor called me to his office for a few minutes. Huzoor mentioned the previous day's in *Pfungstadt* and said that he had had an interesting discussion with the Mayor.

Huzoor also very kindly asked about my family and if they were back in London after attending the wedding of my nephew in Hartlepool. I informed that they would be staying for a few more days before returning.

Thereafter, Huzoor left his office and went and led the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers.

Students classes with Huzoor

Later that day, Huzoor held two students' classes, one with male students and one with female students.

During the classes, presentations were made by research students and thereafter they were asked follow-up questions by other students.

Following the first presentation, Huzoor very beautifully said:

“The purpose of research should be to serve humanity and to help others and to benefit mankind. It should not be done for the sake of furthering business interests or to create financial monopolies.”

Huzoor continued:

“Every person is going to die one day, however it is very important that we use our brains to try and find cures for the illness and ailments that cause so much suffering and to try and improve the quality of people’s lives. This is the essence and true spirit with which research should be conducted.”

The second presentation was about health and well-being and, following its conclusion, Huzoor spoke of the need for people to show self-discipline in terms of their health.

Huzoor said:

“When people become ill they should show self-determination and control their diets and eat healthily as this can also help their recovery. However, many people are not disciplined and give into temptation and rely on medication alone.”

Thereafter, the students had the opportunity to ask Huzoor some questions.

One student asked Huzoor how a person would know if Allah has accepted his repentance after making a mistake or committing a sin.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“If you feel peace in your heart and you have not again committed the sin or error then you can consider that Allah has accepted your repentance.”

A message for lawyers

An Ahmadi law student informed Huzoor that the Germany Jamaat had just established an '*Ahmadi Lawyers Association*' and he was elected its first *President*.

He asked Huzoor to give them some guidance or instructions on how they should conduct their work.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Make sure it is a lawyer’s association and not a liar’s association! That is my instruction.”

Everyone laughed and Huzoor’s answer was extremely amusing but also there was a serious message for the new association.

Sadly, many lawyers have a reputation for their willingness to ignore or depart from the truth in the interest of their case.

Thus, in just one line, Huzoor encapsulated the means for the *Lawyers Association* to be a successful organisation.

Emotions of a Lajna student

Huzoor then held a class with Lajna students. One of the students, *Afshan tul Bushra* sahiba from Hamburg, attended the class along with her sisters and cousins, and she later told me about their experience that day.

Bushra sahiba said:

“We left our home in Hamburg at 5am and drove to Baitus Sabuh in Frankfurt so we could attend Huzoor’s Student’s Class. We arrived at 11.30am and normally after such a long journey a person is tired but throughout the journey we were filled with happiness and excitement that we would be able to meet Huzoor and pray behind him.”

Bushra sahiba said

“During the class Huzoor guided us about the importance of Purdah, about marriage and many other issues. In particular, he told us that we should always give precedence to our faith over all other things.”

Bushra sahiba told me that she and her family stayed for *Maghreb* and *Isha* and so by the time they reached home it was 2am.

However, she said that rather than fatigue all they felt was pure elation at having had the opportunity to meet Huzoor and to be part of his class.

The best samosa of my life!

That evening, I returned to the office that I was sharing with Abdul Majid Tahir Sahib and Mubarak Zafar Sahib and after a little while, the local *Ziafat* team brought some home-made and extremely fresh *samosay* filled with potato and chickpeas.

Truthfully, I can honestly say I have never ever eaten such a delicious *samosa* in my entire life!

Majid Sahib and Mubarak Sahib both also said that they were incredible and that the taste reminded them of the *samosay* they used to eat in their youth in Rabwah.

Emotions of Ahmadis

On 30 August 2016, Huzoor held another session of family *Mulaqats* and so I took the opportunity to talk with some of those people fortunate enough to meet Huzoor.

An Ahmadi, *Zubair Shah (34)* met Huzoor and was accompanied by his wife *Kherun Nisa* who had never Khalifatul Masih before.

Zubair sahib said:

“You feel peace in your heart the moment you look at Huzoor. It is a strange that you cannot take your eyes off him but at the same time you cannot look directly at him for more than a second or two.”

His wife, Kherun sahiba said:

“Today, I am the luckiest person in the entire world. I feel pride that out of all the people in the world it was me who could meet our Khalifa. Huzoor’s personality is even more beautiful and delightful than I

imagined and his kindness is truly indescribable. This Mulaqat increased my faith a million times in the truth of Ahmadiyyat and Khilafat!"

Foundation Laying Ceremony for Noor Mosque in Frankenthal

Late afternoon, on 30 August, Huzoor and the Qafila members departed from *Baitus Sabuh* for the foundation-laying ceremony of the *Noor Mosque* in the German town of Frankenthal.

We had been informed that the departure time was 5.30pm, however Huzoor came down from his residence at 5.25pm.

Thankfully, those of us from London were ready but some of the local German Jamaat officials were not yet present.

Hence, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*) had to wait for a couple of minutes in their car until those missing came rushing from different directions having heard that Huzoor was already outside!

It took just over an hour to reach Frankenthal and upon arrival the formal function began immediately.

After a welcome address from Amir Sahib Germany, guest remarks were made by the *Lord-Mayor* and the *State Minister of Integration*.

Thereafter, Huzoor delivered the keynote address in which he outlined Islam's teachings and the objectives for which Mosques were built.

Very beautifully, Huzoor said:

“You can summarise the teachings of the Holy Quran in two lines – to fulfil the rights of worship of God Almighty and to fulfil the rights of God’s Creation.”

Huzoor continued:

“The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is that community which was established only for the sake of spreading a message of peace, security, love and mercy throughout the world.”

Earlier, Amir Sahib Germany had informed the audience that members of *Lajna Imaillah* had been extremely active in *Tabligh* in Frankenthal. In his address, Huzoor referred to this by saying that those who allege that Islam confines women to their homes or oppresses them were completely wrong.

Huzoor said:

“Islam guarantees the rights of women and has granted them true freedom. Its teachings liberate women and enable them to step out of the shadow of men and to excel and contribute to society in the very best way.”

