

HUZOOR'S TOUR OF SCANDINAVIA

MAY 2016

PART 1

A Personal Account

By Abid Khan

Introduction

On 4 May 2016, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) and his *Qafila* (entourage) embarked upon a 19-day tour of two Scandinavian countries – Denmark and Sweden.

Apart from Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*), there were 8 members of the *Qafila* who travelled from London that day.

There were four security staff – Major Mahmood Ahmad sahib, Nasir Saeed sahib, Sakhawat Bajwa sahib and Mohsin Awan 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*) and me travelling on behalf of the central *Press & Media Office*.

Further, a few days prior to Huzoor's arrival, Mahmood Ahmad Khan sahib and Nazir Baloch sahib, both members of Huzoor's security staff, were sent to Denmark in advance.

An indication of travel

A number of weeks prior to the tour, in early March, I had been invited by *Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya USA* to attend their *Annual Ijtema* which was being held in California at the end of May.

The invite had been sent by the US *Khuddam* directly to Huzoor and Huzoor had given permission for me to attend as a representative of the *Markaz* (centre).

However, a few days later, during *Mulaqat*, Huzoor said to me:

“The US Khuddam have invited you to their Ijtema in May, but I am also travelling to Denmark and Sweden in May and so if the dates clash you will have to decide if you want to travel with me or to their Ijtema!”

As Huzoor said these words he smiled. I am sure he knew full-well what my thoughts would be if such a clash occurred.

I responded immediately by saying:

“Of course, I could only ever desire to travel with you Huzoor!”

Hearing Huzoor’s comment filled my heart with happiness, delight and a sense of anticipation because it was an indication that I would once again have the opportunity to travel with Khalifatul Masih.

It so happened that the dates did not clash and so a few days after Huzoor’s return from Scandinavia, I was also able to travel to California for the *Ijtema*.

Leaving home

Since Huzoor's last tour abroad, which was to Japan in November 2015, Allah the Almighty had blessed my wife Mala and I with a second child – a baby boy, who Huzoor had named as 'Moshahid'.

In the weeks prior to the Scandinavian tour, both he, and our elder child Mahid had been unwell. First they had the flu and heavy colds and then later both contracted chicken pox. Thus, in the days leading up to the tour, I had been praying that they would fully recover and remain safe and well whilst I was away. With the *Grace of Allah*, they did both remain well during Huzoor's tour.

On 4 May, I left my home at 10am and as I said *salam* to my family, I thought that by the time I returned Moshahid may well have forgotten who I was and even that I existed!

On the other hand, Mahid was now of an age where he became sad whenever I left. Thankfully, these days it is much easier to stay in touch with family, through things like *FaceTime* and *Whataspp* and thus I was able to stay in fairly regular contact with them throughout the tour.

A comment of a friend

I had never been to either Denmark or Sweden before. Huzoor's previous and only visit to Sweden had been eleven years before in 2005. Whilst Huzoor had visited Denmark in 2011, it had only been an extremely fleeting

visit on the way to Norway and so there too it had been eleven years since Huzoor's previous full tour of the country.

Upon hearing that Huzoor was visiting Denmark and Sweden, a friend from the United States sent me a message saying that if I wrote a diary about the tour I should specify where in the world Scandinavia was - because Americans like him would have no idea!

I am not sure if he was joking or being serious but anyway Scandinavia is formed by the northern European countries comprising Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Departure from Masjid Fazl and travel to Denmark

At 12.30pm, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi emerged from their residence and before entering his car, Huzoor, wearing a grey *sherwani achkan coat*, waved at the many Ahmadis who had gathered at the Fazl Mosque to see him off before leading a silent prayer.

The *Qafila* then travelled directly to Heathrow Airport, where after a short stay, we boarded a *British Airways* flight to Denmark's capital city of Copenhagen.

The flight to Denmark departed at 2.55pm UK time. I was seated next to Private Secretary, Munir Javed sahib and Sakhawat Bajwa sahib.

Denmark was one hour ahead of the UK and so after a short 90minute flight, we arrived at Copenhagen Airport at 5.25pm local time.

As the plane descended before landing, I noticed hundreds of extremely tiny islands surrounding Denmark. I had never seen such small islands before.

Arrival in Copenhagen and Huzoor's concern for his wife

As we disembarked from the plane, Huzoor was greeted by Amir sahib Denmark, Muhammad Zakaria Khan sahib and also some members of the airport staff.

Huzoor was informed that the *Qafila* did not need to pass through immigration and that Huzoor's car and the other *Qafila* cars were ready and waiting nearby. However, to get to the cars, it was necessary to walk down a flight of stairs.

As I have always seen, Huzoor's love and care for Khala Saboohi is truly exemplary and so upon seeing the stairs, Huzoor himself asked the airport staff if there was a lift available because Khala Saboohi had a long-term knee problem. Unfortunately, the lift was at a distance and so Khala Saboohi walked down the stairs with great fortitude and Huzoor walked just behind her.

As Huzoor and Khala Saboohi reached their car they were greeted by the familiar face of Mahmood Khan sahib, from Huzoor's security staff, who drove Huzoor's car throughout the tour.

Although the Mosque was relatively near the airport, due to rush-hour traffic, it took the *Qafila* a little longer than expected to arrive at the *Nusrat Jahan Mosque*.

A unique Mosque

Upon arrival at 6pm, Huzoor was greeted by Ahmadi men, women and children. Standing to the side, I could see the happiness and delight etched on their faces. It was the same look of joy that I had witnessed on countless occasions, wherever in the world Huzoor has travelled.

I was also taken aback by the unique beauty of the *Nusrat Jahan Mosque*, which was quite different to other Ahmadi Mosques I had seen.

The entire Mosque was covered by a copper-coloured dome and the shape of the dome was quite distinctive. Rather than being perfectly round, it appeared to me to resemble a sea-shell. Whether that was an accurate comparison or not, there was no doubt it was very beautiful.

The inside of the Mosque was also extremely attractive, wherein the entire Mosque was covered by the overarching dome and to the sides were elegant brick walls punctuated by occasional stain glass windows.

Throughout the visit, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi stayed in a small flat opposite the Mosque, which was part of a complex that the *Jamaat* owned.

Also included in the premises were various offices and halls. Further, just behind the Mosque there had recently been an extension, whereby new offices and other facilities had been built.

Having never been to Denmark before, I could not fully appreciate the change, but Majid sahib and Mubarak sahib, who had visited previously, told

me that the changes had been extremely significant and the *Jamaat*, *Masha'Allah*, now had far better facilities than previously.



The members of the Denmark *Jamaat* also all spoke of their pride and joy at the recent developments to the site.

Salat and inspection

After a few minutes, Huzoor walked the few dozen metres from his residence to the Mosque and led the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers. Following the conclusion of *Salat*, Huzoor decided to inspect the premises and to see for himself the changes and improvements since his previous visit.

Huzoor was shown one hall in the basement area where prayers were offered as an overflow when the Mosque became full.

Upon seeing the room, Huzoor enquired if the people praying in the hall were praying ahead of the *Imam* who led prayers from the Mosque itself.

In response, Ameer sahib said that only the rear part of the hall was used as an overflow to ensure that no worshipper prayed in front of the Imam. He pointed a small mark which had been made with a pen on the wall that he said was the limit and so people prayed only up to that point.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“This is a very small mark and most people will not even notice it. Thus, you should put a physical barrier in place to ensure that no-person prays ahead of the Imam at any time. The barrier should remain for at least a year because it will take that long for the members to naturally remember where the limit is.”

This was another example of how Khalifatul Masih guides the *Jamaat* on all matters and how he always pays great attention to ensuring that every act within our *Jamaat* is in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Huzoor’s guidance about hospitality

Thereafter, Huzoor was shown various other rooms within the complex.

When Huzoor was shown one particular room, a member of the Danish *Jamaat* said that the room was normally used as an office but these days the MTA team from London were using it.

The gentleman used the Urdu word '*Kabza*', which means to 'take over' or to 'seize'.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor immediately said:

"Kabza is when someone enters without invitation and without need and so if you do not need the services of MTA I can send them home and you can arrange the transmission of my Friday Sermon yourself. Thus, rather than saying they have taken over the room you should have said that 'these days our guests from MTA are using this room to work from and to store their equipment'".

Huzoor's response showed his love and regard for the *MTA* team who travel from London whenever Huzoor travels abroad and also highlighted the importance of true hospitality.

