

**JALSA SALANA UK 2017**

**A Personal Account – Part 3**

*By Abid Khan*

### **Introduction to Part 3**

Part 2 of this diary regarding the activities of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) during the period of Jalsa Salana UK 2017 concluded with narrations from meetings that Huzoor held with various delegations. During this concluding part, I shall recount incidents and events from the rest of the week that followed the conclusion of the Jalsa Salana.

### **A call from the President**

It was Tuesday, 1 August 2017, and Huzoor's meetings with different delegations continued, as he met a large group from Sierra Leone. It included a number of tribal chiefs, politicians and ambassadors.

One of the dignitaries attending was a *Chief Justice* from Sierra Leone and she read out a message sent by the *President of Sierra Leone*, Ernest Koroma, in which he congratulated the Jamaat on the Jalsa and expressed gratitude on behalf of his nation for the humanitarian and educational services rendered by the Jamaat in Sierra Leone.

After the message was read out, a representative of Sierra Leone's Government informed that the President would like to offer his congratulations to Huzoor in person by phone.

Graciously, Huzoor accepted this request and so the President of Sierra Leone was connected on a mobile phone which was presented to Huzoor.

During the call, Huzoor thanked the President for his kind words and enquired after the situation in Sierra Leone and offered his prayers for the nation.



At such moments, it often occurs how certain African Governments and leaders, understand, to some extent at least, the status of Khalifatul Masih, and seek his prayers and blessings for their nation.

In the past, Huzoor has spoken of his desire and hope that Africa comes to lead the world and in this regard, of understanding the status of Khilafat, it is already doing so.

### **The most articulate**

Thereafter, an Ahmadi lady from Sierra Leone, who was also a senior dignitary, said:

***“On behalf of the ladies who have travelled from Sierra Leone, I wish to say that we are proud that we were amongst the 37,000 people who***

***attended this year's Jalsa and next year it is our dream to bring a plane full of people to attend the Jalsa. Your Holiness, your addresses made us very emotional and through them, we learned true Islamic values and suffice to say that your words have reached our hearts."***

In response, Huzoor said:

***"You do not represent just the women but also the men because I do not think any man can express their sentiments better than you."***

It was a very gracious, kind and true comment from Huzoor.

Later, in the day, Huzoor mentioned his meeting with the guests from Sierra Leone to me.

Huzoor said:

***"I have told you before that Africans are the most articulate people and the ladies from Sierra Leone were proof of this. Some of the vocabulary they used was of the very highest class and extremely eloquent!"***

### **Madagascar, Liberia and Cameroon delegations**

The morning continued as Huzoor met further delegations from Madagascar, Liberia and Cameroon.

One guest from Madagascar was a retired politician who had served as a Minister in previous governments.

Addressing Huzoor, the ex-Minister said:

***“I have seen that your sect of Islam is completely different to all other Muslims I have met. Your community is filled with love and you focus on serving others and particularly people who are deprived or are suffering in any way. I thank you for all that you are doing.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“You do not need to thank us, for serving others is our mission and our duty.”***

During Huzoor’s meeting with Liberian guests, a Liberian Senator said:

***“I have known Ahmadis for decades in Liberia and have seen first hand that Ahmadis in our country are peaceful and loyal citizens. Furthermore, during the past few days, I have seen that this is not exclusive to Liberia, rather I have met Ahmadis from across the world and they were all spreading a message of peace and tolerance.”***

Another Liberian guest said:

***“Your Holiness, it is at difficult times that you see your true friends. For instance, when the Ebola crisis plagued our country a few years ago, it was only the Ahmadiyya Hospital that remained open in our area and continued to treat people, whereas all the other hospitals closed. For this, our nation can never express its true gratitude to you.”***

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

***“Yes, I would not permit our Ahmadi hospital to close at that time when the people needed us. It was our duty to serve the people at their time of need.”***

A journalist from Cameroon said:

***“Never in my wildest imaginations did I imagine that I was coming to attend such a spiritual event. Your Holiness, you have shown the entire world that Muslims are peaceful, educated, intellectual and gracious. Forgive me for saying this, but this has come as a shock to me and I am sure will be a shock to other people like me in my nation. As a journalist, it is my job to criticise and to find flaws, but I could not find any.”***

It was a beautiful testament to the effect that Jalsa has upon non-Ahmadi and non-Muslim guests.

In reply, Huzoor smiled before saying:

***“Yes, you will never find a flaw in Islam and you will never find any other nation or community which demonstrates the peace that you saw here at Jalsa.”***

### **A pioneer Jamaat**

Huzoor also met with converts from Honduras, where a Jamaat was first established very recently.

The first ever convert to Ahmadiyyat in Honduras, a man, said:

***“I do not have the words to tell you how I feel and how to describe the atmosphere of love that I observed at the Jalsa. I want this same atmosphere and spirit to be seen in my country and for my people to accept Islam.”***

The second convert to Ahmadiyyat from Honduras, a lady, informed Huzoor that she was working as a receptionist and that she was living as a single mother with two children. It was clear she was not living an easy life but through Ahmadiyyat she had gained peace. She said:

***“Whilst I was here, I forgot everything else, and all I felt was peace and I felt as though this was my true home.”***

Thereafter, Huzoor collectively addressed the pioneer members of the Honduras Jamaat.

Huzoor said:

***“Alhamdolillah, you have accepted Islam’s teachings and have seen that our religion is the means for peace and that our mission is to love and care for mankind. Therefore, I hope and pray that you now return to your nation and spread the true teachings of Islam to the people of Honduras.”***

Very lovingly, Huzoor then gifted all the new converts rings inscribed with the revelation of the Promised Messiah (as) that *“Is Allah not sufficient for His servant?”*

Before handing over the rings, Huzoor very carefully checked the size of each ring to make sure they matched the person he was giving it to.

It took two or three minutes for Huzoor to find the right size for every member of the group and, whilst every minute of Khalifatul Masih is very precious, Huzoor did not mind and smiled throughout.

It was clear that Huzoor's love for new Ahmadis had enveloped the entire room and a very special atmosphere was created.

### **Guyana delegation**

Huzoor's next meeting was with a small delegation from Guyana, which included a Hindu Priest, who was also a psychologist.

In the meeting, the Hindu Priest said:

***"I am a Hindu but after attending the Jalsa and meeting you I consider myself an Ahmadi by heart."***

Another guest, a female reporter from Guyana, said:

***"In Guyana, I work with all the different Muslim groups and sects and meet them and there is no comparison between the conduct and love of Ahmadis and the other groups. I really hope that one day a light will shine on the other Muslims and they will all become Ahmadis!"***



Hearing this, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Our aim is not just to reform the Muslims but to win the hearts of all people from all parts of the world, Insha’Allah.”***

The Guyanese journalist then asked Huzoor about the significance of dreams.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Every person, whether they are spiritual and religious or not sees dreams whilst they sleep. Thus, the majority of such dreams are not signs from God or of significance and are just the result of our subconscious mind. However, if you particularly pray for something and then see a dream in which you receive guidance or reassurance it can be considered to be from Allah.”***

### **A touching moment**

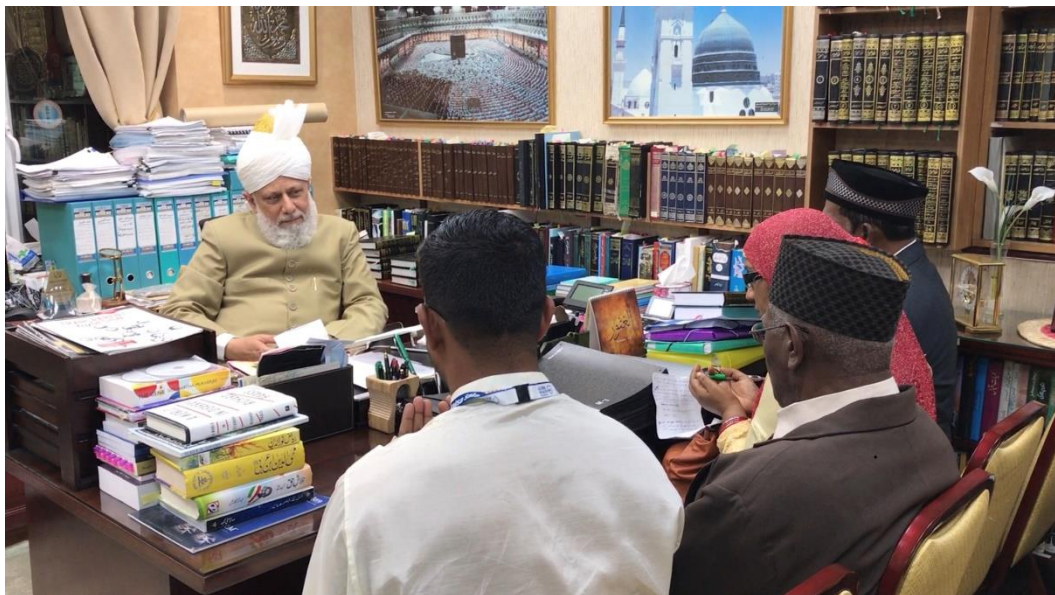
Thereafter, I was lucky enough to witness a very touching and beautiful moment.