Huzoor also thanked the *Lord-Mayor* for gifting the Jamaat a tree to be planted at the site. The Mayor had said that he was giving the tree as a symbol that the Jamaat had laid very strong roots in the town.

Very beautifully, Huzoor said:

“Islam says that Muslims should follow the commands of Allah and so become like those trees that have strong roots in the ground but whose branches reach the heavens.”

Following Huzoor’s address he laid the foundation stone for the new Mosque.



Thereafter, Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor’s respected wife*) also laid down a stone, followed by some Jamaat officials and local non-Ahmadi dignitaries.

Impact of Huzoor’s address

As dinner was served, I met some of the guests and listened to their views about the event.

I met a German lady, *Mrs Labeil*, who told me she had not known much about Islam previously. She particularly liked the fact that Huzoor had said that Ahmadi children living in Germany invariably spoke the German language fluently.

Speaking further, Mrs Labeil said:

“Today, generally amongst immigrants you see a 50-50 split - some are completely Westernised and have forgotten their roots, whereas others have become crazy and have become radicalised. However, it seems that Ahmadi are extremely balanced and different - you have your faith but you also respect us and integrate.”

I also met a lawyer called *Gotz*, who told me he had abandoned his personal faith some years previously.

Gotz said:

“I was previously a Christian but became disillusioned and became atheist but after listening to address of Khalifa I feel more hope. If I were to accept a religion again it would not be Christianity - rather the religion I would accept would be Ahmadiyya Community. I felt great peace listening to the Khalifa and seeing him.”

I also met a medical professional by the name of *Dr. Mauner* who said:

“My view of Islam is an old view - I think of how 1,000 years ago, Islam was at the forefront of wisdom and science. The centre of learning at that

time was Islam, yet sadly in the last few hundred years that knowledge and wisdom seems to have been lost - until now. Today I found it again - in the words of the Khalifa."

I also met a politician, *Baldauf Christian*, who told me about an experience he had had with local Ahmadi Muslims. He said the previous year, a charity walk had taken place in Frankenthal organised by the local council.

All the participants were wearing very short shorts and so he had asked the Ahmadis taking part to also wear shorts but they had responded by saying they would feel more comfortable in tracksuits or trousers.

Recalling that incident, Mr. Christian said:

"Your clothes were more modest but this did not stop you joining us and later when I reflected upon this I realised that this is true integration - that you keep your faith but also join in with the good things in society."

Speaking about Huzoor's address, Mr. Christian said:

"Your Khalifa is very inspiring and very intellectual. He is a man of principle and a man of morality. One thing I realised is that he is working with his brain and by this, I mean he thinks before he speaks and that is why his words have weight."

Huzoor's observation

Following the conclusion of the event, Huzoor returned to *Baitus Sabuh* and led *Maghreb* and *Isha*.

After *Namaz* was completed, Huzoor looked in my direction as he walked back towards his residence.

Huzoor said:

“Abid were you able to eat dinner yet?”

I replied that I had not and hearing this, Huzoor asked:

“When will you eat then?”

I said that I would eat something now.

Huzoor said:

“Will there be anything for you to eat or will the local Jamaat tell you that there is nothing?”

This brief conversation was another example of both Huzoor's observation and his concern for the well-being of his staff.

I was sure that Huzoor had noticed that whilst dinner was served I had been meeting people and so would not have eaten.

Furthermore, Huzoor asked me in front of several local office bearers and so even if there had not been any food prepared, I am sure that upon hearing Huzoor's words they would have arranged something.

As Huzoor was about to enter the lift at *Baitus Sabuh*, he looked at me again and said:

"There were more guests at today's function than the previous one."

It seemed Huzoor was pleased with the event and the fact that many people had been present to hear Islam's true teachings.

As, Huzoor returned to his residence, I went and enjoyed dinner from the *langhar khana* (kitchen).

Emotions of Ahmadis

On the morning of 31 August 2016, Huzoor held a session of family Mulaqats.

One of the people to meet Huzoor was a man called *Hanif Ahmad (45)* who met Huzoor along with his wife *Bushra Begum*.

Hanif Sahib told me that he had worked on the *Nasirabad* farms in Sindh for two years during the time when Huzoor used to manage that land in Pakistan.

Hanif sahib said:

“Even back then, I was unable to look directly at Huzoor because there was something extremely spiritual within him. One thing that used to always strike me was Huzoor’s humility. Although he was the most senior person present, he would never himself lead the Friday Sermon and would always direct the local Missionary to lead it.”

His wife, Bushra sahiba said:

“Before Huzoor was elected Khalifa I had the opportunity to meet him on one occasion and when I heard his voice it sent a shiver down my spine. I remember that moment vividly because in my heart his voice sounded to me like the voice of a Khalifa.

However, I did not say anything as I did not think it was appropriate to say such a thing publicly. Nevertheless, I never forgot that moment and when Huzoor was elected as Khalifa in 2003 I realised that his voice truly was a voice of a Khalifa.”

I then met Zahid Iqbal (40) and his wife Sumeira Yasmin.

Sumeira sahiba, who had just met Huzoor for the very first time in her life, said:

“It was incredible to see Huzoor for the very first time and to be able to solicit his prayers. Our son is six years old and his development is far behind what it should be. For example, he cannot speak and so we

requested Huzoor's prayers for him and Huzoor immediately prayed for him that may Allah grant him health and enable him to catch up."

As she wiped tears from her eyes, Sumeira sahiba said:

"Only God knows the pain we have felt for many years but due to Huzoor's presence and his prayers I now feel peace and finally have hope after years of being hopeless. Huzoor has given me that contentment and that confidence that no doctor or specialist could ever give me."

Her husband, Zahid sahib then said:

"We have already seen how Allah answers Huzoor's prayers. Although my wife had never met Huzoor before, I did meet him two years ago, and at that time our son was four years old and he did not walk and so I requested Huzoor's prayers for this and within a few days he started to walk. It was a miracle to us and now we again have Huzoor's prayers and so we are confident we will see another miracle, Insha'Allah."

That morning, I also spent some time with one of our Qafila members, Mohammad Ahmad sahib (49). He was travelling with the Qafila for the very first time as a driver of one of the cars.