A guest should never be made to feel unwelcome or to be a burden of any sort. In this way Huzoor's comment was an example and lesson for all people.

Huzoor never preaches anything that he himself does not practice. Thus, there are countless people, both Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis, who would attest to Huzoor's standards of hospitality and regard for guests.

Huzoor has always followed the example of the Holy Prophet (sa) and his true servant the Promised Messiah (as) who used to care for their guests in the very best manner.

For his part, having heard and understood Huzoor's words, the host seemed duly apologetic for his comment.

A lot of red-meat

Throughout our stay in Denmark, the food was prepared by a *Ziafat* team who had come especially from the Norway *Jamaat* for this purpose. The food they prepared invariably was very tasty.

However, one thing we all noticed – both in Denmark and later in Sweden – was that at every meal it seemed as though a lamb dish was prepared and sometimes there was more than one lamb dish at the same time.

Thus, sometimes we would eat *aloo ghosht*, whilst at other times we would eat *lamb karhai* or we would be served *bhindi ghosht* or various other lamb dishes. I have always enjoyed eating lamb but I have to admit that after a few days I was missing more simple foods such as *daal* or other non-meat dishes.

An extra fifteen minutes

After the evening meal, Huzoor came to the Mosque to lead the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers and thereafter Huzoor visited some other parts of the complex that he had not yet seen.

For example, he went and checked the accommodation arrangements of his security staff.

At one point, Huzoor looked in my direction and asked where I was staying. I mentioned that I, along with the other office staff, was staying at a nearby hotel as there was not enough room at the Mosque to accommodate us. Huzoor immediately asked if everything was ok, to which I replied that it was.

I am always amazed at how despite being so extremely busy, Huzoor somehow finds the time to check even the smallest details and to ensure that those around him are comfortable.

As he returned to his residence, Huzoor paused for a minute and asked what time *Fajr* prayers were to be offered. Ameer sahib informed that it had been set for 4am.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor enquired the exact time of sunrise and upon being told, Huzoor said:

“We can then offer Fajr at 4.15am rather than 4am. This will make it easier for people to come to the Mosque to offer Namaz.”

Huzoor’s concern was, and always is, that as many Ahmadis should worship in the Mosque as possible and so having checked the time of sunrise he instructed that *Fajr* could be offered fifteen minutes later than had been scheduled.

I for one was extremely grateful for those extra fifteen minutes!

A Danish pastry

The next morning, I had breakfast in the hotel in which I was staying. The breakfast was a buffet and one thing that caught my eye was a series of pastries.

At first I thought I would leave them as they appeared quite heavy and calorific but then I realised that 'Danish pastries' were world famous and so I should try at least one whilst in Denmark!

After trying one, I ended up trying another and then a third as well! They did prove to be quite heavy but also delicious.

Calling home

That morning, I had the opportunity to *FaceTime* Mala for a few minutes. She told me how a few hours after I had left the previous day, our infant child Moshahid, had rolled over from his back and onto his stomach for the very first time. I was pleased to hear he had *Masha'Allah* completed a childhood milestone!

She also told me that Mahid had woken in the middle of the night and was crying asking where I was.

She responded by saying that I was with Huzoor and upon hearing this Mahid instantly calmed down and went back to sleep.

Huzoor welcomed by local Mayor

Later on Thursday 5 May, the local *Mayor*, Mrs Helle Adelborg and four other members of the local *Council* came to the Mosque to officially welcome Huzoor to Denmark and particularly to the town of *Hvidovre* where the Mosque was located. One of the councillors was actually an Ahmadi called Kashif Ahmad.



The meeting lasted for around 30minutes, during which Huzoor was asked about his views on the current state of the world.

In response, Huzoor said:

“In today’s world what is needed above all is for all of mankind to unite together and to focus upon the peace of the world.”

Huzoor also thanked the Mayor and the councillors for granting planning permission to the *Jamaat* to extend the Mosque complex.

The Mayor said that the *Nusrat Jahan Mosque* was considered to be an extremely significant and historic Mosque, as it was one of the very first Mosques, if not the first, to be built in Scandinavia.

Huzoor responded by saying the Mosque was, architecturally speaking, a very unique and attractive building and suggested that it be designated as a 'listed building', which are buildings that are placed on an official register as buildings of '*architectural or historical significance or interest*'.

During the meeting, Huzoor was also asked about the persecution faced by the *Jamaat* in Pakistan.

Upon learning the extent of the persecution and the fact that Huzoor himself had been imprisoned for 11 days in 1999 on entirely baseless charges, one of the Councillors said she could not comprehend or fathom why or how such persecution could ever take place against such a peaceful community.

Huzoor appreciated her comments and thanked her for her support.

One Councillor said that Denmark was a country of '*absolute freedom of expression*'. Upon hearing this, Huzoor said that he did not consider this to be entirely accurate.

Huzoor said that in Western countries many people spoke about the importance of '*free speech*' and '*freedom of expression*', however in reality

these rights were not absolute even in the *West*. Huzoor gave the example of how *anti-Semitic* comments were, rightfully, not tolerated.

Huzoor then gave his own views on freedom of expression by saying:

“Freedom of expression is extremely important, however there has to be a point where you draw the line because it is not right to use such speech that will offend and devastate the sentiments of others. We need to find the middle ground so that we can establish peace in the world.”

Comments of the Mayor

Following the conclusion of the meeting, I went and met Mayor Adelborg. She told me how impressed she had been by Huzoor and how fortunate she felt to have had an audience with him.

Mayor Adelborg said:

“The Khalifa (Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad) is so wise and so kind. His smile is extremely appealing and despite being such a prominent religious figure he is extremely humble.

Everything the Khalifa said focused on the need to establish peace in the world. Honestly, I am so proud to have such a peaceful and respected Muslim leader visit our town. We are extremely fortunate to have this opportunity and I for one will remember this day for a very long time to come.”

Emotions of Ahmadis

Later that evening, Huzoor met various Ahmadis in a session of *family Mulaqats*.

During that time, I also met a few members of the local *Jamaat*, who explained to me how much Huzoor's visit to Denmark meant and their personal experiences of the blessings of Khilafat.

One young married couple I met were *Hameed-ur-Rehman (29)* and his wife *Shazia Ahmad*. As we spoke, Hameed sahib became emotional. As tears rolled down from his eyes, he said:

"I am extremely emotional because Huzoor is Allah's representative on earth and I just had the opportunity to meet personally with him. I truly believe that Huzoor's prayers are all I need in my life."

His wife, Shazia, was also very emotional. She too wiped tears from her eyes and said:

"Those moments in Huzoor's company were the most precious moments of my life. Our Khalifa is gentle, loving and so extremely soft-hearted. As I sat before Huzoor I saw how pure he was and how pious and I felt as though I myself was undertaking a spiritual cleansing of my own."

I then met an Ahmadi family who had lived in Denmark for thirty years. The father was called *Tariq Mahmood Butter*, his wife was *Fauzia Butter* and with them were their two daughters and one son.

We talked for around 10 minutes and the entire family, in particular Fauzia sahiba and her daughters became extremely emotional.

Speaking about her feelings at having met Huzoor, Fauzia sahiba said:

“I wish I could imprison the contentment that I have at this moment so that it would never leave my heart. We are living in a dream from which we never wish to wake up.”

I then spoke to Tariq sahib’s elder daughter, *Awraj Mahmood* who was perhaps in her late teens or early twenties.

Throughout our conversation she was in tears and completely overwhelmed due to her love for Khilafat. She would speak for a few seconds and then wipe away her tears and compose herself before continuing to speak.

Awraj sahiba said:

“The feelings and emotions that I feel in my heart are indescribable. It has been so long since Huzoor last came and so I cannot believe that he is finally here. I cannot believe that I am seeing Huzoor walk past me from his residence to the Mosque every day.”

At this point, Awraj sahiba completely broke down in tears and could speak no more. I felt embarrassed that my conversation had caused for her to become so upset and so I apologised.

She said that I should not worry because her tears were happy tears and not tears of sadness.

Her mother, Fauzia sahiba then spoke again. She said:

“My daughter is upset only because of her love for Khilafat. We have only one fear in our lives and that is that our Khalifa could ever be upset with us. As long as he is happy then our lives are complete.”