The Hindu Priest said:

***“Your Holiness, I wish to offer a Muslim prayer, but before doing so, I wish to pledge my commitment to helping the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and expressing my heartfelt desire for it to flourish. I have been particularly struck by the 9<sup>th</sup> condition of Bai’at, which requires Ahmadi Muslims to serve their fellow Creation for the sake of God Almighty. The***

***words of the ninth condition have touched me and I pledge to abide by them.”***

The Priest then recited very beautifully *Surah Fatiha*. Whilst he was reciting, I took out my phone and started recording a video of his recitation. He had clearly spent a lot of time learning the words of *Surah Fatiha* and recited with a lot of emotion. Huzoor listened carefully to the Hindu Priest, who in the photo below is seen wearing a white shirt. As he concluded the recitation, Huzoor said ‘*Ameen*’ and thanked the Priest.



Huzoor said:

***“In my eyes, you may be a Hindu Priest, but you are also already at least half-Muslim. You have just recited very beautifully the first chapter of the Holy Quran and my advice to you is to always reflect upon the words of Fatiha that ‘Guide us on the right path’ and focus upon this when you pray.”***

It was clear Huzoor had enjoyed the meeting with the Guyanese delegation and appreciated the sentiments of the guests.

Indeed a little later, Huzoor said to me:

***“Masha’Allah, the Hindu guest recited Surah Fatiha very well and seems to have a good understanding of Islam.”***

### **Meeting with African media**

Huzoor’s final meeting of the morning was with a delegation of journalists and media personnel from Africa. The delegation represented various African countries where the Jalsa Salana UK had been broadcast, either in full or in part, on their national television.

It was quite amazing to consider how national broadcasters had broadcasted many hours of the Jalsa to their nations. It was the equivalent of the Jalsa being broadcast live across the UK on the *BBC* or on *ITV*.

The journalists informed Huzoor of the feedback they had received from African people.

One African journalist presented his report to Huzoor and said:

***“We received many calls and emails from members of the general public who said that they had been amazed when they watched the Jalsa and their previous fears and misconceptions regarding Islam had been entirely removed.”***

The journalist continued:

***“It was a relief for our people to see that Wahhabism and extremism is not the true Islam as they thought. Sadly, Wahhabism has a lot of influence in Africa and so people fear Islam or consider it an extremist religion. However, the Jalsa has gone a long way in countering these negative attitudes and wrong views and people have seen what Islam truly represents through the speeches of Your Holiness.”***

After Huzoor received the reports from different countries, he noted that the most coverage was received in Sierra Leone.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“During these days it appears Sierra Leone’s TV was actually MTA, as MTA was broadcasting almost non-stop on their channel. Thus, this year Sierra Leone has overtaken Ghana in terms of Jalsa coverage!”***

I am quite sure that, where Huzoor’s comment was an expression of his satisfaction at the excellent coverage in Sierra Leone, it was also a form of encouragement to the media companies in Ghana to increase their coverage in future years!

### **Emotions of an Ahmadi family**

Later in the day, Huzoor met around 75 Ahmadi families during a session of family Mulaqats.

One Ahmadi family who met Huzoor were *Muhammad Yunus Mairhofer* (36) from Austria, his wife *Faiza Naeem* and their three young children.

Yunus sahib had converted to Ahmadiyyat in 2007 and had moved to London to live near Huzoor for a few years after accepting Islam. In 2012, Yunus sahib returned to Austria so that he could seek to spread the message of Ahmadiyyat to his fellow countrymen.

Speaking to me moments after their family Mulaqat, Yunus sahib said:

***“Over the past decade, Ahmadiyyat has given me a new life and a solid and blessed path to walk upon. It has given me confidence and I feel peace and security that I never ever felt before. In every aspect of my life, my faith is sufficient and Khilafat is my guiding light.”***

Yunus sahib also told me his reasons for returning to Austria. He said:

***“The truth is that as a native Austrian Ahmadi I felt a strong obligation to serve my country by delivering the message of true Islam to it. Of course, I was happy and aware of the privilege of living close to Huzoor and I always tried to take full benefit of it. However, the feeling of obligation towards my nation and my parents, who had shown extraordinary understanding and support when I needed them, meant I had to return. It appears to me now that I have more opportunity to be closer to Allah’s Khalifa by doing Tabligh in Austria than I did when I lived a few metres away from Huzoor’s home in London.”***

Yunus sahib's wife, Faiza also spoke and told me about a personal incident that she had personally found very faith inspiring.

Faiza sahiba said:

*"Today, we have come with our infant child Farah and when I was pregnant with her I kept writing to Huzoor requesting his prayers that the delivery of the child will be very easy and free of any complications. Anyway, around two weeks before the due date, my waters broke, and I was sure that it would be a very quick labour as I had written to Huzoor for prayers. However, when the doctors assessed me they said there was still a long time to go and that they would have to induce labour. Hearing this, I was very frightened and I immediately wrote to Huzoor for prayers and told my husband to go and fax the letter."*

Faiza sahiba continued:

*"As soon as I had signed the letter, within a minute, proper labour pains suddenly started and, despite the doctors thinking it will be a long process, within a couple of hours the baby was delivered extremely smoothly and without any issue or need for inducement. Thus, in the end, everything was extremely quick, and I am sure that Huzoor's prayers were the reason. I consider it a miracle because three or four doctors had assessed me separately and each of them said that we will have to induce labour yet due to Huzoor's prayers there was no such need, Alhamdolillah."*

### A convert's journey

Whilst walking on Gressenhall Road that afternoon I met entirely by chance an African-American Ahmadi Muslim convert, *Abdul Subhan Azim (56)* from Delaware in the United States.

Though we had never met before, we soon became friendly and he told me about his journey to Ahmadiyyat. He spoke in a very gripping way and so as we talked, I felt I was listening to a famous novel or book, yet what he told me was his actual true-life story. As we talked, I also came to know that he was a media personality himself, as he presented a programme called '*The Black Perspective*' in the United States.

Brother Abdul Subhan told me how he was born a Christian but converted to Islam in 2001, when he joined the *Nation of Islam*. However, after some extremely negative experiences, whereby he witnessed immoral behaviour amongst senior members of the organisation, he left the *Nation of Islam* in 2013.

Abdul Subhan sahib said:

***"The reason I joined the Nation of Islam was because I had been inspired by Malcolm X and his struggles during the civil rights movement. I became heavily involved in the Nation of Islam and was appointed as their 'Minister of Information' and I was known as 'Christopher X'. To get an 'X' you had to be very well versed in the Nation's teachings and the 'X' was a symbol that replaced the names our forefathers were given as slaves."***

Abdul Subhan sahib continued:

***“As part of my role as Minister of Information, it was my job to procure books for our official bookstore. I had never heard of Ahmadiyyat but as I looked for books I came across some Ahmadi books and I started to read them. Later, I met an Ahmadi bookseller and I told him that I had found the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) extremely impressive, scholarly and meticulous. It was clear to me that the Promised Messiah (as) did not care about the world and only cared about spirituality and gaining the nearness of God.”***

Narrating further, Abdul Subhan sahib said:

***“As I said, I joined the Nation because of Malcolm X, but the more I read the books of the Promised Messiah (as), the more I realised that my role model should be the Prophet Muhammad (sa) and not Malcolm X or any other activist.”***

After leaving the *Nation of Islam*, Abdul Subhan continued to read Ahmadi literature and he was motivated to attend Friday Prayers at an Ahmadi Mosque in Philadelphia and to attend the USA Jalsa Salana in 2016. He found himself extremely affected by the brotherhood and unity he saw amongst Ahmadi Muslims. Increasingly, he was drawn towards Ahmadiyyat.

Abdul Subhan sahib said:

***“I kept coming to the Ahmadi Mosque every Friday and read more and more books. On my TV show, I was spreading the message of the***



***Promised Messiah (as), even though I had not done Bai'at myself. The reason I held back from doing Bai'at was due to my past negative experiences with the Nation of Islam."***

Abdul Subhan sahib continued:

***"In particular, I loved reading the book 'Noah's Ark' by the Promised Messiah (as) because he has written about the need to 'know' and to have 'certainty' in your faith and as I read it I felt that the Promised Messiah (as) really knew Allah and knew what Allah the Almighty wanted. I wanted complete certainty in my faith before accepting Ahmadiyyat and over a period of time this developed and so with the Grace of Allah, I did Bai'at in February this year."***

I asked Abdul Subhan if he had met Huzoor and he told me he was part of the American group delegation who had met Huzoor the previous day. He also listened regularly to Huzoor's sermons and speeches.

Expressing his observations of *Khalifa-Waqt*, Abdul Subhan sahib said:

***"I love Huzoor because he is an extremely balanced individual and leader. You could place a book on Huzoor's head and he could walk around all day and it will never fall down because he is so balanced and fair!"***

It was a unique description of Huzoor and one I had not heard before! However, it was clear that the example Abdul Subhan gave had come from

his heart and out of his love and respect for Huzoor. In fact, the next day, I mentioned it to Huzoor and he laughed and enjoyed this comment a lot!