Speaking about this experience, Mohammad Ahmad sahib:

"I have been writing to Huzoor for the past six or seven years seeking this opportunity and I cannot believe that Allah has now actually blessed me

with this great honour of travelling with Khalifa-Waqt. All I can say is 'Alhamdulillah' and continue to offer Istighfar."

Mohammad Ahmad sahib told me that for the past few years he had had the opportunity to spend time with the elder brother of Huzoor. Though Huzoor's brother lives in the United States he travels to attend the UK Jalsa each year and Mohammad Ahmad sahib drives him to the Jalsa and spends the Jalsa days with him.

Speaking about this, Mohammad Ahmad sahib said:

"It was from seeing the example of Huzoor's brother, who was his elder in terms of age, that I came to understand the status of Khilafat.

At Jalsa UK, even though he can sit at the front, he has always been insistent that he would sit at the back of the marquee on the floor and he never stands until he is completely sure that Huzoor has left the Jalsa Gah.

When I saw that someone so close to Huzoor has such love and respect for him, it made me aware of the need to improve my own standards of love and devotion to Khilafat."

A long journey

I also spent some time with a Khadim called *Nasir Ahmad (36)* who told me about his personal journey to Germany.

In 2013, he left Pakistan and travelled to Thailand where he lived for some time. Thereafter, in January this year he came to Germany and claimed asylum.

His wife and three young *Waqf-e-Nau* children were still in Rabwah and he was trying desperately to get them to Germany but had been advised that the process could take up to five or six years.

Though he was living in a town far from Frankfurt, throughout Huzoor's tour he sought to come to Baitus Sabuh as much as possible.

Explaining the journey, he made to get to Baitus Sabuh, Nasir told me:

"The day after Huzoor arrived in Germany, I was desperate to come and offer Salat and so I asked our local Jamaat members if anyone was driving to Baitus Sabuh but I could not find anyone who could accommodate me."

Nasir continued:

"I was determined to pray behind Huzoor and so I left my home at 10am and walked to the tram station and from there I took the tram, followed by a bus and then I took a train to Frankfurt."

Once I arrived in Frankfurt I took the local subway and then another bus before finally arriving here just in time for Zuhr and Asr at 2pm. I then was blessed with the opportunity to pray behind Huzoor and then I left

the Mosque at 3.15pm and did the same journey home and arrived at exactly 7.15pm.”

As I listened to his story, I could not help but be impressed by his determination to offer prayers behind Huzoor.

Nasir continued by saying:

“It was a long journey but it was worth every second. It was to see Huzoor and to meet him that I came to Germany and so if I now failed to make the effort to offer prayers then it would be shameful.”

Nasir sahib then became emotional as he told me about his wife and children in Rabwah and the sacrifices they were making. He said:

“It cost me a lot of money to come here and it will also cost a lot to travel to Karlsruhe for the Jalsa and so I have been very worried. It would be unforgivable for me to not attend but at the same time our means are extremely limited.

I mentioned this to my wife in Rabwah and she said that I should not worry. I had promised to get her a UPS light generator for the apartment in which she is living in Rabwah but she told me to use that money for my travel to Jalsa and to Baitus Sabuh. She said it is more important for you to meet Huzoor, to pray behind him and to do duty at Jalsa Germany.”

Nasir continued:

“When I was living in Pakistan we were financially quite comfortable as I had a job with the UN Polio project, but now we are extremely weak and it is my wife and children who have made the bigger sacrifice. My family is living in a home with just two rooms and my son is studying in Madrassa-tul-Hifz and so my wife uses a hand-fan to cool him whilst he studies to save electricity.”

Finally, Nasir told me about the fact that earlier that day he had met Huzoor for the very first time.

Speaking about the Mulaqat, Nasir said:

“For many days, I had thought that when I see Huzoor I will convey the salam of the Holy Prophet (sa) but Huzoor’s smile and kindness overwhelmed me to the extent that I completely forgot to do this!”

Nasir continued by saying:

“I did not even have to tell Huzoor our problems because I could see that he understood just from seeing me that we are facing difficulties. Having met him I now feel complete peace and surety that Allah will help us through this period.

All the difficulties we face pale into comparison to the great reward that Allah bestowed on us today when I was able to meet the person who Allah loves more than anyone else in the world today.”

A potential security breach

For most of that morning, I met Ahmadis outside of *Baitus Sabuh* after they had met Huzoor. However, during that period, I also received a video-call from my wife Mala on *FaceTime*.

I talked to her and to Mahid and Moshahid for around 10minutes and as I did so, I paced back and forth with the intention of burning a few calories because I had just discovered the step-counter feature in my phone and so was trying to increase the number of steps I took each day.

What I did not realise was that I was being watched very closely. I only realised this later when a *Khadim* who was doing security duty came up to me and said:

“Abid sahib we received a report earlier from a Lajna security team member that there was a suspicious man walking back and forth outside the Mosque using his phone. Our security team immediately rushed out to see who it was and then we saw that she was talking about you!”

I went back to my office and told Mubarak Zafar sahib and Majid sahib about this and they laughed a great deal and enjoyed teasing me at the fact that I had caused this security incident!

An important reminder

That day, Athar Zubair sahib from Germany, who was on-duty throughout the tour told me he had sought Huzoor's permission to visit Mahmood Khan sahib in hospital.

In response, Huzoor had said to him:

"Your duty is here."

It was a very important point and clarification that Huzoor had made. There were other people who were with Mahmood Khan sahib and had seen him but the responsibility of the on-duty Qafila members was to remain present where Khalifatul Masih was.

Of course, Huzoor himself could direct someone to visit the hospital at any time but this incident Huzoor's words reminded us that it was not for us to make such a request.

Undeniably, Huzoor had great concern for the health and well-being of Khan sahib and he sent people to visit him, including *Private Secretary* sahib. However, at the same time, Huzoor reminded that a person should never forget his primary duty.

I was personally glad that Zubair sahib shared this narration with me because I had thought about seeking permission to visit Mahmood Khan sahib but thereafter I did not and thought that if Huzoor desires for me or anyone else to go he will direct us himself.