Another person I met was called *Syed Zaki Ahmad (37)* who told me how the presence of Huzoor had inspired him and many others. Zaki sahib said:

“Sometimes we become lazy in our duties and service to the Jamaat but when you see Huzoor and you observe his piety it inspires and energises you. Huzoor’s presence makes you determined to serve the Jamaat and to spread the true message of Islam. Khilafat is like a magnet because its pull is so strong that the more you see Huzoor the more you want to be closer to him.”

Huzoor’s wise words

I met an Ahmadi called *Mashood Ahmad (32)* who told me about his previous *Mulaqat* which had been some years previously.

He said that on the night before meeting Huzoor he had been burgled and most of his valuable possessions and all of his clothes had been stolen. He had no money or time to go shopping and so he appeared at his *Mulaqat* in very basic clothes and felt very embarrassed by his appearance.

Thus, as soon as he entered he told Huzoor about the burglary and apologised about his attire.

Upon hearing the story, Huzoor said:

“Do not worry at all – perhaps the burglar needed the clothes more than you.”

Mashood sahib said he was astonished by Huzoor’s kindness and also the wisdom within Huzoor’s words.

Speaking about the incident, Mashood sahib said:

“After hearing Huzoor’s words I never again felt any worry about the losses that I had incurred – even though they were significant and I did not have any insurance. And ever since that day I have seen blessings in my life and Allah has helped me repeatedly.”

Friday Sermon in Copenhagen

On 6 May 2016, Huzoor delivered his weekly *Friday Sermon* from the Nusrat Jahan Mosque in Copenhagen.

Huzoor referred to the fact that it had been eleven years since he had visited Copenhagen and that the *Jamaat* had progressed in various ways during the intervening years.

Huzoor said it was imperative that Ahmadi Muslims were ever grateful to Allah for such favours and blessings and the way to be grateful was to live by the teachings of Islam.

Huzoor said:

“To continue to receive the favours of Allah the Almighty, one must always seek to improve his or her conduct and actions. If we ourselves become negligent in our religious endeavours then we will be responsible for taking our children away from religion and Allah’s grace.”



Addressing the Ahmadi Muslims who had migrated to Denmark due to difficult conditions in their home countries, Huzoor said:

“Those who have come here in search of a better future should ask themselves if the improved conditions have driven them away from their faith?”

Thus, Huzoor spoke of how ease and comfort ought to make Ahmadis more grateful to God and closer to him, rather than lead them towards materialism and forgetting the teachings of Islam.

Emotions of Ahmadis

In the evening of 6 May 2016, Huzoor once again met personally with Ahmadi families living in Denmark.

One of the people to meet Huzoor was *Khawar Ahmad (35)*, who had come to Denmark from Pakistan in 2012. I spoke to him moments after his first ever *Mulaqat* with Khalifatul Masih. Understandably, he was extremely emotional.

Khawar sahib said:

“When I saw Huzoor all I could see was purity, love and compassion. The feelings I felt were unlike anything I have ever felt before. My wife and I truly believe that the prayers of the Khalifa-Waqt are the prayers that unlock the doors to heaven.”

I then met a Danish lady, *Mrs. Munira Krogh*, who had accepted Ahmadiyyat during the time of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh).

Her husband, Kamal Krogh sahib had himself converted to Ahmadiyyat in the late 1960s and had served as *Secretary Tabligh* for many years before he passed away a couple of years previously.

Sister Munira met Huzoor both personally during the tour and also on one occasion officially during the tour. The latter meeting took place because she was working on the revision of the Danish translation of the Holy Quran and so met Huzoor to seek his guidance about this project. It was fascinating for me to hear the experiences of Sister Munira.

Sharing some of her memories with me, Sister Munira said:

“I feel very privileged because I have met the Third Khalifa, the Fourth Khalifa and also our current Fifth Khalifa. I remember vividly the face of the Third Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (rh) – his countenance was so friendly and loving and his personality was the main reason why I came to accept Ahmadiyyat. Seeing him all those years ago, when I was a young lady, was extremely moving and had a lifelong impact upon me.”

Sister Munira continued:

“I watch the Friday Sermon of our Khalifa every single week and with each day that passes I see and observe how Allah the Almighty is blessing our Jamaat. We are very lucky to have Khilafat because all the other Islamic groups and sects are divided but the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is united at the hand of Khalifatul Masih.”

I met *Kashif Ahmad* and his wife *Hina Ahmad* who was a Danish convert. Kashif had recently been elected to the local *Council* and had been part of the Mayor’s official delegation who had welcomed Huzoor to Denmark the previous day. His wife, Hina had accepted Ahmadiyyat a couple of years ago.

Speaking of their Mulaqat with Huzoor, Kashif said:

“Meeting Huzoor is so special and indescribable. Somehow, in just a minute or two Huzoor always manages to touch our hearts. He is our biggest inspiration of what the Quran teaches because he is the foremost example of living one’s life according to Islam’s true teachings.”

After meeting Huzoor for the very first time, sister Hina said:

“To meet the Khalifa today for the first time was an amazing experience and very special. When I saw Huzoor all I could see and feel was peace and those few minutes in his presence has increased my faith even more in the truth of Ahmadiyyat.”

Sister Hina continued:

“Ahmadiyyat is now my home and where I am meant to be. I have found my paradise in this life. We are all so lucky that our beloved leader is with us here in Denmark.”

Blessings of Khilafat

The next morning, I met an Arab Ahmadi, *Tariq El-Baba sahib* (54) who was originally from Beirut but had lived in Denmark for many years. Tariq sahib had accepted Ahmadiyyat in 1986.

He told me how he had been guided to the truth of Ahmadiyyat by a series of true dreams he saw and that when he thought back to those dreams and how

they came true word for word the hairs on the back of his neck stood up.

Regarding his *Mulaqat* earlier that day, Tariq sahib said:

“It may sound strange but I feel like I am flying after meeting Huzoor! I cannot describe my joy and happiness. Huzoor is the person who has been sent by Allah to unite the Ummah and today the Muslim Ummah needs Khilafat more than ever before. Today’s Muslims are routinely mocked and have lost their influence in the world and the only way it can be recovered is through Khilafat.”

Tariq sahib continued by saying:

“We are so fortunate because our Khalifa is not just for a few Ahmadis but rather he is here for all of us. He is our shepherd and we are his flock. I feel sorry for the other Muslims who are deprived of these blessings.”

A faith inspiring conversation

I then met a young Arab man in his early twenties, who had been born and brought up in Denmark. I found his story to be both incredibly interesting and faith affirming.

He told me that he had been raised as an Ahmadi in Denmark but due to the influence of certain non-Ahmadi friends he had lost contact with the *Jamaat* in recent years.

Those friends sought to influence him by telling him that Ahmadis were not

true Muslims and over time this had an effect on his faith and he lost contact with the *Jamaat* and stopped coming to the Mosque. He told me that he had two particularly close non-Ahmadi friends who had led him away from Ahmadiyyat.

Speaking about those two friends, he said:

“They were both my close friends who I trusted. However, one evening one of those friends called me suddenly in the middle of the night and I could hear that he was completely drunk and was talking without any control and not making any sense. I was extremely disappointed.”

He continued:

“Then after some time my other close friend suddenly lost touch with me and so after a few days I visited his mother to find out where he was. She was very distraught and told me that he had left home and had travelled to Syria or Iraq to join the terrorist group Daesh. A few weeks later we were told that he was now presumed dead.”

He told me that seeing the fate of his two friends had proven a wake-up call. He said that those very people who had convinced him that Ahmadi were not true Muslims had themselves been involved in completely non-Islamic practices.

Thereafter, he started coming back to the Mosque and was extremely grateful that he was made to feel welcome and not scolded for having turned away in the past.

He said that his experiences had shown him that Ahmadis were true Muslims and that Ahmadiyyat was nothing to fear but was something to be proud of.

He asked me about my own experiences with Khilafat and so I said to him that I was not an Imam or a religious scholar of any sort.

I told him that I had not read as many religious books as I should have. Rather, my faith in Islam and the truth of Ahmadiyyat had been dictated through my contact with Khalifatul Masih.

I told him how as a child I had the opportunity to meet with Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) on many occasions and as an adult I had seen and observed Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) for many years.

I said that having seen them and known them, one thing I was sure of was that Khalifatul Masih were men of absolute truth and integrity.

Nowhere else had I ever seen such honesty, truth and virtue as I had seen in Khilafat and so I could never doubt the truth of *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*.

Having just met Huzoor in *Mulaqat*, my new friend said:

“The feeling at seeing Huzoor was completely indescribable. My pulse was high throughout and I could feel my blood pressure rising! What an honour it is for someone like me to be near the Khalifa, Alhamdulillah! Those moments have further re-affirmed my faith. God bless our Khalifa.”