Continuing, Abdul Subhan sahib said:

***“Whenever I see Huzoor answer questions I can see how intelligent he is and how much he has pondered over the Holy Quran and understood it. In fact, when you listen to Huzoor speaking, it is like he is reciting the Quran because in every speech or sermon whatever he says is essentially the words of the Quran. Anyway, I was really humbled to meet Huzoor yesterday and I also had the opportunity to say, ‘I love you’ to him and I am proud to say I love him deeply.”***

Abdul Subhan sahib continued:

***“You know once Huzoor broke my heart because in a sermon he spoke about those women who are mired in poverty and have to walk ten miles each day to get water for their children. In his address, Huzoor asked ‘Don’t you think that such a woman who has to walk so far has a heart and has feelings?’ That moment, I realised the Khalifa feels the pain of society and of the most vulnerable people. That moment he got me! He got me! I was ready to get on a plane and go and give water to the ladies he spoke about.”***

As I continued to listen to Abdul Subhan sahib, I felt both emotional and a sense of anticipation as to see what he would say next. He told me about his experiences of attending the UK Jalsa for the very first time.

Abdul Subhan sahib said:

***“It was a wonderful Jalsa but there was one issue I faced. In the mornings, the showers at Hadeeqatul Mahdi were extremely cold and so I became upset. However, I then read the verse of Quran that says, ‘Is Allah not sufficient for His servant?’ Upon this, I realised that cold showers and other tribulations were meaningless because Allah and His Prophet (sa) were sufficient and thereafter my Jalsa experience was awesome, I felt peace and I felt proud that I had beaten Satan.”***

Referring to the example he was now setting for his children, Abdul Subhan sahib said:

***“My son is 25 and he told me recently that he wants to be a Muslim like me. He never said any such thing when I was a member of the Nation of Islam and so it shows that there has been a good change in me since I became an Ahmadi Muslim!”***

Abdul Subhan sahib continued:

***“When I was young, my parents forced me to go to church and I resented it and so I have never forced religion upon my kids, but my recent conduct has had a good effect on my child and drawn him towards religion and I consider it a blessing of Ahmadiyyat.”***

I had enjoyed my conversation with Abdul Subhan sahib and learned a lot about the experiences of the African-American community in America and some of their history.

I had been moved by the way he had come to accept Ahmadiyyat through a combination of reason, research and emotion.

As he walked away, I saw that the man, formerly known as ‘*Christopher X*’ was wearing a hoodie sweater which had ‘*Messiah 89*’ written prominently on the back, as he proudly displayed his belief in Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (as) for the world to see.

### **Virtues of Islam**

On the morning of 2 August 2017, Huzoor held meetings with further delegations from across the world, including a group from Benin, which included the *ex-Foreign Minister of Benin*.

The ex-Foreign Minister said:

***“Your Holiness, I am here as a representative of the President of Benin and I wish to inform you that the message of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has reached all parts of our nation and we truly believe that if the world understands your message and follows it then the world will be a far better place.”***

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Thank you and I hope that in Benin, at least, you seek to spread this message of peace and tolerance. You need to be united as a country and Africa needs to be united as a Continent. This will help to defeat terrorism, extremism and enable your nations to progress.”***

The ex-Foreign Minister thanked Huzoor and said:

***“As a woman, I wish to say that your Jalsa address to the ladies on Saturday has affected me in a very profound way because you beautifully explained the true status of women. In our countries, women are not treated in such a good way and so it is imperative that the African people, both men and women, listen to your address.”***

As I write these words it is now November 2017 and as I think back to the comments made by the ex-Foreign Minister of Benin, it occurs that it is not only in Africa that women are not treated well.

Rather, during the last few weeks, we have seen news of famous Hollywood personalities, as well as Western politicians, embroiled in scandal. It has been revealed how they have harassed and abused women seemingly with impunity for decades.

Just a few days ago, I mentioned the latest developments in this scandal to Huzoor, where a UK Government Minister was forced to resign after being caught up in the scandal. One of the allegations was that he placed his hand on the knee of a female journalist many years ago.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

***“Whether they accept it or not, these incidents of abuse and harassment are showing the world the wisdom and virtues of Islamic teachings. Who knows if his gesture was made with ill-intent or not but in Islam by***

***keeping men and women at a certain distance and through Purdah it ensures that there is no scope for suspicion.”***

Huzoor’s words were profound and certainly the scandal has emphasised the way Islam has protected women from men, whilst at the same time has protected men from having allegations of abuse or harassment levelled upon them.

In the Western world, Muslims are rebuked if they do not shake hands with people of the opposite sex or women are criticised if they observe Hijab, yet it is these values that protect from distressing situations.

Who knows if all the allegations being made these days are true or whether some have been exaggerated or fabricated, but nevertheless reputations have been destroyed and a culture of inappropriate behaviour has been revealed. Perhaps, now non-Muslims will start to understand the motivations underpinning Islamic teachings.

### **Further delegations**

Huzoor’s next meetings were with a delegation from *Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Micronesia*, as well as delegations from *Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Morocco, Guatemala, and Guinea Conakry*.

During his meeting with guests and converts from Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Micronesia it was extremely inspiring to see how in these tiny and extremely remote Pacific Islands, the message of the Promised Messiah (as) had reached and was now flourishing with the Grace of Allah.

For example, Kiribati is a tiny country with a population of just 110,000, yet, with the Grace of Allah, a proper Jamaat has been established comprising over 400 Ahmadi Muslims.

During the meeting, the local Jamaat Missionary in Kiribati informed Huzoor that for a religious community to be officially registered by the government it required that 10% of the population followed the religion.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

***“Ok, so you need to increase the Tajneed by at least another 10,000 and then they may let us get registered!”***

A Moroccan Ahmadi convert asked Huzoor to pray that he was able to find a suitable match for marriage in Europe.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“If it is your desire to get married in Europe then may Allah help you, however, I am worried about the entire Jamaat and not just Europe. Thus, if the Ahmadi Moroccan men choose to get married in Europe, then who will be left to marry the Ahmadi ladies in Morocco? Will they be left alone?”***

Huzoor’s words very moving, whereby he permitted the Ahmadi to pursue his desire to get married in Europe but, at the same time, expressed his deep love and concern for Ahmadi women in other parts of the world.

A non-Muslim guest from Guatemala told Huzoor about his experiences at Jalsa and also his impressions of Islam. He said:

***“In my entire life, I have never seen people who care for others as much as Ahmadis do. You teach that to attain the love of God, you must love His creation and this is completely different to the media portrayal of Islam.”***

The guest continued:

***“At a personal level, I was a Catholic and then I became a Protestant but neither of these variations of Christianity ever told me that to get God’s love, I should love my fellow mankind. Rather, all they said was to earn money and then give it to the Church and in the end, this pushed me away from Christianity. Here at your Jalsa, I have seen a religion that is a positive force for the entire world.”***

A Judge from Guatemala, Mr. Dominguez, also mentioned his experiences of Jalsa. He said:

***“I consider myself extremely lucky to have attended the Jalsa because these three days were like a full University degree in the true teachings of Islam! Now, I will be able to teach others in my country about Islam’s peaceful teachings.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“You are a judge and so remember that Islam teaches justice and honesty when making decisions or judgements. This is the spirit you should seek***



***to develop in your people that even if they have to testify against themselves they should be willing to do so in order for the truth to prevail.”***

A guest from the African country, Guinea-Conakry spoke of the effect Jalsa had on him. He said:

***“I have done Hajj and have attended many Islamic events but without hesitation, I can say I have never seen such a righteous spirit as I saw at the Jalsa Salana. I saw young children who displayed perfect morals and were trained to serve others and always had a smile on their faces. I consider you not just as a leader of Ahmadis but a leader for all Islam and I am certain that the Hand of Allah is with you.”***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“Nothing can be more peaceful than true Islam but the majority of Muslims have forgotten the real teachings of Islam and, as a result, are proving to be the biggest source of conflict and disorder in the world today. However, we Ahmadis, have followed the original teachings of Islam since the day our Community was founded in 1889. It is our hope and prayer that Muslims across the world unite, irrespective of differences of sect, to promote humanity and live side by side in peace.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“This year the British police appointed a new inspector to oversee the security at Jalsa and on the final day, he said that he will report to his***

***superiors that there is actually no need for policing at the Jalsa because everything is so peaceful and everyone is so disciplined! This is true Islam!"***

### **A clenched hand**

During a short break in the proceedings, I walked towards one of the Jamaat guest houses across the road from the Fazl Mosque when I was approached by an Ahmadi man called *Mubashar Ahmad* (54).

I had seen him on dozens of occasions over the past few years and most often he would have a brush in his hand and would be sweeping the courtyard of the Mosque. Alternatively, he would often be rolling out prayer mats for people to pray on or collecting them after the conclusion of *Salat*. Though I had seen him many times, I did not know who he was or where he was from.