Inspection of Jalsa Salana Germany

On Thursday, 1 September 2016, Huzoor left *Baitus Sabuh* and travelled to Karlsruhe for the Jalsa Salana. The Qafila left Baitus Sabuh at 5.40pm and arrived at the *Messe Karlsruhe*, the venue for the Jalsa, at 7.40pm.

Soon after, Huzoor conducted an inspection of the Jalsa Salana arrangements.

After a successful launch at the UK Jalsa, Huzoor instructed the *Review of Religions* to continue the *Al-Qalam* project at the Jalsa Germany. Thus, during the inspection, Huzoor visited the area reserved by the Review of Religions for *Al-Qalam*.

Huzoor also visited a Quran exhibition set up by the Germany Jamaat as well as the MTA offices and translation centre.

Thereafter, Huzoor travelled to the *langhar khana* and to the area where food was being stored. Huzoor tasted the *aloo ghosht* (lamb and potato curry) and *daal*.

As Huzoor inspected the kitchen, he noticed that one of the volunteers was working with an injured leg. Huzoor asked him how he had hurt himself and the extent of his injuries.

The volunteer explained that he still felt some pain but was determined to do his duties.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“You can supervise whilst sitting on a chair but leave the physical work to others.”

Huzoor then walked to an outside accommodation area, where hundreds of Ahmadi families had pitched up tents.

As he walked past, many Ahmadis stood outside their tents and waved at Huzoor and raised extremely loud *naaray*.

On a couple of occasions, Huzoor stopped and asked individual families about their tents and if they were comfortable. They were all left overjoyed and overwhelmed at Huzoor’s kindness and the fact they had the unexpected opportunity to meet him.

Thereafter, Huzoor visited the *Lajna* side for a few minutes and gave guidance to *Sadr Lajna* and her team before returning to the men’s side, where Huzoor spent some time inspecting the bookstore.

Huzoor seemed pleased that the compilation of the Promised Messiah’s (as) writings in *The Essence of Islam* had been revised and reprinted in German.

Huzoor looked at the new edition carefully, checking both the paper thickness and font size.

After doing so, Huzoor said:

“The font type and size should always be one that can be read easily.”

Then, Huzoor visited an exhibition set up by *Humanity First* in which they had displayed a full-size model of the type of water-wells they were installing in remote parts of the world.

Huzoor himself physically tested the hand-pump, which demonstrated how water could be pumped using such wells. Unfortunately, the model did not actually pump water.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“You should have used a model in which water is actually released.”

Huzoor then smiled and said:

“Now you will need to put up a sign saying ‘No drinking water’ because otherwise people will get excited and start drinking the water in the basin thinking it is fresh water!”

Huzoor was then informed that *Humanity First* was using the movement of cows to generate power in remote parts of Africa.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“Ensure that the cows are treated kindly and cared for and given proper food and drink to fuel and sustain them through this physical activity.”

Huzoor’s comment was made with great love and concern for the welfare of animals. A representative of *Humanity First* told me that upon receiving Huzoor’s instruction that same night they arranged for extra feed to be delivered and fed to the animals in Africa.

As he walked towards the main Jalsa Gah, Huzoor enquired about the bedding arrangements for the attendees of Jalsa.

The previous year there had been a shortfall and so Huzoor had instructed that Khuddam give their bedding to women and children to ensure that every lady and child would have adequate arrangements.

After hearing the report of the local administration, Huzoor said:

“You should have at least an extra 2,000 beds ready compared to last year and the priority must remain women and children.”

Address to volunteers

Thereafter, Huzoor addressed the volunteer workers of the Jalsa Salana and particularly emphasised the importance of maintaining the highest standards of hospitality and etiquette throughout the Jalsa.

For example, Huzoor said that those on duty in the *langhar* (kitchen) should understand that people have differing tastes and levels of hunger.

Huzoor said:

“Those who are serving food should display tolerance and open-hearts. If someone says ‘Give me only meat’ then you should quietly accept their request. Similarly, if someone returns three, four or even five times to take more food then you should serve them with a smile and never act in a way that makes them feel self-conscious or embarrassed in any way.”



Qibla direction

The formal session concluded with a silent prayer led by Huzoor before he left the stage to lead the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers.

Immediately, Huzoor noticed that the *Qibla* direction was slightly different to previous years and asked why this was the case.

The *Officer Jalsa Gah* responded by saying:

“Huzoor, we have improved the standard of checking and used a more accurate compass which showed that previously the direction was not exactly correct.”

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“So, you mean to say in previous years the direction was wrong?”

This incident highlighted the importance of ensuring the Qibla direction is always correct.

Huzoor then spent a significant amount of time to ensure that this time there was no error and expressed his displeasure at the fact that in previous years it had not been entirely accurate.

Never wasting a minute

At Jalsa Germany, the distance from the main Jalsa Gah to Huzoor’s residence is several hundred metres and so it takes a couple of minutes to walk.

Even during those couple of minutes, Huzoor often enquires about the Jalsa arrangements or alternatively Amir sahib or others use that time to present any issues or concerns to Huzoor and seek his guidance and instructions.

For example, as Huzoor returned to his residence that evening, Amir sahib Germany mentioned to Huzoor that members of the media would be

attending the *Friday Sermon* the next day and many had requested the opportunity to interview Huzoor.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Ok, they can interview tomorrow immediately before the Jalsa Flag Hoisting and Jumma.”

Thereafter, just as Huzoor was about to enter his residence, *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed sahib handed Huzoor a file with official letters and reports.

Rather, than take the file into his residence to read later, Huzoor stood there and read the letters there and then before handwriting instructions on each individual report.

After he had checked his mail, Huzoor turned to Munir Javed sahib and said:

“In the Jalsa programme it says Maghreb and Isha will be at 9.45pm during the days of Jalsa but the time should be changed to 9pm.”

I was happy to hear this! When I had looked at the programme I had noticed that *Namaz* was listed at 9.45pm, even though it had been offered at 9pm so far on the tour.