A few moments with Huzoor

After the session of family *Mulaqats* had concluded that day, Huzoor called me to his office for a few minutes. As I entered his office, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Abid – how is your tour going?”

I replied saying that with the *Grace of Allah*, everything was well.

Thereafter, Huzoor asked me who I had met and particularly about the Ahmadi youths in Denmark.

I have always seen how much love and concern Huzoor has for the younger members of the *Jamaat* and he always desires that Ahmadi youths have a personal connection with Allah the Almighty. Huzoor is concerned about the welfare – both spiritual and physical – of every single Ahmadi and does not want even a single Ahmadi to be wasted.

In reply, I told Huzoor about my meeting with the young Arab man I had met moments earlier and how after having withdrawn from the *Jamaat* for some time, his own experiences had brought him back.

Upon hearing this story, Huzoor responded by saying:

“This is an example of how Allah the Almighty guides those who are naturally pious towards the truth and how He Himself saves their faith.”

An amusing incident

I then mentioned to Huzoor an incident from the day before that I had found quite amusing.

I mentioned how initially, Majid sahib, Mubarak sahib and I were allocated an office in the building across the road from the Mosque. Anyway, it so happened that to get to that office we had to walk through a Lajna security checkpoint.

As we did not wish to cause any disturbance to the Lajna we asked Major sahib (Huzoor's head of security) if there was any other way to reach our office.

With full confidence, Major sahib told us that we could say '*salam*' and cross through the Lajna checkpoint without any problem. Thus Major sahib led the way and we walked behind keeping our heads down as much as possible.

As we reached the Lajna checkpoint, I think we all assumed that because we were with Major sahib the Lajna would let us through.

However, the two young Lajna members on duty did not recognise him or any of us and so they very diligently insisted that we would be checked before we could cross to the other side.

Thus, first of all Major sahib had to put his arms wide out and was scanned by a Lajna member using a handheld scanner, then Majid sahib was, then Mubarak sahib and finally I was.

I tried hard to contain my laughter and amusement as they scanned our elders who seemed increasingly embarrassed, whilst awaiting my turn.

Anyway, after being scanned they were all cleared to cross but when I was scanned the scanner began to beep.

Thus the Lajna member insisted that I empty my pockets and so I sheepishly emptied them and was re-scanned and only then cleared to cross!

Upon hearing this story, Huzoor laughed and asked:

“So did they even do a full security of Major sahib?”

I replied that they did and Huzoor laughed and enjoyed even more.

Although it was a little awkward for us to be scanned by the Lajna they were correct to check us as they did not recognise us and so I think probably Huzoor will have appreciated their attentiveness.

Certainly, I learned my lesson and resolved that throughout the rest of the trip I would keep my pockets empty!

Thankfully, later that day Munir Javed sahib said we could share his office and so thereafter we were not faced with such daunting security checks again!

Huzoor's example

Unlike some of our more recently built Mosques, there is no side entrance for the *Imam* at the Nusrat Jahan Mosque and so Huzoor used to enter the Mosque using the main entrance. Thus, when *Salat* was completed, Huzoor would walk past the Ahmadis to leave the Mosque.

As Huzoor was offering *Qasr* (shortening of prayers) as he was travelling, sometimes local Ahmadis would be still completing their prayers when Huzoor got up to leave the Mosque.

Huzoor would always wait patiently to the side until the individuals had completed their prayers so not to disturb them. Only once their prayers were completed would Huzoor walk past them.

As I observed Huzoor waiting patiently, I thought that this was a lesson for all Ahmadis because often we observe situations where people are still completing their prayers and yet others try to walk around them or even across them instead of waiting.

No matter how busy such people are it is not possible that they be busier than *Khalifa-Waqt* who waits patiently on such occasions.

Meeting with Majlis Ansarullah Amila

On 7 May 2016, Huzoor held a meeting with Denmark's *Majlis Ansarullah* National Amila.

During the meeting Huzoor spoke of the importance of *Tabligh* and spoke of his regret at missed opportunities in the past.

Huzoor said:

“Our Ahmadis were amongst the first Muslims to arrive in Denmark and so if at that time proper efforts had been made for Tabligh we could have been much more successful in spreading the true message of Islam in this nation.”

One thing I have always seen is how efficient Huzoor is. If there is work to do Huzoor never wastes time.

This is a habit that Huzoor also seeks to cultivate in Ahmadis and personally speaking on many occasions Huzoor has told me the importance of efficiency.

Anyway, one of the *Amila* members said that as the new *Amila* had only been formed on 1st January they were all still settling into their roles.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor responded by saying:

“What are you all waiting for? Nearly half the year has already passed and you are still settling in. We should not waste any time to assume our duties.”

Throughout the tour, Huzoor mentioned in a number of meetings that the *Tarbiyyat* Department played an extremely important role in the *Jamaat* and so the *Secretary Tarbiyyat* should understand their true responsibilities.

Addressing the *Secretary Tarbiyyat* directly, Huzoor said:

“Rather than acting in a harsh way you should treat the members of the Jamaat with love. Rather than judging them you should be kind and considerate. The way to encourage people is through love. It is your duty to bring people closer to the Jamaat rather than to drive them away and the key to this is to treat Ahmadi with compassion and kindness.”

During the meeting, Huzoor was also asked by the *Secretary Ishaat* to name the forthcoming magazine to be printed by *Majlis Ansarullah*. At first, Huzoor asked the *Amila* if they had any recommendations.

One or two responded but Huzoor did not seem entirely satisfied with their suggestions and so Huzoor himself instructed that the magazine should be called “*Ansar-ud-Din*” (*Helpers of the Faith*).

One *Amila* member spoke of his fear that some Ahmadi youths were losing contact with the *Jamaat* and spending less time at the Mosque or at *Jamaat* centres.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“If they are moving away it is because their elders are not setting the best examples for them. For example, sometimes Ahmadi parents speak ill of certain office bearers or Jamaat decisions within their homes. This is very dangerous because it can have a negative effect on their children. A parent can destroy the faith of his child simply due to his own grievance and pride.”

Huzoor continued by saying:

“If any person has a complaint or grievance he or she should not let it be a means of weakening his or her faith or the faith of their children. Rather, they should submit and bow down before Allah and seek His help. Remember that Allah the Almighty continues to listen today as He ever listened before.”

Huzoor said:

“Furthermore, if a person has a genuine belief that a wrong decision has been made then they should write to me as Khalifatul Masih. It is then up to Khalifa-Waqt if he wishes to take action and even if he doesn't at least you have done your duty and thereafter your only concern should be to safeguard your own faith.”

One member of the *Amila* said that sometimes he felt that the National *Amir Jamaat* could be overly harsh in certain matters.

In response, Huzoor said:

“I have never said that any office bearer is perfect and will not make mistakes. Everyone is human but you should not allow small grievances or complaints to affect the next generation. Remember you have not done Bai'at at the hand of the National Amir – rather you have done Bai'at at the hand of the Khalifa-Waqt.”

Visits to London

Huzoor also advised that if there were Ahmadis who were distant then the *Jamaat* should make programmes to bring them to London to meet him so that they were able to make a direct and personal connection with Khilafat.

I hoped the *Jamaat* heeded Huzoor's advice and made such a programme as soon as possible. Over the past couple of years various delegations of Ahmadis, from both within the UK and also from abroad, had travelled to London to meet Huzoor. Every time they came the positive effect of spending time near *Khalifa-Waqt* was more than apparent.

I had met young people who previously had little connection to the *Jamaat* but were persuaded to come to London and after meeting Huzoor stated that their lives had completely changed.

They could not believe how kind, loving and humble Huzoor was and how much time he gave them. Having attained such spiritual blessings, they pledged that they would go back to their homes and remain forever attached to the *Jamaat*.

An early invite

After *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers, Huzoor was returning to his residence when he was approached by Munir Odeh sahib, MTA's *Director of Production*. Munir had been to Malmo in Sweden that morning, where Huzoor was due to travel in a few days to inaugurate the *Mahmood Mosque*.

Munir informed Huzoor that though the Mosque appeared close to completion, the hall where a special reception was to take place was not yet ready and there was no guarantee it would be ready in time. Munir asked Huzoor if alternative venues for the reception should be looked at.