Upon beckoning me, Mubashar sahib told me his name and without any further introduction, he said:

***"I have heard that you write things down and what you write is sometimes read by other people. I am an illiterate man, who cannot read or write, and so perhaps you can write something for me, which I know to be a sign of the truth of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya."***

I was a little taken aback but at the same time intrigued and so I asked him to tell me more.

Mubashar sahib said:

***“In 2006, my daughter was born and the fingers of her hand were permanently closed.”***

Mubashar sahib clenched his fist tightly to show me how her fingers were stuck to the palms of her hand.

After showing me, he said:

***“We kept taking her to the doctor but when she reached the age of 9 months, finally the doctor gave us the news that we never wished to hear. He said she will never be cured and that she will never be able to talk and that she would have many other physical and mental problems during her life.”***

Mubashar sahib continued:

***“We are so fortunate that our Khalifa even meets illiterate and worthless people like me. He meets those that the world looks down upon and considers to be nothing. Thus, I went to see Huzoor and told him about what the doctor said. In response, the most beautiful words imaginable came out of the mouth of our Khalifa. He said: ‘Do not worry, whatever the doctors say is wrong – your daughter will be absolutely fine!’”***

As he reached the climax of his story, tears rolled down the face of Mubashar sahib. It was very emotional for me to see the state of this person, who I had seen many times before doing duty in the Mosque.

Mubashar sahib said:

***“When my daughter reached exactly 18 months of age, she was sitting in front of me and I saw with my own eyes her unclench her hand for the very first time. I swear before God, it was a miracle and a direct result of the prayers of my Khalifa. Alhamdolillah, my daughter is now 11 years old and despite what the doctor predicted, she talks, she is normal and healthy in all regards. I swear there is nothing in the world that cannot be achieved through the prayers of Khalifatul Masih!”***

As he said these words Mubashar sahib picked up his brush, which he had laid to the side for a few minutes, and went back to the Mosque courtyard and began sweeping once again. Now, many months later, I continue to see him most days and each time I am reminded of those few minutes in his company.

### **International Press Conference**

Later in the morning, Huzoor held a Press Conference with media representatives from different parts of the world.

In total, 16 journalists took part from Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe and other parts of the world.

A journalist from Mexico asked Huzoor his views on the potential of a USA-Mexico border wall, as proposed by Donald Trump.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“There are some genuine concerns, such as the risk of human trafficking or drug smuggling, however at the same time USA and Mexico are neighbours and have a huge amount of bilateral legal trade and so to build a wall does not send out the right message. Rather, the Governments should invest in ensuring that border checks are conducted with vigilance so that any criminal activity can be stopped, whilst they continue to engage in trade and respecting each other’s rights as neighbour countries.”***



As I listened, I considered how this was an example of the balance and wisdom in Huzoor’s words.

From reading media reports and talking to people in America, there is a sense of an ever-deepening polarisation of society where everything is in black and white. Thus, in terms of the border wall, people are either for or against, yet Huzoor considers both sides and the various shades to each issue.

Consequently, where he made it clear that neighbour countries should seek to build bridges rather than walls, he also stated that some concerns of the US Government were legitimate. Though, rather than waste countless billions on building a wall, he proposed increased border vigilance, which would achieve far more and would probably cost far less.

A journalist from Rwanda informed Huzoor that he had visited Jamia Ahmadiyya UK and met some of the students who were training to be Missionaries. He asked Huzoor if the Jamaat was ‘*restricting*’ or ‘*limiting the potential*’ of the young men by training them to be Missionaries when they could otherwise pursue worldly careers.

In response, Huzoor explained that the Jamaat did not force anyone to join Jamia and the students applied freely of their own volition. Huzoor said that the majority of Ahmadi youth were pursuing higher education in university and going on to different professional careers, whilst there were around 130 students who were receiving religious training in the UK Jamia.

Huzoor said:

***“You chose to become a journalist and there are Ahmadi journalists as well. However, if an Ahmadi youth wishes to dedicate his life and become a Missionary that is also his personal choice and not a restriction or obligation forced on them!”***

A female journalist from Benin asked Huzoor how women could play their role in developing peace in the world.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“I consider women to be nation builders and so they play a vital and immeasurable role in developing peace in the world by raising their children in the best way and educating them. In this way, women are the ones who can unlock the doors to Paradise for their children.”***

### **Reflections of an elder**

Over the past few years, a familiar figure at the UK Jalsa has been *Mubashar Kahlon sahib* (66) from Rabwah. Kahlon sahib is well known, as he has served as the *Mufti-Silsilah* (Director for Office of Jurisprudence) for many years and is an esteemed scholar of the Jamaat.

I must admit that despite having a vague understanding of the role of *Mufti Silsilah*, I was not sure exactly what the role entailed. Thus, when I met Kahlon sahib one afternoon in the week after Jalsa, the first question I asked him was about his work.

He explained that within a religion there were ‘two branches’, one being ‘*Kalaam*’ which pertained to establishing the truth of a religion, its doctrines and theological aspects.

The second branch was ‘*Fiqah*’ which related to the practice of Islam and the various rules and regulations linked to every day issues of one’s faith. He said that a *Mufti*, was essentially a jurist, who could issue *Fatwas* in relation to *Fiqah*.

It was interesting to hear him bring the word ‘*Fatwa*’ into the conversation, as in the non-Muslim world it is a word that has elicited a great deal of controversy and fear over the past few decades. Whilst commonly translated as ‘edict’, Kahlon sahib told me this was inaccurate.

Mubashar Kahlon sahib said:

***“People translate Fatwa in different ways but in reality, it means ‘an answer’ and so the Mufti is the person who gives answers to issues pertaining to the practice of Islam. The reality in our Jamaat is that there is only one real Mufti and that is Khalifatul Masih. In order to assist him, to provide research and an opinion on certain matters the office of Mufti Silsilah was created by Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra). Yet, Khalifatul Masih is never bound by the decisions of the Mufti, rather we provide opinions or recommendations that Huzoor may approve or reject as he deems right.”***

From a distance, Mubashar Kahlon sahib can seem a slightly intimidating and imposing figure. Probably for a *Mufti-Silsilah* such a disposition is useful as it lends a sense of authority! However, as I spoke to him, I found him very down to earth and each sentence was accompanied by a smile on his face.

Speaking about his experiences of Huzoor before Khilafat in Rabwah, Mubashar Kahlon sahib said:

***“Before Khilafat, Huzoor was extremely quiet, verging on the silent. I observed that Huzoor’s main purpose and objective at that time was dua (prayer). In every matter, it was apparent that Huzoor would turn to***



***Allah and bow down before Him before taking action or making any decision.”***

Mubashar Kahlon sahib continued:

***“I have to admit that I never realised how well read and how much religious knowledge Huzoor had until after he became Khalifa. This too was a sign of his humility that he never showed off his knowledge. It was only after he became Khalifa that I became aware, as sometimes Huzoor would ask us for a reference and we could not find it and so then we would receive another message from Huzoor in which he would tell us to search a particular book and look at a particular page or footnote and invariably when we looked there we would find the reference. It showed me that Huzoor had read these books in great detail and his recall was extremely precise and exceptional.”***

Speaking about the unique nature of the UK Jalsa, Kahlon sahib said:

***“I think the first preference of every Ahmadi in the world would be to attend the UK Jalsa above any other and the reason is the presence of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih. He is the person that God Almighty talks to directly and so his presence takes everything to a completely different level. He is the pivot around which we all circle.”***

Mubashar Kahlon sahib continued;

***“In Surah Al-Nahl, Allah the Almighty has stated that he has inspired a bee through revelation. It means that even the work of the bee is guided***

***by Allah and the result is that bees produce honey and honey is known as an excellent antiseptic and also as a remedy for many illnesses. Honey is also a means of energy, power and strength and so this is the potential that has been unlocked in a humble bee through the Grace and Inspiration of God. If we consider then that Khalifa-Waqt, who is the best of mankind today and that man is the best of Creation, receives the direct guidance of Allah we can never imagine the power of spiritual healing and blessings associated with him."***

The analogy drawn by Kahlon sahib was fascinating and highlighted very clearly the great importance of staying close to Khilafat.

I had heard that Mubashar Kahlon sahib had read the books of the Promised Messiah (as) repeatedly to the extent that he had memorised many parts and so as our conversation drew to a close, I asked him how he found the time to study and if he continued to do so even now.

In response, Mubashar Kahlon sahib said:

***"Ever since I studied in Jamia, I have had the habit of reading either the Holy Quran or other religious books after every prayer. On my bookshelf, I have various books and so after every Namaz, I take a book from one side of the shelf and read it for around an hour or as long as possible."***

Mubashar Kahlon sahib continued:

***"Once I have finished I do not return the book to the same place but put it on the far side of the line of books. After the next Namaz, I will come***

***and take the book that is on the near side and read it. In this way, I can complete a cycle of reading different books, whether it be commentary of the Holy Quran, books of Hadith or the Promised Messiah (as). This enables me to revise and for the information to stay fresh in my mind.”***

As he told me this, I thought of how Huzoor often instructs Jamia graduates to continue their learning throughout their lives and that Mubashar Kahlon sahib was a prime example of the benefits of following this instruction.