I could not think of any reason why the German Jamaat had suddenly pushed *Namaz* back by 45 minutes and so my own conclusion was that they may

have copy and pasted that section from last year's Jalsa programme when the Germany Jalsa was held in June and the days were longer.

Anyway, Huzoor instructed it should be changed and in this way, it was a means of ease for all the participants because each day the formal activities of Jalsa concluded 45minutes earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

Interview with the media

On Friday, 2nd September 2016, Huzoor came out from his residence at 2pm and met with several journalists in the main lobby area of the convention centre.

With the *Grace of Allah*, the press area was packed full with various journalists.

As I saw this scene I recalled how a couple of weeks earlier I had mentioned to Huzoor in London that I felt that the media coverage at Jalsa Germany had always been comparatively weak.

At that time Huzoor did not say anything, but as I looked at the huge throng of people present I thought of how when the attention of Huzoor is drawn to something, even if he does not say anything, perhaps he prays in his heart.

Thereafter, the press conference began when a journalist asked Huzoor his message for Germany.

In response, Huzoor said:

“We have been spreading the same message always that the entire world must come together and strive for peace because otherwise we are heading towards a great catastrophe. If we do not realise our duties, we are going to leave behind a very painful legacy for our children to bear and one that we will surely come to regret.”



A journalist then asked Huzoor about ‘*Shariah Law*’ and particularly the concept of punishments in Islam.

Huzoor replied by saying:

“Islam does, on occasion, prescribe certain punishments, however they need to be taken into a proper context. Furthermore, at the very beginning of the Holy Quran it states that Allah is Gracious and Merciful and so such a God could never permit brutality, cruelty or unjust punishments.”

The next journalist asked Huzoor whether Islam could spread in Germany and whether the local people should fear it.

Huzoor responded by saying:

“The only Islam that I know is an Islam of love, peace and tolerance and harmony. It teaches us to love our Creator and to love our fellow beings. That is the basic sum of Islamic teaching.”

As the press conference concluded, it was apparent that some journalists had not been able to ask questions due to a lack of time.

When Huzoor was informed of this he directed that the journalists could meet with him immediately after *Jumma* as well.

It was another example of how Huzoor is ever ready to sacrifice the little personal time he gets for the sake of the Jamaat. On Friday Huzoor’s afternoon break is even shorter than normal and by including another media session it meant that the little time Huzoor did have would be shortened further.

Flag hoisting and Friday Sermon

Following the media interviews, Huzoor raised the *Liwai-e-Ahmadiyyat* flag before proceeding to the *Jalsa Gah* to deliver the Friday Sermon.

During his sermon, Huzoor stated that the objectives of the Jalsa Salana remained the same as those laid down by the Promised Messiah (*as*) 125 years ago, in 1891, when the first Jalsa Salana was held.

Further, Huzoor said that it was not enough just to bring about temporary righteous changes during the days of Jalsa and then to return to one's previous standards. Rather, it was the duty of every Ahmadi to sincerely endeavour to maintain and build upon the increased spirituality felt during the Jalsa Salana.

Press Conference

Following the conclusion of the *Friday Sermon*, the second press conference, consisting of those journalists who were unable to ask him questions earlier took place.

This was a more formal press conference compared to the one that took place before *Jumma*. For example, Huzoor was seated at a table, rather than standing.

In response to a question about the rising fear of Islam in much of the *West*, Huzoor said:

“Yes, there is a growing fear of Islam, however it should be clear that whatever terrorists and extremists are doing has nothing to do with the teachings of Islam. Several Western journalists have gone to Syria and Iraq and have seen for themselves that the terrorists know nothing about Islamic teachings and do not even have a copy of the Quran.”

Huzoor continued:

“It is my view that the press and media give too much publicity to those who join extremism and terrorism and not enough publicity to those that are spreading peace.

Here at this Jalsa Salana thousands of people have joined together for the sake of love, peace and harmony but it will not get a fraction of the coverage that a few terrorists get when they conduct a heinous act. So, the media should also understand its duty to give news responsibly and to act with justice.”



Thereafter, Huzoor was asked what guidance he would give to the hundreds of thousands of refugees who had immigrated to the *West* during the past year and how he would like to see them integrate.

In response, Huzoor said:

“No politician or anyone else has so far given me a clear definition of integration or what is meant by it. Personally, I think that when you come to a country it is incumbent to love it because this is the teaching of the Holy Prophet (sa). Furthermore, you should be law-abiding and you should seek to serve your country. This is integration.”

Huzoor continued:

“In my opinion, to go to a nightclub or to drink alcohol is not integration and to leave behind your religious teachings is not integration.”



Some extra help

During Jalsa Germany, I share an office with Majid sahib and Mubarak Zafar sahib. Also present are some young Missionaries who assist us. This year, another young Khadim, Adeel Shah a student at Jamia Ahmadiyya UK, was

attending the Jalsa and he had asked Huzoor weeks before if he could assist me during the Jalsa Germany.

With the *Grace of Allah*, he learned quite quickly and translated some quotes of Huzoor from his Jalsa addresses which we used in the Jamaat Press Releases and was kind company throughout.

MTA issue in residence

On Friday evening, following *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers, as Huzoor returned to his residence he spoke to Munir-ud-din Shams sahib (*Managing Director, MTA International*) and then to the *Head of MTA* in Germany.

Huzoor mentioned that the *MTA* feed in his residence was not working properly. Only the English and German translations were working and so if Huzoor desired to watch a session in Urdu he had to listen to the translation, rather than directly.

The Head of MTA in Germany responded by saying:

“Huzoor, someone else did the setting in your residence and so we are not responsible for it.”

Hearing this, Huzoor’s tone became somewhat firmer. Huzoor said:

“You are Head of MTA here and so you are responsible. You should not blame others.”

It was an important lesson given by Huzoor, whereby people working in the *Jamaat* should not seek to shift the blame for mistakes or weaknesses on others but should fully understand the scope of their responsibilities and admit where there have been shortcomings.

Rarely, does Huzoor scold or admonish anyone and, on the very rare occasions where Huzoor has exhibited anger, I have always seen that where the person understands his mistake or weakness, Huzoor forgives the error very soon.