In response, Huzoor said:

“It would have been better if the Jamaat had waited until it was sure everything would be ready and then invite me to inaugurate the Mosque. As for the venue for the reception, I will make a decision once I arrive in Sweden.”

An emotional Khadim

One day I met an Ahmadi Khadim called *Kunooz Anwer (37)* who had been born and brought up in Denmark.

Throughout the trip he was doing various duties at the Mosque. He told me that some years ago he had moved away from the *Jamaat* and had stopped practicing as an Ahmadi. However, during that period, he never felt inner peace or contentment and so after a few years he came back to the Mosque.

He was worried that he might be looked down upon or that someone might scold him for having not come to the Mosque for so long. However, to his surprise he was immediately welcomed and encouraged by the *National Amir* and other members of the *Jamaat*.

Then, a few weeks prior to Huzoor's tour to Denmark, Kunooz sahib had himself travelled to London to meet Huzoor.

Describing his experiences, Kunooz sahib said:

“When I met Huzoor in London I realised instantly how wrong I had been to distance myself from the Jamaat. Our Khalifa has nothing but love in his heart for each and every Ahmadi, even people like me. All I can do is to seek Allah's forgiveness through Istighfar for turning away from this blessed Jamaat.”

He then told me about the change he had observed in himself since he had been able to re-establish a connection with the *Jamaat* and with *Khalifa-Waqt*.

Kunooz sahib said:

“When I look at my old self – a person who was filled with bitterness – I cannot even recognise him. I have a teenage son and he says to me that he has seen a huge change in me since I came back to our Mosque and that he loves me more and that I am now the father that he had always hoped for.”

Emotions of an Ahmadi lady

I also met a lady called *Qanita Laiq* who had met Khalifatul Masih for the very first time a few moments before I met her. She had also had the opportunity to meet Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*) the day before.

As she wiped away tears from her eyes, Qanita sahiba said:

“Today, I met Khalifa-Waqt for the very first time in my life and I could never have imagined anyone could be so beautiful and so precious. Those moments in the presence of Huzoor will stay with me forever.”

She also told me about meeting Khala Saboohi. Qanita sahiba said:

“When I met Apa Jaan it felt as though I was meeting my own mother because she was so loving and kind. She was very wise and gave us some very important advice for our home lives. For example, she said that if a husband and wife ever have a dispute they should not discuss it in front of their children or show their anger to them.”

Qanita sahiba added:

“We also asked Apa Jaan what her personal life was like and she told us that both she and Huzoor lived very simple lives and did their own household jobs and errands. When I heard this I was amazed.”

A simple life

Upon hearing this, I told her how I had seen for myself just how simply Huzoor and Khala Saboohi lived.

Despite being so extremely busy and having such great responsibilities they did not depend on others but did normal household activities and work.

For example, Huzoor has told me how sometimes there are repairs to be made in his home and rather than call somebody he will do the repairs with his own hand.

Huzoor also does other household tasks such as changing lightbulbs in his home or lighting the Asian type of air-freshener known as '*dhooni*'.

Similarly, sometimes people presume that Khala Saboohi will have countless maids or cooks and yet nothing could be further from the truth.

Further, behind Huzoor's office in London he has a small personal garden. On a few occasions, Huzoor has kindly invited me to join him as he tended to his flowers and fruits.

In particular, during summer season Huzoor has cherries and figs that grow in the garden and I have witnessed how very lovingly Huzoor has himself tended to them.

Sometimes, Huzoor would ask me to hold a branch as he trimmed them or on other occasions Huzoor would pick the ripe fruits and ask me to gather them in a bag. In between, Huzoor would himself sometimes taste some of the fruits and would also encourage me to taste them.

Those moments were always very special and I was also always struck by how Huzoor seemed to enjoy being able to do these tasks himself rather than relying on others.

The importance of truth

I met a lady called *Shahista Nigae* sahiba who was *Secretary Ziafat* in Denmark's Lajna Imaillah.

Shahista sahiba had also met Khala Saboohi and told me about meeting her. She said:

“Apa Jaan is extremely simple and humble and we all benefited so much from spending time with her. She is very loving and graceful and is like a fountain of knowledge for the Lajna. One thing she emphasised to us was that we should always be entirely truthful in all our matters. When she says something you listen because you can see that she herself is an extremely truthful woman.”

Meeting Kosovan Ahmadis

During the tour, I also met with a number of Kosovan Ahmadis who had migrated to Denmark during the troubles of the 1990s in their homeland. Many of the Kosovan Ahmadis lived in a small town called *Nakskov* in southern Denmark.

One Kosovan I met was called *Moharam Qunjiji* who had come to Denmark in 1992 and accepted Ahmadiyyat the following year.

Moments after meeting Huzoor he said:

“All I can say is Alhamdolillah because so many millions of Ahmadis wish to meet their Khalifa and on this day my Allah has given me this

opportunity and this great privilege. These memories and blessings of seeing the face of my beloved and to hear his voice will stay with me forever.”

Another Kosovan, Adam Xhuze said:

“Huzoor is love, he is beautiful, he is everything and meeting him has further strengthened my faith. As soon as I get a Danish passport the first thing I will do is fly to London to meet Huzoor again!”

Meeting with Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Amila

On 8 May 2016, Huzoor held a meeting with the *National Amila of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Denmark*.

During the meeting, Huzoor gave a great deal of advice to the *Amila* members and instructed them on how they should conduct their duties.

During the meeting, Huzoor said:

“As Amila members you should set the best example for other Khuddam and you should be their friends, rather than trying to be their superiors or leaders. Insha’allah through such friendship they will naturally be attracted to the Mosque and to the Jamaat.”

The *Khuddam Ishaat Secretary* mentioned to Huzoor that the *Khuddam* were publishing a magazine, however it was published ‘on and off’ rather than regularly.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“Successful organisations do not work ‘on and off’ but are persistent and persevere. If we work only ‘on and off’ then it will take thousands of years for the world to accept Ahmadiyyat!”

As the meeting concluded, a member of the *National Amila* asked Huzoor to not wait eleven years until his next visit to Denmark.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Yes it has been eleven years and I do not know how time has flown by so quickly. With the Grace of Allah, the Jamaat has spread to all parts of the world. African Ahmadis are inviting me, similarly our Jamaats in South America are inviting me and they have made great progress.”

Huzoor then said:

“Anyway, we will see but if I come to Denmark and only give you four hours notice, will you manage?”

Upon this the *Khadim* said immediately:

“Yes Huzoor we will be ready!”

Preserving Jamaat's history

Later that day, Huzoor held a class with the Denmark's *Atfal* at the Nusrat Jahan Mosque.

During the class, the *Atfal* presented a short history of the Danish *Jamaat* and in it they mentioned that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) had taken a train to Denmark in 1967.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor enquired where Khalifatul Masih III (rh) had travelled from and neither Amir sahib or anyone else knew the answer to this.

Huzoor himself said that he suspected the train would have come from Germany.

After a few moments, Atta-ul-Abbasi, a *Waqf-e-Zindigi* who had travelled with *MTA International* informed Huzoor that he had done some research for *MTA* about this and that the train journey to Denmark taken by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) had been from the German city of Hamburg.

Thereafter, Huzoor turned to the elder members of the local *Jamaat* present and said:

“Every Jamaat should know the full history of their respective Jamaat and this information should be preserved. It is not enough to only know half your history or part of it.”

Atfal questions

Later, many of the *Atfal* had the opportunity to ask Huzoor questions.

One young boy asked Huzoor why he did not wear a white *sherwani* coat. In response, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Every person has a right to choose a colour that he prefers!”

A never ending schedule

Another boy asked Huzoor if he took a weekly holiday. In response, Huzoor said:

“I work seven days a week. Only very occasionally, perhaps after 5 or 6 months I might take a few hours but that is all.”

Whilst most *Waqf-e-Zindigis* are permitted one day off per week by the *Jamaat*, it is true that Huzoor works every single day.

Recently, someone said to me that he had heard that Huzoor took every Friday afternoon off after *Jumma*. This was incorrect.

In fact, within a couple of hours of *Jumma*, Huzoor invariably returns to his office and goes through correspondence received from different countries or from individual Ahmadis or other *Jamaat* work.

Huzoor's capacity to work is unlike anything I have ever seen in my life. When some of his longest tours had ended, such as to the *Far East* or *Australia*, Huzoor would return to his office within a few hours of returning to London, whilst the rest of the *Qafila* members returned home to rest.

Further, Huzoor has the ability of being able to do multiple things at once.