### **Mexico delegation**

On the morning of 2 August 2017, Huzoor’s meetings continued as he met a delegation from Mexico, comprising mostly Mexican converts to Ahmadiyyat.

During the meeting, Huzoor’s affection and concern for the recent converts was very apparent. He presented them all with gifts, including Ghanaian chocolate and asked them about their personal lives and if they had any problems or difficulties.

Upon noting that one male convert was well-built, Huzoor jokingly said:

***“You are very strong and healthy, but our Missionary is slim and so there needs to be some equality! So, I think the Missionary needs to eat a little more!”***

Amongst the delegation, was a young Mexican convert who was extremely jolly and happy. Throughout the meeting, he was looking around Huzoor’s

office, smiling and excited like a small boy. When he spoke to Huzoor he spoke with love and could not control his excitement. It seemed Huzoor enjoyed his personality as well, as normally people are overwhelmed with emotion or somewhat formal, yet this convert was just constantly in a cheerful and jovial state!

Later when the converts had the opportunity of a photo, Huzoor smiled and said to the Jamaat's Missionary:

***“It is good that you also have a very cheerful person amongst your group as well who keeps the mood light!”***

### **A convert from Turkmenistan**

During his subsequent meeting with guests from the former Soviet state of Turkmenistan, Huzoor was introduced to a guest who was a well-known author and former journalist in his homeland. He informed Huzoor that he had accepted Ahmadiyyat at the Jalsa and taken part in the *International Bai'at*.

The author told Huzoor about his experiences at the Jalsa and why he had accepted Ahmadiyyat. He said:

***“All the Ahmadis present at Jalsa were extremely loving and this affected me a great deal. There were so many thousands of guests, yet I was treated as though I was very special. The hospitality made me very emotional and made me think that this is the same spirit that was displayed by the companions of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa). I am sure***

***that amongst Ahmadis there will be many who are willing to put their children to sleep hungry so that their guests are able to eat, just as happened in the time of the Holy Prophet (sa)."***

The guest continued:

***"Huzoor you came to Jamia a few days before Jalsa for the inspection and that was the first time I saw you and I swear my entire body began to shake and I felt an intense energy surge within me that I have never felt before. I thought perhaps I have acquired a fever because it felt like a surge of electricity had entered my body, but I soon realised that it was my love for Khilafat. Since then I have seen you at the Jalsa and prayed behind you and whenever you do Tilawat I can feel my heart melt due to the beauty of your tone."***

Very emotionally, the guest continued:

***"When I attended the funeral of my father I did not cry or shed tears and despite my loss I was able to keep control of my emotions. However, when I took the Bai'at for the first time during the Bai'at ceremony on Sunday I could not control my tears, I could not control my emotions and I swear I have never felt anything like it before in my life."***

Huzoor listened to the words of the guest with a very loving and caring expression on his face throughout like a father.

Thereafter, Huzoor thanked the new convert for narrating his experiences, before saying:

***“A true Muslim can only feel the most intense pain and despair at how much of the world views the Holy Prophet (sa). He, who was the best of mankind and the perfect man, is considered as the most cruel and unjust by many.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Thus, we must strive to show the world the true character of the Holy Prophet (sa) and we must weep before Allah the Almighty praying that the majesty and true status of Islam dawns upon the world and that they come to realise the noble character of Holy Prophet (sa) who was the true mercy for all of mankind.”***

Those moments in Huzoor’s office were extremely emotional. On the one hand, we saw how the light of the true Islam had entered the heart of the guest, whilst on the other, we saw the intense pain and grief felt by *Khalifa-Waqt* at the false portrayal of the Holy Prophet (sa) in much of today’s world.

### **A guiding Hand**

Thereafter, Huzoor held a meeting with a delegation of Ahmadis from Kazakhstan.

During the meeting, the *Sadr Lajna Kazakhstan*, who was of Tartar origin, said:

***“Huzoor, I wrote to you when I was pregnant to request that our child be included in the Waqf-e-Nau scheme. In reply, you gave the name ‘Safeer’ for our child. At that time, we did not know the sex of our child, but you had given a boy’s name and later a boy was born. How did you know? For me. it was a miracle.”***

In reply, very beautifully Huzoor said:

***“I do not myself know, this is the way of Allah. Normally, I do send two names, one for a boy and one for a girl but occasionally I only send one name because Allah the Almighty guides me in this way. Sometimes, Allah enables such things to occur so that the faith of those involved increases just as you have described how you found this to be faith inspiring. Now it is your job to work even harder and more diligently for the cause of Islam in your part of the world.”***

### **Nigeria delegation**

The final group comprised around 15 Nigerian Ahmadi men and women, led by Amir Sahib Nigeria.

The group only just managed to fit into Huzoor’s office, yet Huzoor was very particular that all the Ahmadis should have chairs and so he asked for extra chairs to be brought in from outside.

During the meeting, an Ahmadi informed Huzoor that he had been elected to Nigeria's *House of Representatives* and was the first Ahmadi Parliamentarian in Nigeria.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Masha’Allah, may Allah bless you. In your capacity as a politician, you should strive to raise the economic standards of Nigeria and rehabilitate the old oil refineries, rather than sending oil abroad for refining. Work against all forms of corruption and try to ensure that your nation’s wealth is spent to help the local people and to help the nation progress. This is my task for you!”***

Thereafter, Amir Sahib Nigeria said:

***“I have told the members of Nigeria Jamaat that Huzoor will not come to Nigeria unless we arrange a State visit.”***

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

***“This may be your condition but certainly is not mine! I have no desire for a State visit or such protocol. My only condition is that the Jamaat excels in piety and I also hope and pray that the Nigerian authorities are able to eradicate the terrorist groups such as Boko Haram.”***



### **A special place**

Later in the day, Huzoor met over eighty Ahmadi families in Mulaqat, including a small group of four Lajna members who had travelled from Singapore to attend the Jalsa.

When they emerged from their Mulaqat, all four Singaporean ladies exhibited a mixture of being extremely emotional and extremely excited at having just met their spiritual leader.

All of them asked me to convey to Huzoor their heartfelt desire that he would visit Singapore again and a day or two later I did convey their message to Huzoor.

Upon this, Huzoor looked up at me and said:

***“I liked Singapore a lot when I visited previously and saw that the local Jamaat is very sincere.”***

I responded by saying how I had found the Singapore tour, in which I was able to accompany Huzoor in 2013, to be very special and I recalled how Ahmadis from nearby countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines flocked to Singapore to meet Huzoor.

As I said this, Huzoor nodded and so I could not help but say:

***“Huzoor, I hope and pray that you are able to visit Singapore again soon.”***

## **Emotions of Ahmadis**

On Thursday, 3 August 2017, Huzoor met dozens of Ahmadi families and individuals in Mulaqat, including *Mirza Usman Baig (32)*, originally from Sialkot, Pakistan but now living in Canada. He had come as part of a large group of hundreds of Canadian Khuddam who had travelled to the Jalsa on a chartered plane.

Shortly after his Mulaqat, I met Usman sahib and he told me about his experiences at Jalsa and also about travelling with the Khuddam.

Usman sahib said:

***“Huzoor is our role model in everything and when you see him something happens inside that makes you want to improve and be a better person. As I met him, I realised the closer I am to Huzoor the better it will be for me.”***

Usman sahib continued:

***“Travelling on the chartered plane, as part of the 375-strong delegation from Canada, was very special. The best and most emotional part was being able to offer congregational Namaz on the plane, as the whole PA system was under our control. It felt historic to be part of this group, as it was the first time such a plane journey took place.”***

I could not resist asking Usman sahib how the plane food had been and whether they had been served anything special or whether somehow, they

had managed to get *langhar khana* food onto the plane! I was slightly disappointed when he told me they had been served 'regular plane food'!

I also met with *Muhammad Rafi (31)* from the Middle East moments after he had met Huzoor. He told me that he had converted to Ahmadiyyat in 2015 and that accepting Ahmadiyyat had transformed his life because previously he had been raised with what he called a 'Wahhabi mentality'.

Speaking of why he had accepted Ahmadiyyat, Muhammad Rafi said:

***"I had known Ahmadis since I was a student in college. Despite the negative things I had been told about Ahmadis, I could not help but notice that their morals were far better than the other Muslims I knew. Nonetheless, I was very scared of taking Bai'at as it was a life-changing decision and so I waited for a long time. However, upon seeing that there were blessings in my life, I came to the realisation that I had to accept the Promised Messiah (as). Two years later, my life has been transformed, I feel closer to Allah and I have been bestowed with those blessings of which I was previously deprived."***

### **An emotional comment**

On Friday, 4 August 2017, Huzoor delivered his weekly *Friday Sermon* from the Baitul Futuh Mosque.

During his sermon, Huzoor reflected upon the blessings of the Jalsa Salana and narrated some of the comments of guests from around the world.

Most graciously, Huzoor mentioned the media coverage of the Jalsa Salana and the work of the Press & Media team.