This is certainly my own personal experience as well. Just a few days ago, Huzoor asked me about my own experiences serving the *Jamaat* before I did *Waqf* in 2007.

In response, I mentioned that once I had been scolded very severely by my superior when I was a local *Amila* member due to a mistake I had made.

Hearing this, Huzoor asked me:

“How long were you a member of the local Amila?”

In response, I said:

“Perhaps a year or 18months”

Huzoor then asked:

“And how long have you worked with me?”

I responded by saying:

“With the Grace of Allah, around 9 years.”

Huzoor then said:

“In those 9 years, how many times have I raised my voice or admonished you severely?”

I replied by saying:

“Not once.”

I could not help but smile because I knew I had made countless mistakes and errors during the past nine years but Huzoor had never ever reacted with anger.

Rather, wherever needed, Huzoor drew my attention with great love and kindness. I am certain that all other people who have had the privilege to work closely with Huzoor would tell the same story.

Huzoor continued by saying to me:

“You have observed me in many Amila meetings over the years as well and other meetings and, whilst I certainly draw the attention of the office bearers where weaknesses or shortcomings are apparent, I never resort to shouting or screaming.”

Again, Huzoor's words were so true. Sometimes, I have been in meetings presided by Huzoor where certain issues have been raised and I have expected Huzoor to reprimand the local officials for their weaknesses but invariably he reforms them with a smile, with love and encouragement.

Truly, I have never met a more patient and forgiving person than Hazrat Khalifatul Masih.

In terms of the translation issue in Huzoor's residence, even though many members of MTA's senior management and Directors (of whom I am also one and so also culpable) were present in Germany, the simple matter of fixing the TV in Huzoor's residence was sadly beyond all of us.

In the end, some 24 hours later, Huzoor informed Munir Odeh sahib (*Director Production, MTA International*) that he himself had managed to fix the TV by adjusting the settings.

Having a pen ready

As Huzoor returned to his residence, *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed sahib presented Huzoor with some certificates that required Huzoor's signature. I think they were certificates to be awarded to Ahmadi students who had excelled and who were to receive awards at Jalsa Salana.

After signing one or two certificates, Huzoor noticed that the pen he was using was smudging a little and so he asked if anyone else had a pen.

I had a simple disposable fine-liner pen that I carry with me and so I presented it to Huzoor and *Alhamdolillah* it worked adequately and Huzoor signed the rest of the certificates with it before returning the pen to me.

An example of Huzoor's patience

The next morning, on Saturday 3rd September, Huzoor addressed *Lajna Imaillah* Germany and prior to his address, Huzoor distributed certificates and awards to Lajna students who had excelled.

For some reason, there was a lot of confusion, whereby, on several occasions, students were called in the wrong order.

Thus, the awards ceremony went on for an extremely long time, as Huzoor waited to ensure that any mistakes were rectified and that all students were given the correct certificates.

Despite the fact, the ceremony had taken much longer than usual, when it finally concluded, Huzoor waited and asked three times if there was any student who had not received her prize or had been given the wrong certificate.

Only when he was sure that every student had received the correct prize did Huzoor proceed to deliver his address.

Huzoor's every minute is precious and yet he continues to sacrifice his time to ensure that each and every Ahmadi is content.

Address to Lajna Imaillah

Thereafter, Huzoor addressed *Lajna Imaillah* about the status of women in Islam. It was a truly amazing address, in which Huzoor spoke about the fact that nature had determined that men and women had certain different characteristics and such differences should not be ignored in the name of so-called equality, rather mankind should respect those differences that God Almighty had Himself made a part of nature.

One part I found extremely interesting was when Huzoor spoke about the ability of males and females to tolerate stress. He said that it was beyond dispute that physically males tended to be stronger than women, however in certain situations Allah the Almighty had bestowed women with much greater fortitude, patience and strength than men.

One example was child-birth which only females can tolerate and similarly a woman's natural ability to raise children was superior to men.

For example, Huzoor said that Hazrat Musleh Maud (*ra*) used to say that women had nerves of steel when it came to tolerating the cries of a child, whereas men became frustrated much sooner.

Huzoor said:

"It is pure ignorance and foolishness to ignore the natural differences that exist between men and women in the name of 'absolute equality'."

Later in his address, Huzoor spoke extremely movingly about domestic relations within some Ahmadi households.

He said that sometimes he received reports that some husbands were extremely strict with their wives and did not let them visit their own families. Huzoor said that such treatment was completely wrong and opposed to Islamic teachings.

Very emotionally, Huzoor said:

“Do not ever think that a woman does not have a heart that beats and feels pain and sadness.”

Huzoor continued:

“Always act according to Islam’s teachings and not according to inappropriate and wrong cultural practices that have developed in society. Islam’s teachings are to discharge the rights of others and not to seize them unjustly and this basic principle is the key to peace, from a domestic level all the way to international relations.”

A loud disturbance

Following the *Lajna* address, Huzoor proceeded to the men’s side to lead the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers.

Towards, the end of the *Asr* prayer an extremely loud emergency alarm went off that could be heard around the entire complex.

Ahmad bhai was standing next to me in *Namaz* and as soon as the alarm went off I saw him end his *Salat* and he quickly tried to ascertain if there was any danger or real emergency.

As he and the security team investigated, the rest of us continued our prayers behind Huzoor and after about 30 seconds the alarm fell silent. When Huzoor concluded his prayers, he enquired what had caused the alarm to go off.

In response, the *Officer Jalsa Gah* informed that some of our duty-volunteers were in possession of megaphones to make announcements and that there was a button on the megaphones that triggered an alarm in the case of an emergency. He said the button was very sensitive and needed only a light press to trigger and it seemed one of the duty workers had accidentally pressed it.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“There are so many volunteers who are technically minded and so I am sure someone could have done something to ensure that the alarm button does not go off accidentally like it did today where it disturbed everyone’s Namaz. Even some basic tape could have been placed around it to prevent accidental presses!”

Importance of Salat

Thereafter, as Huzoor walked back to his residence, he saw some Ahmadis standing near various exhibitions.