On many occasions, I have been in Huzoor's office for *Mulaqat* and I have seen Huzoor reading his office mail and writing detailed instructions, whilst at the same time giving me verbal instructions on whatever report I have presented.

Sometimes, when it seems Huzoor is intently reading a letter or a report, I remain silent so that Huzoor can concentrate, however invariably Huzoor will tell me to carry on with my own report.

Talking with Secretary Kharija

On 9 May 2016, Huzoor was to address a special reception of dignitaries and guests in Copenhagen and so the day before I met with the Secretary *Umoor-e-Kharija (External Affairs)* to discuss the event and programme.

He told me that the *Jamaat* had lined up 12 or 13 guest speakers before Huzoor would take the stage to deliver the keynote address.

I thought that this was an unusually large number and so I suggested that they cut this down to 5 or 6.

Having attended many receptions hosted by the *Jamaat* in the past, I had noted that sometimes guests would become a little tired if the function went on too long.

As a *Jamaat*, our aim is for the guests to listen to the message of Khalifatul Masih and to absorb his words and this is less likely if the guests are fatigued or hungry by the time Huzoor comes to deliver the concluding address.

Anyway, the local *Jamaat* accepted this advice and the number of guest speakers were reduced.

Huzoor's comment about Canada

On 9 May 2016, some members of Canada's *Jamaat* sent me photos of an open-air event they had held in Toronto city centre as part of their *Jamaat's* 50th anniversary celebrations.

It seemed as though thousands of Ahmadis had converged on the public square and also many dignitaries and guests were present. Following the conclusion, the thousands of Ahmadis present also offered *Salat* in the open air. Later that day, I showed the photos to Huzoor.

Upon seeing them, Huzoor said:

***"Masha'Allah in these type of public events and activities Canada's
Jamaat is very well trained."***

Alhamdolillah it seemed as though Huzoor was pleased.

Debuting my trousers

The day before Huzoor's tour begun I went to the well-known British store '*Marks & Spencer*' to purchase some new clothes to wear during the tour. Apart from a few other things, I bought a pair of trousers which were a little pricier than I would normally choose to pay.

I had been wondering when to '*debut*' my new trousers and so after much consideration I decided to wear them at the *Reception* being held in Copenhagen on Monday 9 May.

Thus, during the afternoon break following *Zuhr* and *Asr* I returned to my room to get ready. I proudly took out the trousers from my suitcase and proceeded to iron them very carefully. Though I am not the best ironer in the world, I wanted to do justice to my new trousers and so ironed each and every inch with great care and attention.

Finally, upon being satisfied that they were now very neatly ironed, I went to put on the trousers but as soon as I pulled them up and fastened the button, the trousers fell promptly to the ground!

I was confused and so pulled them up again and fastened the button and yet once again they instantly fell to the ground!

I picked them up a third time and this time I checked the label and to my horror and dismay I saw that I had purchased a size 42inch waste by mistake instead of the size 30 or 32 that I normally wear! No wonder they kept falling down!

Anyway, I then had to find some other trousers from my suitcase and iron them, all the while feeling deflated that my new trousers would remain packed in my suitcase throughout the tour!

Despite my trouser troubles, I was looking very much forward to the evening and to listening to Huzoor's address at the reception.

Travel to reception

At 5.30pm on 9 May, Huzoor came out of his residence wearing a grey *sherwani* coat and walked down the steps from his residence to where his car was parked.

Huzoor looked extremely graceful and radiant as he set off to deliver the true message of Islam to the Danish people.

I was seated in the car directly behind Huzoor's along with Mubarak sahib, Nasir Saeed sahib and our driver, a local *Khadim* called Talha Majoka.

The reception was being held at the *Copenhagen Airport, Hilton Hotel* where we arrived at 5.55pm.

Huzoor's meeting with dignitaries

Upon arrival at the hotel, Huzoor was escorted to a meeting room where Denmark's *Cultural and Religious Minister*, various MPs and a leading Christian Priest had gathered to welcome Huzoor and to meet him privately in advance of the main reception.

Huzoor met with the dignitaries for around 25 minutes, during which time they sought Huzoor's views and guidance on world affairs.



A message of peace

One of the MPs, a lady called Ulla Sandbaek, asked Huzoor if she could record a video message from Huzoor that she could then post on social media.

She said many people had the wrong impression of Islam and so she wanted to give Islam's true message through the person she considered as the true representative of the teachings of Islam. Most graciously, Huzoor agreed to record the message.

She had planned to make the recording using her phone, however *MTA* offered to record the message for her using their cameras.

Huzoor then spoke for two or three minutes and extremely eloquently outlined Islam's true teachings and its commitment to peace.

During the recording, Huzoor said:

“Islam literally means peace and so those who are acting against this are not true followers of the religion. Islam is peace, love, harmony and I believe that human values are more important than anything else. This is the Islam that I know and understand.”

As Huzoor concluded the *Member of Parliament* looked extremely appreciative and emotional.

Addressing Huzoor, she said:

“Thank you your Holiness – your message was beautiful and what you preached is what I expected and hoped Islam to be. I wish to spread this message of yours around the world.”

I actually spoke to Mrs Sandbaek later and she told me why she had asked Huzoor to record a message.

She said:

“I made a video of the Khalifa because I want to share with the world that Islam is a religion of peace. The Khalifa is truly inspirational and a voice of sanity in a world of too much insanity. I am so grateful to him.”

Message of condolence

After a few minutes, Belgium’s *Ambassador* to Denmark arrived and he also joined the meeting.

Upon being introduced to the *Ambassador*, Huzoor said:

“I wish to offer my sincere condolences to the Belgian nation following the recent terrorist attacks in Brussels. When the attack happened the local Ahmadi Muslims immediately manifest their loyalty to the nation and your Government appreciated this. In fact, wherever they are based, Ahmadi Muslims are always loyal to their nation.”

Copenhagen reception

Following the concluding of the meeting with dignitaries, Huzoor was escorted to a main reception hall at the *Hilton* where the formal reception commenced at 6.25pm.

Following the recitation of the Holy Quran, various guest speakers addressed the audience, which included more than 125 guests.

The guest speakers all welcomed Huzoor to Denmark and spoke about their appreciation of the peaceful message of the *Jamaat*.

Hon. Bertel Haarder, *Minister for Cultural Affairs and Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs* said:

“I would like to say that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is special in the way that all of your members are very well integrated into our Danish society.”

Another MP said:

“Your Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad is the voice in Islam who is talking about peace, talking about love, talking about unity. I have come here tonight to be inspired by your words so that I can carry them out in the world.”

Huzoor’s keynote address

Thereafter, Huzoor delivered his keynote address in which he spoke about Islam’s teachings and the need for mankind to respect each other’s beliefs.

After all, it was in Denmark that, more than a decade ago, a national newspaper first published extremely offensive cartoons depicting the Holy Prophet (sa).

Since then this act, which caused Muslims worldwide a great deal of pain and grief, had been copied in many other Western countries.

Addressing the cartoon issue and the need to respect one another, Huzoor said:

“Today in the name of freedom of expression, prophets and saintly figures are routinely mocked and ridiculed... Even here in Denmark, some years ago, there were cartoons printed that sought to ridicule the Founder of Islam^{sa} and to portray him, God forbid, as an imperialistic leader and belligerent warmonger.”

Huzoor continued:

“This unjust portrayal of the Holy Prophet^{sa} defies history and defies the truth. The reality was that the Holy Prophet^{sa} was forever enslaved by his determination to establish peace and the rights of humanity.”



Huzoor said:

“If we truly desire peace in the world, we need to think of the consequences of our words and deeds. We need to be respectful of the beliefs and values of others. This is the way to break down barriers and to knock down the walls of enmity and resentment that have been erected in so many parts of the world.”

Huzoor said that if people viewed Islam through a “*lens of justice*” as opposed to a “*lens of prejudice*” they would realise that Islam is a religion of peace.

Huzoor gave the example of how Syria’s Christians in the time of Hazrat Umar (ra) preferred to live under Muslim rule as opposed to living under the

Roman Empire because they had seen how the Muslims had protected their religious and civic rights.

Huzoor concluded by warning of the risks of further warfare.

Huzoor said:

“Conflicts continue to ignite and burn throughout the world and so let us not be in any doubt that the shadow of a fateful war looms before us. Alliances and blocs are rapidly forming before our eyes and so it is my grave fear that we are charging madly towards a devastating Third World War without pause for thought.”