After giving a report of the actual coverage, Huzoor said:

***“The media has given very good coverage of the Jalsa Salana and so the true message of Islam has reached a very wide audience and for this, we should be extremely grateful to Allah. This is all a result of His blessings and our efforts in comparison are very little, but regardless, for the effort they put in I thank the members of the Press & Media office. May Allah reward them all.”***

I felt extremely emotional hearing Huzoor offer his thanks to our team members and this was the collective emotion of all our team members and volunteers.

We felt very undeserving of such thanks and considered it a great blessing to be able to serve the Jamaat in any capacity. Any success was due to the blessings of Allah and the prayers and guidance of Huzoor himself.

### **In our grief, in our joy**

Following *Jumma*, Huzoor’s schedule continued after a short break for lunch. First, Huzoor met the family of a recently deceased Ahmadi before leading the *Janaza* (funeral) prayer.

Immediately thereafter, Huzoor invited a young couple into his office who were getting married later in the day, along with their relatives. As he could

not attend the wedding, Huzoor graciously offered a silent prayer in his office.

Thus, in the space of a few minutes, Huzoor was consoling an Ahmadi family as they shared their grief with him, before joining an Ahmadi family in their celebrations as they started their married life together.

As I observed the different emotions on the faces of the two families as they came out of Huzoor's office, I considered it a reflection of the huge burden on Khalifatul Masih and his love for the members of the Jamaat.

There is no Ahmadi whose happiness, Huzoor does not consider his happiness and there is no Ahmadi whose grief Huzoor does not consider to be his own grief.

### **International Meeting of Missionaries and Office Bearers**

At 5.35pm on Friday, 4 August 2017, Huzoor walked across from his office at Masjid Fazl to a marquee erected behind the Jamaat owned guest-houses on Gressenhall Road. The marquee was filled with hundreds of Missionaries and senior Jamaat office bearers from around the world.

Over the next two and a half hours, Huzoor sought reports from almost all the Jamaats present about their activities over the past year and their plans for the year ahead.

The Jamaat representatives also had the opportunity to seek Huzoor's guidance and prayers on various issues.

Huzoor spent a lot of time in discussion with the representatives of our African Jamaats, where the majority of *Bai'ats* had taken place in recent years and so Huzoor asked each country how they were facilitating the moral and religious training of the new converts.



Huzoor said:

***“You should encourage our converts to take part in the Tehrik-e-Jadid and Waqf-e-Jadid schemes, as this is an important means of training. Do not underestimate their spirit of sacrifice. I have seen extremely poor people give in the way of Allah whenever their attention is drawn to it. It is our duty to help the poor people but at the same time we should encourage them to develop the habit of sacrifice as well. Thus, even if they offer only a penny it is ok, the amount is not important, the real thing is to be part of the scheme.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“I do not just want numbers or statistics of how many Bai’ats you have achieved or how much Chanda you have collected, my concern is the Tarbiyyat and moral well-being of the members of the Jamaat. Our Missionaries should be travelling to the villages as much as possible to meet the Ahmadis, to train them, guide them and help them.”***

Huzoor also emphasised the importance of Namaz in congregation and said that each Jamaat had a duty to arrange centres for people to join together for Namaz and where that was not possible people should get together in homes to offer congregational prayers.

During the meeting, Huzoor recalled how in 2016 he had asked the Jamaat in Congo to meet with pygmies and to try and help them, as they are often looked down upon and vulnerable. The Jamaat Missionary informed Huzoor that during the past year 75 pygmies had accepted Ahmadiyyat, including a tribal chief.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“We should try to build a school specially to educate the pygmies so that they can learn to read and write and gain a good education.”***

Huzoor’s continued concern for the pygmies illustrated Islam’s teachings of serving humanity and helping all people stand on their own two feet.

During the meeting, Huzoor also asked about Jamaat libraries and reiterated his instruction that there should be a proper library of Jamaat literature in every local Jamaat.

In the latter part of the meeting, Huzoor focused upon Tabligh and said that wisdom was necessary in Tabligh. He said that what may be effective in one country or one area, may not be effective in another. Thus, it was important that each Jamaat understood the psyche and characteristics of the local people.

Furthermore, Huzoor said that social media should be used as much as possible to spread Islam's teachings and to respond to false allegations against Islam.

A young Ahmadi Missionary posted in the USA, informed Huzoor that the USA Jamaat had used social media live broadcasts to spread Islam's teachings and, as a result, ten people had done Bai'at in Afghanistan.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“This is good but your first focus should be to get Bai’ats where you are posted – in America!”***

A representative of *Wakalat-e-Tasnif* (central Office of Translations) informed that there were many languages in which Huzoor's book '*World Crisis: Pathway to Peace*' had not been translated.



Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“It does not need to be translated into every language and it can be decided over time which languages it should be translated into. The only book that should be translated into every single language of the world is the Holy Quran.”***

Towards the end of the meeting, Huzoor mentioned the Waqf-e-Nau scheme.

Huzoor said:

***“In terms of Waqf-e-Nau, as many boys as possible should go to their nearest Jamia and train to be Missionaries. For the future of our Jamaat and the spread of the mission of the Promised Messiah (as) it is essential that we have Missionaries from all parts of the world.”***

### **Interview with Bolivian journalist**

On the morning of 5 August 2017, Huzoor held *daftari (office) Mulaqats* with National Presidents of the USA and Canada Jamaat before meeting further delegations from around the world.

In the first meeting, Huzoor met a journalist from Bolivia, who asked Huzoor about his family life.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“I am married, I have two children and five grandchildren with the Grace of Allah. My daughter has two children and my son has three sons. I very much enjoy spending time with them whenever it is possible. When I am in London, I see them for a few minutes either at meal times or when I drink tea in the afternoon. However, I cannot spend more than this because of my duties to the Jamaat.”***

I was not surprised hearing Huzoor’s answer, as his schedule is such that it is clear that he does not have much time to spend with his family. However, I felt sad all the same.

On a personal level if I do not see my children for a day I feel sad, whilst they also become upset. However, for most of us, such separation is rare and occasional, yet for Huzoor it is a daily fact of life.

The journalist also asked Huzoor about Islam’s relationships with other religions.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“It is my view that the root of opposition to Islam has always been that Islam claims to be a complete and universal teaching. We say that only the Holy Quran remains in its original form of all the religious scriptures and this fact is something that worries the people of other religions, as they realise Islam has the potential to spread far and wide.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Furthermore, now there is a growing proportion of people who are non-religious and increasingly materialistic, and they fear the spread of Islam more than any other faith. Anyway, where Islam says there should be no compulsion in religion, it also says that right has been made distinct from wrong and so we will continue to propagate our message peacefully.”***

### **Paraguay, Congo, Cambodia and Italy delegations**

Subsequently, Huzoor held meetings with delegations from *Paraguay, Congo, Cambodia* and *Italy*.

The delegation from Congo, included a *Provincial Minister* who had converted to Ahmadiyyat, having been raised as a Christian.

In the meeting, the Provincial Minister said:

***“I will never forget this Jalsa because all I saw was love from all quarters and the way people were fulfilling their duties, including young children, has deeply affected me.”***

The Provincial Minister continued:

***“Huzoor, I have to say that I am also relieved that everything was fine because sometimes you speak against the policies of powerful nations***

***and so I was worried that they could arrange an attack against you or the Jalsa.”***

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“If you want to speak the truth then you must show courage and speak without fear.”***

The Provincial Minister continued by asking a question on behalf of his daughter. He said:

***“With the Grace of God my family has been supportive but my daughter said that the crescent moon and a star have been used as symbols of Islam and so she questions why I have accepted a religion which is using signs of the night.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“She says it is a sign of the night but I say that these are symbols that at a time of darkness, Islam will provide light to the world as we believe the Holy Prophet (sa) to be the Siraj-e-Munir, the source of light for mankind. Anyway, I do not believe that there is a need to object over such small things because each religion has its own symbol and they should be respected.”***

The Provincial Minister sought Huzoor’s advice for his political activities.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Always think of yourself as the servant of your nation as the Holy Prophet (sa) taught that this is how a nation’s leaders should be. You should understand and feel the pain of your citizens, you should love them and care for their needs.”***

As the meeting drew to a close, the Provincial Minister presented Huzoor with some money as a gift.

Immediately, Huzoor returned the money and said:

***“Spend this money for the benefit of your people. Perhaps you can donate it to a humanitarian charity.”***

During the meeting with a delegation from Cambodia, a guest from Cambodia’s National Television said:

***“Your Holiness, I did not find anything extraordinary at your Jalsa. Though, I admit that I have never seen an event ever where there was such discipline observed or where so much food was served with so much patience to so many people.”***

Huzoor laughed and said:

***“On the one hand, you said there is nothing extraordinary about the Jalsa and on the other, you said that you have never seen anything like it before!”***

In his meeting with guests from Italy, Huzoor met an Italian man who had accepted Ahmadiyyat at this year's Jalsa.

Upon meeting him, Huzoor said the convert should learn Surah Fatiha and Huzoor spoke out loud the words to Surah Fatiha himself.