They were stood in position to wave to Huzoor and perhaps were hoping that as he walked back Huzoor would visit their exhibition.

As he passed the *International Human Rights* exhibition, Huzoor enquired from the person in-charge:

“Did you offer Namaz or did you remain here throughout?”

The individual mentioned that he had offered *Namaz* and had run back to the exhibition area after it had finished.

Huzoor’s comment illustrated how *Namaz* was of the greatest importance and he would not like for people to miss congregational prayers so that they could get a good spot to see Huzoor walk past.

An emotional narration

During the Jalsa, I visited the *Al-Qalam* project and met with a lady, *Amtul Qayoom Khan* who was with her adult daughter.

Amtul Qayoom sahiba and her daughter were originally from *Topi*, a town in north-west Pakistan, where Ahmadis had been severely persecuted in 1974.

Amtul Qayoom sahiba’s daughter sadly suffered from extremely poor eyesight. Her daughter herself told me she could see some things extremely vaguely but never clearly. Her mother told me that her daughter’s poor eyesight was a direct result of the persecution she and her family had faced in Pakistan.

Amtul Qayoom sahiba said:

“In 1974 the opponents of Ahmadiyyat came to our town in Topi and burnt down our homes and our relatives and other people we knew were martyred. The reason my daughter suffers from lack of sight is because during that time we were boycotted and had no place to live and so we used to spend time in jungle areas that were completely unsanitary and for days we would not have proper food. It was because she was malnourished that my daughter lost her eyesight.”

Amtul Qayoom sahiba continued:

“When she was a child she could not see anything at all and so we took her to meet Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) and he put his blessed hand over her eyes and prayed for her. After that there was some improvement and so now she is able to see vaguely, Alhamdulillah.”

Speaking of her joy at being able to partake in the *Al-Qalam* project, Amtul Qayoom sahiba said:

“Today, I had the blessed opportunity to take part in the Al-Qalam project and to write a verse of the Holy Quran with my own hand. I cannot thank Allah enough for this opportunity and I consider it to be a great reward for the sacrifices that my family made back in 1974. Allah the Almighty never forgets and never fails to reward.

The opponents were able to burn down our homes but they could never destroy our faith.”

Taking part in Al-Qalam

Alhamdulillah, I was also able to take part in the *Al-Qalam* project during the Germany Jalsa. For a while my friend, Amer Safir (*Chief Editor of Review of Religions*), had encouraged me to take part but I was worried that my Arabic handwriting would be of a poor and inadequate standard.

However, that day as I saw the huge queues of people waiting to take part and heard their stories, I realised that I should not waste this blessed opportunity.

For example, whilst he was queuing to take part, a Khadim, *Muhammad Amir Sharma (34)* told me:

“Today is one of the best days of my life because I am Insha’Allah going to be part of such an historic and blessed project. I am going to write a verse of the Quran that is being written in such a unique and historic way. Even if I have to queue for ten hours it does not matter because one day I will tell my children and grandchildren about this day.”

Having decided to take part, I was taken to a desk and where there was a copy of the Holy Quran and a large sheet of special acid-free paper. This special treated paper, I learned later, was used as it preserves much better than ordinary paper.

Hafiz Fazl-e-Rabbi sahib, a teacher at *UK Jamia Ahmadiyya*, was on-duty and he asked me to write verse 25 of *Surah Bani-Israel*, which reads:

“And lower to them the wing of humility out of tenderness. And say, ‘My Lord, have mercy on them even as they nourished me when I was a little child’.”

After I copied out the verse, Hafiz sahib told me that verses were allocated randomly but that he felt that I had been given an apt verse.

Hafiz sahib said:

“This verse is a prayer for one’s parents and as you wrote it out, I thought it was very appropriate for you as your parents died when you were young.”

I felt emotional as Hafiz sahib said these words to me. In fact, the entire experience of taking part in the Al-Qalam project was moving and affected me in a way that I had not expected at all.

Huzoor’s address to guests

On the afternoon of 3 September, Huzoor returned to the *Jalsa Gah* after a short break to address over 1,000 non-Ahmadi guests.

Huzoor delivered his address in English and spoke in detail about current issues facing Germany and Europe.

It was a truly wonderful speech which had a huge impact upon those who listened to it. At a time when a fear of Islam and a fear of immigration has swept through Europe and other parts of the world, Huzoor continues to

take an extremely balanced approach and provides solutions to the many problems afflicting the world.



Speaking about increasing conflict in many parts of the world, Huzoor said:

“As we join here today, it is an undeniable fact that the world’s peace is teetering on a knife-edge. With each day that passes we witness increasing conflict and uncertainty across the globe. It is a strange and tragic paradox that even though we are more connected than ever before, we are actually growing ever more distant by the day.”

Huzoor referred to terrorist attacks that had taken place in Belgium, France and Germany during recent months and the effect they had had on local people.

Huzoor said:

“Naturally, such attacks have frightened members of the public and instilled a fear of Islam within the hearts and minds of the locals. It is a tragedy of the highest scale that these attacks are being associated with Islam because such atrocities are the polar opposite of what Islam stands for.”

Huzoor advised that genuine immigrants should be supported and helped but should also be encouraged to “*stand upon their own two feet*”.

He said if they actively contributed to society it would lessen the sense of ‘burden’ on local people and would diminish the chances of far-right nationalists exploiting people’s fears.

Huzoor also spoke about the peaceful beliefs of our *Jamaat* but made it clear that our teachings were a perfect reflection of Islamic teachings and nothing new.

Huzoor said:

“In complete contrast to the extremists, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is an entirely peaceful religious community that seeks to spread tolerance, reconciliation and freedom of belief throughout the world. However, do not think that we have adopted a new interpretation of Islam or have modified its teachings in any way.”

Huzoor continued:

“The sole reason we are peaceful, the sole reason we care and love mankind and the sole reason we seek to heal the divisions that have beset the world is because, and only because, we follow the teachings of Islam... Everything we say and do is inspired by what we have learned from the Holy Quran and from the practice of the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).”

Impact of Huzoor's address

Following the conclusion of Huzoor's address, I met many guests and it was clear Huzoor's words had touched the hearts of many people.