Impact of Huzoor’s address

Following, Huzoor’s address, I was glad to be able to meet many of the guests and to hear their reflections on Huzoor’s address.

I could see how once again Huzoor’s words had touched so many people and clarified so many misconceptions about Islam.

I spoke to a Danish man called *Lars*, who said:

“The Khalifa explained that the Prophet Muhammad (sa) was a peaceful man who has been misunderstood and misrepresented. He defended his religion in a way that we cannot argue with.”

Another guest, Karol said:

“I met a man of peace today. I met a man who proves what the media says about Islam is false. I am emotional and feel charged and inspired. I feel as though I have met a man of wisdom. In particular, I liked how he balanced media freedom with world peace – this was very delicately handled.”

A Danish guest, Henrich Gemmelhoff said:

“To be honest the Danish people are afraid of Muslims and of the conflicts in the Middle East but after today at least we know that what is happening is not the fault of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) or his religion but that his teachings have been distorted.”

I met a lady who was a member of the *Humanist Association*. After listening to Huzoor’s address she said:

“There is too little awareness of the Ahmadiyya Community – the media seems to highlight only the negative things. All of Denmark’s media should have been here today to hear the message of peace delivered by the Khalifa.”

Another guest said:

“The Khalifa spoke about the cartoons printed in this country some years ago depicting the Prophet Muhammad (sa). Although this was a difficult subject to broach, His Holiness dealt with it in the very best way and with

sensitivity so that he was able to point out the errors that had been made without offending anyone.”

An interesting conversation

I also had an interesting conversation with Danish lady called *Ullia fin Ulrique*. She told me that her husband had been extremely reluctant to attend a reception hosted by an Islamic organisation because he feared there would be a terrorist attack or that there would be a suicide bombing!

However, she was extremely curious to see what an Islamic event was like and so she forced her husband to accompany her.

Describing their feelings after attending the event, Mrs Ulrique said:

“I have never been to such an event in my life. I accept now that Islam is peaceful and I hope that people pay heed to his message. My husband is also so happy that he came and in fact he was quite emotional. I am proud to have attended and if anyone missed this event they should regret it because they missed the message we have all been waiting for.”

A delicious buffet

After the formal reception concluded, food was served on long tables at the side and back of the hall for guests to enjoy in a buffet style. I spent most of the time meeting different guests but just at the end I was able to make myself a plate of grilled salmon and roast potatoes. The salmon was truly delicious!

There were a number of other dishes as well which I did not taste but they also looked very appetizing.

Nonetheless, just as the *Qafila* was about to return to the Mosque, I noticed a table with various desserts placed on it. They all looked delicious but as there was very little time I had to pick only one. I went for a small glass filled with chocolate mousse. It was a good choice!

Return to Mosque and prayer upon seeing the moon

Alhamdolillah, the reception proved extremely blessed in all respects. When the *Qafila* returned to the Mosque and Huzoor came out of his car he looked in my direction and asked me how I had found the event.

I mentioned how a number of guests had asked for the Danish translation of Huzoor's address.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor turned to Amir sahib and asked who would be an appropriate person to translate Huzoor's speech from English to Danish.

Amir sahib suggested one name but Huzoor said that Falah-ud-Din sahib, a young *Missionary* who had graduated from *Jamia Ahmadiyya UK* a few years ago, had a good standard of English and so he should translate the speech.

Just as Huzoor was about to return to his residence, Major sahib pointed towards the sky and said that a new moon was visible.

Immediately, Huzoor turned towards the moon and lifted his hands to pray and we all did likewise.

In this way, Huzoor was following the blessed practice of the Holy Prophet (sa).

Interview with *Radio 24Seven*

During the reception, Huzoor had been approached by a well-known Danish journalist called Rushy Rashid who hosted a programme on Denmark's *Radio 24syv* (*Radio 24Seven*).

She requested to interview Huzoor before he departed from Denmark and even though Huzoor's departure was the next day, Huzoor graciously accepted her request and said that she could come to the Mosque the next morning.

And so at 10.30am on Tuesday 10 May, Huzoor was interviewed at his office at the Nusrat Jahan Mosque by *Radio 24syv*.

Though the interview was scheduled for 30minutes it overran and lasted for around 50minutes.

Part of the reason for this was that the journalist asked Huzoor questions in English and would then translate both her questions and Huzoor's answers into Danish for her radio listeners.

Huzoor's attention to detail

One thing, I have seen is how alert Huzoor remains at all times. Sometimes, things that I, or others, should be aware of we miss but Huzoor invariably notices. One example took place during the interview.

In the room were certain members of Huzoor's *Qafila*, such as Majid sahib and me and also a couple members of MTA who were recording the interview. However, none of us were Danish speakers.

Thus, when it became clear that the journalist would translate Huzoor's answers into Danish herself, Huzoor sent a note outside that Amir sahib Denmark should also enter the room and observe the interview.

Generally speaking, when Huzoor is on tour, the *National Amir* does sit in the room during media interviews but it is not always the case.

Anyway, afterwards I thought to myself how the journalist could have translated Huzoor's answers in any way she wanted and none of us would have known if she was translating accurately or not.

I felt embarrassed that I had not myself realised this but also extremely grateful that Huzoor had himself called Amir sahib.

The handshake issue

During the interview one of the questions the journalist asked was why Huzoor did not shake the hands of women. I was not surprised that she

raised this question as in the weeks before the tour the issue of Muslim men not shaking the hands of Muslim women had become a political issue in neighbouring Sweden.



There, a Muslim politician refused to shake the hand of a female journalist and this led to a great deal of criticism from the mainstream media and the politician was forced to resign.

Thereafter, it was also debated in Sweden's Parliament and the Swedish Prime Minister also became involved by stating that shaking hands was a part of 'integration' and 'respect'.

For a few days, the issue became so controversial that Sweden's *Jamaat* also sent a report to Huzoor in advance of the tour.

I remember when I presented the report to Huzoor in his office in London, Huzoor instructed that it did not matter if it was a controversial issue or not – he could never do anything that was against the teachings of Islam.

He said that shaking hands with a lady was against our teaching and that I should convey this message to Amir sahib Sweden.

Upon being asked about this issue in Denmark, Huzoor explained that the fact that he did not shake hands with women was not a sign of disrespect but rather a sign of respect.

Furthermore, Huzoor said that the handshake was not the only form of greeting in the world. For example, Hindus joined their hands together as a form of respect and greeting, whilst Japanese people tended to bow.

Similarly, different groups had different beliefs and customs and it was wrong to say that only one form of greeting could be considered respectful and all others were disrespectful.

Huzoor said:

“Whether I shake the hand of a woman or not, I believe that the respect I hold for women in my heart is more than anyone else.”

Huzoor was also asked about the handshake issue later in the tour during a number of interviews in Sweden. He gave similar answers to their journalists and said that the handshake issue was one that had been blown out of all proportion at a time when there were far more pressing issues.

For example, innocent people were being killed in different parts of the world, there was a threat of another world war, global economies were suffering and millions of innocent people were dying of hunger.

Huzoor said that we should be looking to solve these great issues of our time, rather than to inflame smaller issues and to infringe on the personally held religious beliefs of peaceful people.

Huzoor was also asked various other questions, such as about the theological differences between Ahmadis and other Muslims and the increasing conflict in the world.

Alhamdolillah, to each and every question Huzoor gave eloquent responses filled with wisdom and truth.

Remaining true to Islam's true teachings

The final question asked by the journalist concerned the recent opening of a Mosque in Copenhagen which had received a lot of media coverage as it claimed to be a “*woman's only Mosque*”, in which the *Imams* were women.

Thus, Huzoor was asked if he supported the idea of female *Imams*.

In response, Huzoor said:

“The question is whether a person desires to develop his own new religion or whether he desires to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa). We Ahmadi Muslims follow the Sunnah, whereas those who are opening such Mosques are doing so in order to try and please non-Muslims. As true Muslims, we will always choose to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet (sa).”

The next day, the journalist played the majority of the interview on her radio programme and so in this way many thousands of people were able to listen to the blessed words of Khalifatul Masih.

As the journalist and the other people present exited the room, Huzoor looked in my direction.

Smiling, Huzoor said:

“Today’s interview had some different types of questions to the ones I am normally asked.”

I responded by saying I particularly appreciated how clearly and persuasively Huzoor had responded to the questions about the handshake issue and also about the idea of women Imams.