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

***“The Holy Prophet (sa) said that Salat without Surah Fatiha is empty and so there can be no Salat without it. Thus, you should learn this prayer as quickly as you can.”***

### **Chufi and a mother-in-law**

As the Italian delegation filed out, Huzoor called me towards him for a second and said:

***“Take some Chufi for your mother-in-law.”***

I was amazed. A few months earlier, Huzoor had given me a couple of bottles of a milk-like drink, extracted from nuts, known as *Chufi* which was commonly drunk in Spain.

At the time, Huzoor asked me if we liked *Chufi* and I said that me and my family did enjoy it a lot and my mother-in-law, who lives in America, was also a big fan of the drink.

At that time, Huzoor said:

***“You do not need to save this for her because when she comes for Jalsa I will send you some more Chufi.”***

I had completely forgotten all about the fact that Huzoor said he would send some *Chufi* but, despite being so busy, Huzoor had not forgotten!

In the middle of such a busy period and, in between important meetings, he remembered his promise from months before and handed me two bottles to take home.

### **Further delegations**

During the rest of the morning, Huzoor met further delegations from *The Gambia, Egypt, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ghana* and a group of Missionaries who were serving in the printing presses established by the Jamaat in various African countries.

In his meeting with a large delegation from The Gambia, the Amir Jamaat spoke of his gratitude that the political situation in his country had changed and so conditions for Ahmadis had improved a great deal during the past few months.

Amir Sahib Gambia said:

***“Huzoor, it is a result of your prayers for us that this year we come here happy, content and with smiles on our faces.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“With the Grace of Allah, the persecution of the past in The Gambia has ended with the formation of the new Government. You passed through years of sufferings and there were atrocities perpetrated against some Ahmadis in The Gambia. Now you should remain grateful to Allah that He has delivered you from the past persecution and pray that the conditions remain favourable in the future.”***

In his meeting with a delegation from Egypt, an Egyptian Ahmadi, Khalid sahib, said:

***“Huzoor, I wish to tell you that Egypt has great love for Khalifatul Masih. Also, the Holy Prophet (sa) taught that if a heart is clear then the rest of the body is ok and people have said that Egypt is the heart of the world. So please pray for us.”***

Upon hearing this, Huzoor very lovingly said:

***“For me the heart of Egypt are our Ahmadis who live there and so, at the very least, our Jamaat in Egypt should be pure and pious.”***

Huzoor then jokingly added:

***“I certainly do not want to hear reports of heart failure or a need for stents!”***



An Egyptian Ahmadi, Fatih said:

***“In my opinion, this Jalsa Salana was a spiritual war for the sake of Islam and our weapons were our pens, our prayers and above all the wisdom and grace of Khalifatul Masih which won the hearts of people from across the world.”***

As the Egyptian Ahmadis continued to express their emotions, Huzoor remained seated and had a smile on his face throughout.

It seemed Huzoor enjoyed listening as the Arab Ahmadis expressed their sincere love for Islam, the Holy Prophet (sa) and the Promised Messiah (as).

An Ahmadi lady from Egypt asked Huzoor how the Egyptian Lajna could play their roles in spreading the message of Islam.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Do not isolate yourselves or cut yourselves off from society. Rather go and meet people and tell them of your love for the Holy Prophet (sa) and hold events in which you discuss the blessed character of the Holy Prophet (sa). However, always do Tabligh with wisdom and so at the beginning start by conveying the message to your friends and contacts.”***

During his meeting with Ahmadis from Ghana, Huzoor was introduced to an Ahmadi Ghanaian police officer.

Upon seeing him, Huzoor said:

***“Ahmadi police should be an example in honesty, fairness and never being involved in any form of corruption.”***

Another Ahmadi informed Huzoor that many years ago Huzoor had gifted his daughter with his own pen and had prayed that she excel in education.

Unable to control his emotions, the Ahmadi said:

***“Huzoor, due to the blessings of that pen and your prayers my daughter has excelled in her studies ever since and has now fully qualified as a doctor.”***

A member of Ghana Jamaat, serving as the national *Rishta Nata Secretary* (marriage section) informed Huzoor that he had two wives.

Upon this, Huzoor remarked:

***“Do you propose only marriages for yourself or do you find some suitable matches for the other members as well!”***

Hearing Huzoor’s joke, I, and everyone else in the room as well, could not control our laughter!

As the meeting ended, a Ghanaian Ahmadi informed Huzoor that this year some Ahmadis were unable to travel for the Jalsa as their visa applications had been rejected.

In a comment manifesting his deep love for the people of Ghana, Huzoor said:

***“We can only pray that they are granted visa in future but if it were in my hands I would give every single Ghanaian a visa!”***

### **Saturday & Sunday lunch**

It has become a tradition in recent years that following Zuhr and Asr prayers on the Saturday and Sunday after the completion of Jalsa UK lunch functions are held in the presence of Huzoor.

Thus, after prayers on Saturday, Huzoor attended a lunch hosted by the UK Jamaat, in which representatives of different Jamaats and guests of Jalsa were invited.

Similarly, on Sunday afternoon, 6 August 2017, Huzoor attended a lunch hosted by the *UK Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association (PAAMA)*.

The Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association has been established by the Jamaat in several countries and comprises the Ahmadis living in the country who are of an African heritage or background.

One of the organisers of the Pan-African dinner was *Ahmad Konadu (42)*, originally from Ghana but now living in Scotland and a well-known member of the UK Jamaat.

Following the lunch event, I met Konadu sahib and he told me why the lunch event was arranged each year.

Ahmad Konadu sahib said:

*“When Huzoor graciously attends the PAAMA lunch it has a hugely positive effect on our members. He is the man chosen by Allah and so Huzoor’s presence inspires us to be better.*

*There are some African-origin Ahmadis who are somewhat distant from the Jamaat but when they see Huzoor or hear him speak all their worries or misconceptions are removed instantly. Rather, they feel great pride both in their faith and in their heritage and so when Huzoor gives his time like he did today it strengthens the bonds amongst our people. Thus, it is not just a pleasant lunch, rather Huzoor’s presence unites the African diaspora and strengthens our faith.”*

### **Blessings of prayer**

Ahmad Konadu sahib continued by telling me what I found to be a very compelling and emotional personal story. He said:

*“I have seen myself how Allah is with the Khalifa always and how He listens to our prayers and I have one example which is very special to me. For eight years I served as Regional Qaid in Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya and during that time I tried for our Scotland region to improve as much as possible. I considered it my duty to set an example for the Khuddam in my region and so I ensured that me and my children attended Fajr and Isha at the Mosque every day and participated in all Jamaat, Khuddam and Atfal activities.”*

Ahmad Konadu sahib continued:

*“However, when my eight years as Regional Qaid were coming to an end, I felt sad that I never had the chance to shake the hand of beloved Huzoor at the Ijtema because our Scotland Majlis was not able to win the Alme-Inami prize or to win academic or sports prizes.*

*Hence, during my final Khuddam Ijtema as a Khadim in 2015 I prayed and wept every day in Tahajjud seeking Allah’s forgiveness and saying that I have not done well for my Majlis. I begged Allah for His mercy and prayed that even if there was one thing I had ever done which had pleased Him then to grant me the opportunity to shake the blessed hand of the person who Allah loves the most before I returned home. This was my prayer and it was something between me and Allah alone and I never mentioned it to a single soul.”*

Narrating his story further, Ahmad Konadu sahib said:

*“I kept repeating this prayer throughout the Ijtema but my tears remained a secret from others. However, the Ijtema concluded and I did not get any opportunity to shake Huzoor’s hand. Thus, feeling extremely dejected I rounded up our Scottish Khuddam so we could depart for the long journey back to Scotland.”*

Ahmad Konadu sahib continued:

*“Just before our departure, I decided to go to the bathroom when a National Amila member beckoned me and said that Huzoor is touring the*

***Ijtema site. Immediately, I headed towards where Huzoor was but, as I am always shy in the presence of Huzoor, I remained on the fringe of the group and there were many people between me and Huzoor. Yet somehow Huzoor saw me from a distance and called me. I was so far away that I did not even hear and it was only when someone else told me that Huzoor is calling you.”***

Ahmad Konadu sahib told me that Huzoor stopped walking and waited especially for him.

Ahmad Konadu sahib said:

***“When I reached Huzoor he asked me if it was my last year in Khuddam and then Huzoor told some very kind and funny jokes that Ghanaians are extremely fearful of entering Ansar and so they do not admit they are Ansar until they reach their late 40s! Everyone laughed a lot and thereafter Huzoor extended his hand towards me and I had the opportunity that I dreamed and had wept for to shake his blessed hands. Then, Huzoor kept hold of my hands and I was able to walk alongside with him for the next minute or two.”***

Ahmad Konadu sahib continued:

***“No one can imagine how I felt during those moments! Only I knew of the tears I had shed before Allah praying for the chance to touch the hands of my Khalifa and when I thought that there was no chance left and the Ijtema was over, everything had been fulfilled in a way that I could never have imagined.”***

It was very interesting and faith inspiring to hear the story of Ahmad Konadu sahib and later he showed me a photo of that moment where Huzoor held his hand.

It was an extremely beautiful photo in which Huzoor was smiling with great affection whilst walking with Ahmad Konadu.



### **A true elder**

Another person, who I was very grateful to spend some time with, was *Tayyab Ali* sahib, a 91-year-old elder from Qadian.