I was assisted by Salman Shah, a young *Missionary* serving in Germany who acted as a German translator wherever needed.

One person I met was called *Edward Milian* who had travelled to Germany from Malta to attend the Jalsa.

After listening to Huzoor's address, Edward said:

"Most people when they hear the word 'Islam' they become scared and so I just wish we could have fit the entire public of Europe into this hall so in one sitting all their fears and worries would have been removed."

Edward continued:

"I am extremely reassured by what I have heard. The Khalifa is fighting the demons that have attacked Islam – and the media should highlight this but sadly all they want to do is sell newspapers and so they prefer bad news."

I also met a German lady, *Angela Weisbrod* who told me she had listened to both of Huzoor's addresses that day and that his address to *Lajna* had particularly affected her.

Mrs. Weisbrod said:

“I have to say that me and my family are completely transfixed by your leader. The most beautiful part was listening to what he said about a woman’s status during his morning address. I always had questions about this issue but he has explained that Islam does not just give rights to women but actually champions them. He explained, very logically, that if there are differences in role, it does not mean gender inequality. I feel enlightened and inspired.”

In a similar vein, another lady, Mrs Metz also said that Huzoor’s Lajna address had made her realise that ***“there is no doubting there is gender equality in Islam but it is a different and more sophisticated gender equality.”***

A young student, Laura Falz, told me she had particularly appreciated Huzoor speaking about the need for media justice and fairness. She said:

“The best part of the speech by His Holiness was how boldly he said that the media is filled with propaganda and bias. He is right! They should show the speech on national TV but they won’t.”

I met a man called David Weller who said:

“The Khalifa has an attraction like a magnet and when you see him you feel as though ‘this is the person I was looking for’. It is a strange sensation. His words reach our hearts and you feel that every word has depth and meaning.”

A lady called Anna said:

“His analysis is the opposite to everyone else because most people in the West consider that Islam is the problem but the Khalifa proposed that Islam is the solution! It was a really wonderful speech.”

I met a German man, Thomas who said:

“The thing that attracted me the most was that it was clear that your Khalifa feels a huge responsibility to establish peace in the world and is striving for this. He is not motivated by a desire for power or for personal glory.”

Thomas continued:

“I have always believed you should clean your own home before you try to clean other people’s homes. However, all Ahmadis I have met have been good people and so it is clear that the Khalifa has cleaned his own home and so, unlike many others, he has a right to preach to us and tell us how we should be fair and just.”

I spoke to dozens of other people, as did many other members of the Jamaat. *Alhamdulillah*, they each spoke of their admiration for the Jamaat and how they had learnt a great deal about Islam.

Many openly said that the fears they had previously held about Islam had completely vanished after listening to Huzoor’s words. *Masha’Allah*, in all respects, it had proven an extremely blessed afternoon.

Croatia delegation

On Saturday evening, Huzoor held a meeting with a delegation of guests who had come to attend the *Jalsa Salana* from Croatia.

The guests had the opportunity to introduce themselves to Huzoor and to ask him various questions.

One female guest said that the translation device she had been provided to listen to the Jalsa proceedings had not been adequate.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“You are right. I also used the translation device during the last session when the guest speakers were speaking in German and there was a great deal of interference and different languages were overlapping with one another. I will ask our teams to address this issue for future but I would also request that you also write to us with the details as well because this is how we learn our shortcomings and improve in future.”

Huzoor’s humility always is incredible. He did not show any irritation that the guest had raised a complaint, rather he thanked her and took her comments very seriously.

One of the Croatian guests said that whilst thousands of people were joining the Ahmadiyya Jamaat in Asia and Africa, much fewer numbers of people were accepting it in Europe. He asked Huzoor why this was the case.

In response, Huzoor said:

“In general people in Europe are more materialistic and have less motivation to change their religion, even if they appreciate its message. Also, in the Western world there is a general decline in religion that is taking place. For example, less people practice the Christian faith of their forefathers. However, we remain optimistic that in the long-term even in this part of the world many people will join us.”

Another guest said that after reading about Islam he had concluded that it was a ‘difficult’ religion to practice and so he wondered if people would be inclined to accept it in its ‘current form’ or whether there was a need to ‘adapt’ and ‘modernise’ Islam.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“If you believe in something and love it then you should be willing to make sacrifices for it. Nonetheless, I do not agree that Islam is ‘difficult’ to practice. Muslims are required to pray five times a day but even in prayers Allah has created great ease for us.

Thus, where the days are extremely short we are permitted to combine the afternoon prayers or when the days are extremely long we are permitted to combine the evening prayers.”

Huzoor continued:

“In terms of dress code, some people may think that Hijab is difficult but Muslims understand that through Hijab they observe modesty and all major religions have advocated modesty, not just Islam.”

Lithuania and Latvia delegation

Thereafter, Huzoor met a delegation of guests from Lithuania and Latvia. As the meeting started a young infant child began to cry and so his mother stood up to take him out of the room fearing that he may cause a disturbance. Upon seeing her, very affectionately, Huzoor said:

“You do not need to leave the room. Please sit down and do not worry at all.”

A young lady who was a student then took the microphone and as she did I could see she was shaking and appeared very nervous.

Trembling as she spoke, she said:

“Your Holiness, my heart is beating so fast at this moment because I have the opportunity to meet you and to speak to you.”

She said that before the Jalsa she knew hardly anything about Islam. As she said this she gestured by putting her thumb and index finger together to illustrate her point that her knowledge of Islam had been minimal.

Seeing this, Huzoor smiled and then placed his two hands at a wide distance and said:

“And now your knowledge of Islam is this much!”

The young lady smiled and nodded and asked Huzoor if he had a life motto which he followed.

In response, Huzoor said:

“It is to recognise one’s Creator, God Almighty and to serve one’s fellow beings. This is the teaching that I follow and seek to live my life by.”

A blessed week

As the meetings concluded, the first week of Huzoor’s tour of Germany reached a very blessed conclusion.

Still ahead was the final day of Jalsa Salana, two Mosques openings and various other activities.

End of Part 1

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