Huzoor looked at me and said:

“It is essential that we remain firm on our beliefs at all times. We follow Allah’s law and ultimately non-Muslims will respect us more if we stay firm to our principles rather than caving under their pressure.”

Huzoor’s words were so powerful, so inspiring and so true.

His voice was filled with certainty and an absolute conviction that only a true man of God could have. Certainly, Khalifatul Masih will always uphold the true teachings of Islam no matter what the circumstances.

I thought about this later in the day. The truth is that there are certain areas where our beliefs are contrary to modern-day popular opinion here in the *West*.

However, for decades we have endured hatred and persecution in Pakistan and certain other countries and have always been proud that the faith of Ahmadis has never weakened in the face of such opposition.

Rather, with every martyrdom or attack our faith increases and so if there comes a time where we are criticised or worse here in the *West* then it should not cause us fear or worry. Instead, it should strengthen our faith.

A fearful guest

I remained in Huzoor's office for a few minutes and mentioned some of the people I had met after the reception the previous night.

I mentioned the lady who had said her husband was worried that they would be caught up in a terrorist attack if they attended the reception.

Huzoor smiled and said:

“At least her husband had the courage to enter the hall because once in a different country there was a man who stayed in his car throughout one of our events because he was convinced there would be a terrorist attack!”

Meeting with Denmark's National Majlis Amila

Following the interview, Huzoor held a meeting with Denmark's *National Majlis Amila*. After a few minutes the *Jaidad (Property) Secretary* introduced himself to Huzoor.

Huzoor asked: ***"How much property do you have here?"***

The *Jaidad Secretary* thought Huzoor was asking about his personal property and so was about to list his own personal assets!

Thankfully, before he disclosed his personal portfolio, Huzoor said:

"No – I mean what property does the Jamaat in Denmark hold - not you personally!"

Huzoor then spoke to the *National Tarbiyyat Secretary* and said that he had noticed how that morning the attendance at *Fajr* had been lower than previous days and of those who did attend, the majority were guests from outside Denmark.

Huzoor said:

"When I go to Germany, Ahmadis come from 30 or 40km away to attend Fajr yet here the situation is different. If even during my presence the attendance at Fajr is poor, then what will it be like after I have left? You need to pay great attention to the importance of Namaz in the Mosque and it is up to the Amila members to set the standards."

Huzoor said it was important to develop an attachment to the Mosque and so the auxiliary organisations should hold their events on the same day where possible as this will encourage entire families to visit the Mosque.

The *Secretary* asked who would be responsible for *Ziafat* (food and hospitality) costs if joint functions were held as Huzoor suggested.

In response, Huzoor said:

“If the issue stopping people coming to the Mosque is the payment of food and drink then I will gladly pay for your Ziafat costs myself. This should not be a reason to stop you holding events.”

Visiting homes

Huzoor also advised the *Secretary Tarbiyyat* that his team should visit the homes of Ahmadis with a kind and tolerant spirit. In response, the *Secretary* mentioned that some Ahmadis may not appreciate being visited in this way.

Very beautifully, Huzoor said:

“Even so you should still go to their homes to see if they have any concerns or needs. Knock on their doors and if they do not invite you inside it does not matter. Just say ‘salam’ to them and leave without taking any offence. This is how to build trust and love and even if your effort is rejected by the person at least you will be rewarded by Allah for offering salam and for your good intentions.”

Huzoor's emotional words

One of the *Amila* members asked Huzoor about anonymous letters that are sent to Khalifatul Masih. For example, if someone sends a complaint to Huzoor but does not put his or her name to it.

Huzoor responded by saying that generally no action is taken on anonymous letters sent to him, however he does forward a copy of the letter to the local *Jamaat* about whom the complaint pertains.

Huzoor said the reason was so that the local *Jamaat* would be aware of the issue and they could assess if it was a genuine complaint from which they could learn or improve.

The same member then mentioned how once someone had sent an anonymous letter to Huzoor from Denmark complaining and the local *Jamaat* assumed it was his son who had sent the letter and had questioned him about it. He said that his son had written to Huzoor about this but had not received a response.

Some time later his son had a *Mulaqat* with Huzoor in London and so he advised him not to raise this issue in his *Mulaqat* in case Huzoor became upset with him or in case the *Jamaat* took any action against him or even expelled him from the *Jamaat*.

The next few minutes listening to Huzoor's response was extremely emotional.

Huzoor said that he responded to all of his mail and so it was possible that the letter had not reached him or the response had become lost.

Huzoor then said:

“It was extremely wrong of you to tell your son not to ask me about this issue in his Mulaqat. This is how grievances build up and it is also a means of thinking ill of Khalifa-Waqt that you think he will take action without reason. To remove someone from the Jamaat is a final step and Khalifa-Waqt would never take such action without proper reasons and without a thorough investigation.”

Huzoor continued by saying:

“Always remember that you should pray for Allah’s Grace and Mercy and for the truth to prevail. No one is perfect and so instead of beseeching Allah for justice, we should bow down and seek his forgiveness and mercy. Never stop your children from asking questions as this will open the door to resentment and frustrations. Remember, I have no personal enmity with any Ahmadi or any person.”

When I heard Huzoor utter these words, I felt tears roll down from my eyes. I looked around the room and saw that many of the other people in the room were also emotional and transfixed by Huzoor’s words.

The person who had asked the question also seemed to realise he had given erroneous advice to his son and seemed humbled by Huzoor’s words.

Having witnessed this scene, I thought of how Huzoor desires not for even a single Ahmadi to become distant from the *Jamaat* and yet there are still people who may think that the *Khalifa-Waqt* would take punitive action over trivial matters, rather than as an absolute last resort.

An example of Huzoor's kindness

Later in the day, a man in his 50s, called *Mirza Masood Ahmad* approached me. When he told me his name I thought that perhaps he was a member of the family of the Promised Messiah (as), however this was not the case.

He told me of an incident some years ago in Germany when his entire family had congregated in Germany during one of Huzoor's tours. When his sister met Huzoor in *Mulaqat* she requested if Huzoor would permit their family to have a group photo with Huzoor.

As there were so many members of the family the photo took place in the corridor outside Huzoor's office, rather than inside it. Masood sahib told me that his family had placed a chair for Huzoor and the plan was for the rest of the family to stand either side of Huzoor. However, when Huzoor came for the photo he saw that Masood sahib's mother was elderly and frail and so he immediately instructed that a chair be brought for her to sit on.

With tears flowing from his eyes, Masood sahib said:

"Each Ahmadi will have his own story of how Khalifa-Waqt has impacted them and for me I consider that moment to be one of the greatest moments of my life. The love, regard and respect that Huzoor showed for

my mother is something that I can never ever forget. Whenever I think of it I become emotional remembering the generosity and love of our beloved Khalifa.”

Departure from Denmark

Huzoor’s tour of Denmark had reached its conclusion and *Alhamdolillah* it had proved extremely blessed.

In just 6 days, Huzoor’s presence had a great impact on the country – both in terms of the local Ahmadis but also the wider population through the reception and media coverage.

The *Qafila* would now move on to Sweden. Although a different country, the drive to Malmo was very short and would take less than an hour.

Thus, in the afternoon Amir sahib Sweden, Mamoon-ur-Rashid sahib arrived to receive and escort Huzoor to Sweden.

The *Qafila* departed at 5.10pm from the Nusrat Jahan Mosque. I was seated with Mubarak Zafar sahib and unsurprisingly the car taking us to Sweden was a *Volvo*, which of course is a famous Swedish car company.

Before departing, Huzoor waved goodbye to the Ahmadis of Denmark. I looked around and saw people who were extremely sad to see their Khalifa depart wondering when they would next see him.

Arrival in Sweden

We drove across a long bridge that links Denmark to Sweden and reached the Swedish border at 5.45pm from where the Swedish police provided a full police escort for the onward journey to the Mahmood Mosque.

Within minutes of entering Sweden I saw a huge *IKEA* store, which was another iconic Swedish brand.

Looking forward

After a few minutes of driving on the motorway, the driver in our car pointed to a building in the distance.

We looked up and had our first glimpse of the newly built *Mahmood Mosque* which Huzoor was due to inaugurate during his visit. It was quite stunning and much more beautiful and larger than I could have imagined.

And so as we drove towards the Mosque, Huzoor's tour of Scandinavia entered its second week.

I looked forward to the rest of the tour where Huzoor would not only inaugurate the new Mosque but would also travel to both Stockholm and Gothenburg.

End of Part 1

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