He was one of the few surviving *Darvesh* and so was one of those courageous and blessed individuals who had remained in Qadian at the time of *Partition*

in 1947 to protect and safeguard the sacred places and historic buildings of the Jamaat.

Tayyab Ali sahib was staying in the Guest House known as '39' on Gressenhall Road and so upon learning he was staying there, I knocked on the door of his room.

As he called me in, I saw he was lying on his bed and so I told him my name and said I would come back after he had rested.

With a loving grandfatherly smile, Tayyab Ali said:

***"I am ever ready for the Jamaat and so no need for me to rest. All I ask is that you speak loudly as I am a little hard of hearing."***

I felt very fortunate to spend the next thirty minutes in his company. He was of course very elderly and frail, yet at the same time, he was an example in humility, kindness and simplicity.

Telling me about his journey to London, Tayyab Ali sahib said:

***"Can you believe it that I am 91 and this is the very first time I have been to the UK? In fact, it is the first time I have ever been on a plane! I had a deep desire to attend the UK Jalsa at least once in my life and so I wrote to Huzoor for permission and he graciously gave it and has hosted me in the most wonderful manner."***



I was intrigued to learn about Qadian in the aftermath of *Partition* and so I asked Tayyab Ali sahib what it was like.

In reply, he said:

*“Partition and the subsequent years were very difficult and the conditions were extremely dangerous. There were no other Muslims nearby and the Hindus, Sikhs and authorities were all against us. Many officers used to come to Qadian with the intention of ejecting us but we had a firm resolve and would say that we will never leave the land of the Promised Messiah (as) no matter what. We considered ourselves very lucky as we were being guided by Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) and had his prayers.”*

Tayyab Ali sahib continued:

*“For quite a long time we were given an allowance of five rupees per month and I would buy some soap and oil and my five rupees would finish. Thankfully, we could go to the langhar khana (Jamaat kitchen) and eat a basic meal. These extreme conditions lasted for around eighteen months and then slowly the situation started to improve slightly.*

*Over time the Jamaat was able to re-establish some offices and we were able to serve in them. The truth is that Allah the Almighty saved us and protected us, otherwise in worldly terms, we had no hope at all. The way we survived is proof that the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as) is a true Jamaat established by Allah Himself.”*

I asked Tayyab Ali sahib if he ever found the hardship too much to bear or ever regretted his decision to stay in Qadian. He seemed almost offended that I could even have suggested this.

In response, he said:

***“How can you even ask me this? Spending my life as a Darvesh means I am the most fortunate person in the world because I have lived my life according to the instructions of Khalifatul Masih. I was never scared of death or for my family because I knew I was serving the Promised Messiah (as).”***

Tayyab Ali sahib continued:

***“I have lived a long life and if there is one thing that I have learned it is that we must never try to go ahead of Khilafat by taking any action or making any decision without the permission of Khalifa-Waqt. The day we start doing that is the day our Jamaat is finished.”***

Tayyab Ali sahib also told me something I was not previously aware of. He said that when Huzoor visited Qadian in 2005 he visited the home of every single Darvesh including his.

Tayyab Ali sahib said:

***“I am a humble and simple human being and yet Huzoor came to my house in 2005. The blessings of that visit will last for generations to come***

***Insha'Allah. We had placed some sweets and most graciously Huzoor took some and then had photos taken with all of us."***

As our conversation ended, I asked Tayyab Ali sahib to remember me and my family in his prayers.

Upon this, he said:

***"Just remember that Khilafat is everything and if you follow the instructions of Khalifa-Waqt you will be fine but the day you stop is the day all blessings will be taken away from your life."***

I was very grateful for his wise counsel and had no doubt of the truth of his words.

### **Our secret host**

During the Jalsa period, it is not easy to spend time with relatives or friends who have travelled from abroad as we are all busy with our various duties. Nevertheless, on the evening of 10 August, we were able to invite some close family members from abroad to our home in Epsom.

I always get nervous as a 'host' and I feel a lot of pressure at having to entertain and make sure the conversation continues, especially as I am not really a conversationalist myself!

However, *Alhamdolillah* the evening went well and our guests seemed to enjoy the food and company.

I had told Huzoor that we were hosting the dinner and so the next day when I met him, he asked me how the evening had gone.

In reply, I said:

***“Huzoor, we served some Chinese kaava (tea) which you had given us as a gift and the guests enjoyed it and complimented it”***

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Did you also use the dhooni (incense) that I sent you a few days ago and which you thought was a Ferrero Rocher?”***

In response, I said:

***“Yes, Huzoor we did and the guests complimented the special aroma in our house! Thus, in truth, the success of our dinner was in large part due to you!”***

Hearing this, Huzoor laughed and enjoyed the comment, Mash’Allah.

### **Love of Khilafat**

As I walked out of Huzoor’s office, a minute or two later, Huzoor came out of his office and walked a few metres across to the Mahmood Hall, where he met with a delegation of Jamaat officials and workers who had travelled from India to attend the Jalsa. They were leaving the next day and so Huzoor had a photo taken with them and met them individually.

As they walked one by one to meet Huzoor, one of the group asked Huzoor for a gift for his children and so Huzoor gave a couple of pens.

Thereafter, the next person asked for a gift for not only his children but also his grandchildren! Huzoor asked how many they were and gave pens accordingly.

Following this, every member of the group asked for gifts for their families.

One member told Huzoor he had 16 grandchildren and so Huzoor counted out 16 pens and handed them to him.

Also present was *Tayyab Ali* sahib, the 91-year-old Darvesh, I had met the day before.

When it came to his turn to meet Huzoor he did not ask anything for his daughter or grandchildren but asked for a ring to give to his wife.

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Ok, I will give you a ring but I think your wife will wonder why you only thought of getting her a ring after 80 years of marriage!”***

Everyone laughed a great deal and it was a beautiful and tender moment, where it was clear that despite being many years older than Huzoor, the Darvesh considered himself to be one of Huzoor’s spiritual children.

### **An unforgettable few weeks**

It had been a full week since the end of Jalsa Salana and slowly but surely the number of people at the Mosque each day began to decrease, as Ahmadis from around the world returned to their homes.

As the Jalsa period reached an end, Huzoor's routine would start to return to normal. However, the word 'normal' is relative and a normal day for Huzoor is very different to a normal day for other people.

In a normal 'routine' day, Huzoor holds *daftari* Mulaqats for three to four hours in the morning, meeting office bearers and representatives of the Jamaat from different countries. This is followed by 'Family Mulaqats' in the evening where Huzoor meets dozens of Ahmadi families.

In addition, he goes through hundreds of official correspondences from the more than 200 countries where our Jamaat is based and gives instructions and guidance. Furthermore, he reads around 700 personal letters from Ahmadis across the world each day in full and moreover the summaries of a thousand more. Huzoor also personally signs between 500 to 1,000 letter replies to Ahmadis each day.

There are many other events that take place each week. For example, almost each weekend, there are delegations from abroad or from across the UK who travel to London to meet Huzoor and he gives them a lot of time and answers their questions and showers his love upon them. He holds classes with members of Waqf-e-Nau or students of Jamia Ahmadiyya whenever there is an opportunity.

There are also many other activities or events that Huzoor must attend or prepare for.

For example, in the week that followed, Huzoor was interviewed by Athar Ahmad from the BBC for a documentary called *'The Caliphate in the Countryside'* which was later broadcast as an episode of the BBC religious series *'Heart and Soul'*.

The same week, Huzoor called me to his office for around ninety minutes as he prepared and dictated an address that was to be delivered to non-Muslim guests at the forthcoming Jalsa Salana Germany for which Huzoor was shortly to depart from London.

The activities or events that I describe are just the tip of the iceberg. Someone wrote to me recently pointing out that where I write about some of Huzoor's daily activities, the one thing I cannot capture is the true level of Huzoor's worship of God Almighty.

The person who wrote this was quite right. For we see Huzoor during the day, but the nights belong to Allah the Almighty.

It is during those times, when most of us are sleeping, that our Khalifa remains awake for much of the night in prostration weeping before His Creator praying for us and for mankind at large.

I remember once one of Huzoor's security guards told me that his favourite duty was the night shift at Fazl Mosque because he was able to observe that when the rest of the world was asleep the light in Huzoor's flat would come

on very early in the night and he knew then that Khalifa-Waqt was awake and was praying for the members of the Jamaat.

### **Conclusion**

With the Grace of Allah, the Jalsa Salana UK 2017 had proved blessed in all respects. All those able to attend were witnesses to the spiritual blessings and unique atmosphere of the Jalsa.

Huzoor had met countless Ahmadis, personally guided them, comforted them and brought them closer to their faith.

He had met guests and dignitaries and been interviewed by journalists from across the world.

He had shone a light upon Islam's true teachings and exhibited its truth through the purity of his personality.

That week, I also got the glad tiding directly from Huzoor that I would be joining him in Germany. I looked forward to what proved to be an extremely blessed tour.

May Allah the Almighty grant Huzoor a long and healthy life always. *Ameen.*

### **End of Part 3**

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