

LONDON DIARY

SPRING 2018

A Personal Account

By Abid Khan

Introduction

In recent years, I have written a series of diaries about the activities of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba). Such diaries have focused upon Huzoor's foreign tours or major events in the United Kingdom such as the *Jalsa Salana* or the *National Peace Symposium*.

I hope to continue to write such diaries for as long as Huzoor directs, *Insha'Allah*, however I also wished to write a diary about a 'normal' period in London and so in this diary I have included various incidents and narrations from late April 2018, following Huzoor's return from Spain, until Eid-ul-Fitr in June 2018.

The truth and reality is that there is no such thing as a 'normal' day or period when it comes to *Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya*. Every day we are witnessing the blessings of God Almighty and how *He* continues to guide the *Khalifa-Waqt*.

Every day we see that Huzoor is devotedly serving the Jamaat and striving with unimaginable courage, fortitude and wisdom to fulfil the mission of the Promised Messiah (as).

Every day he touches the hearts of Ahmadi Muslims across the world, whether through *MTA*, his correspondence or various meetings. Each day, he comforts Ahmadi who are facing difficulties or grief, whilst at the same time he joins in the celebrations and happiness of the members of the Jamaat.

Quite simply, every day in the life of Khalifatul Masih is extraordinary and greatly significant.

Return from Spain

On 24 April 2018, I had the opportunity to meet Huzoor after a period of three weeks, as he had just returned from a visit to Spain the evening before.

Most graciously, Huzoor permitted me to sit with him for over two hours that afternoon, as he worked through the various files of letters that lay on his desk.

Even after I had presented my report for the day, Huzoor continued to let me sit with him and I am sure it was because Huzoor knew the feelings in my heart. Whilst he was in Spain, not a day passed when Huzoor was not in my mind. I used to wonder where Huzoor was, how he was, and found myself revisiting past memories spent in his blessed company.

During the Mulaqat, I asked Huzoor about how his visit to Spain had been. Huzoor responded only by saying it had been 'good' but without giving any further details. It seemed as though Huzoor did not wish to speak about it and so for the rest of the day I felt regret that I should not have asked.

Later, it occurred to me that if Huzoor remained quiet it was due to his love and kindness. He knew I had been missing him and that I had been with him on previous trips abroad and so if he told me details, perhaps I would have felt even sadder that I was not with him on this occasion.

Only *Khalifa-Waqt* thinks so deeply and is so loving and caring of a person's feelings.

After some time, Huzoor did mention one incident from his tour. He told me that one day during the course of travel lunch was taken at a hotel in Spain.

Huzoor said that when the food arrived it was a minuscule portion of fish with a strange egg like thing placed on the top!

Huzoor said it neither tasted good and nor did it fill anyone's stomach! Huzoor said it reminded him of a meal he had eaten in 2006 during his first trip to Australia.

Huzoor said:

“On my second trip to Australia in 2013 you were with me and the food was much better. Though at one place we had lunch and you were scolded by the catering staff when you tried to take a second piece of cake!”

It took me a second to recall the incident to which Huzoor referred. The *Qafila* had stopped for lunch and the food had been served as a buffet and so there were many slices of cake also laid out on the tables.

After eating one slice, I returned to take a second only to be strictly admonished by the catering staff who told me the cake slices were limited to one per person!

As Huzoor reminded me of that incident I was amazed at his memory, as he had remembered an incident pertaining to me from years ago that I had long forgotten.

A case of nine deliveries!

During the Mulaqat, I shared some feedback I had received to a *diary* I had written a few weeks before about the UK Jamaat's *National Peace Symposium*.

An Ahmadi from Ghana had written:

“Abid sahib, your diary is pregnant with new information”.

It was a turn of phrase I had never heard before and one that made me laugh.

After hearing the comment, Huzoor said:

“You should learn English from the Ghanaians! They use their native phrases in English.”

As I concluded presenting some comments, Huzoor smiled and said:

“You have shared the comments of nine individuals and so it can be said you had nine successful deliveries today!”

I laughed a lot and Huzoor also laughed with that beautiful and radiant smile of his.

I was glad I had shared the comment of the Ghanaian Ahmadi as Huzoor had remembered it and enjoyed it.

“Phir, Allah ke saath baaten ki”

During the Mulaqat, Huzoor also mentioned an article published in *Al-Hakam* the week before in which Huzoor had given an interview narrating his emotions and recollections of when he was elected Khalifatul Masih in 2003.

It was a beautiful and touching interview in which the readers received a very personal insight into those days when Huzoor’s life was transformed forever.

I told Huzoor that I had found one passage particularly emotional in which Huzoor had informed that he had spent time alone with the blessed body of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) in a room adjacent to the Mahmood Hall.

Upon this, Huzoor remarked:

“It was not mentioned in the Al-Hakam article but initially there was a security guard present who was on duty standing near the coffin in which Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) lay, however I told him to leave because it was not possible for me to open my heart before God or to express my feelings and emotions in front of anyone else. After he left, I then spoke with Allah the Almighty.”

I found Huzoor’s last remark to be particularly beautiful and poignant. In Urdu, Huzoor said ***“Phir, Allah ke saath baaten ki”*** and it was a reflection of how in those few days of desperation and devastation, Huzoor turned only and always towards Allah the Almighty alone.

A misconception removed

One afternoon in late April, I informed Huzoor about an attack that had taken place in Toronto where ten people had been killed after a man had purposely driven his car into innocent pedestrians.

The Canadian Jamaat received Huzoor's instruction that *Khuddam* should go and offer their sympathies and with the *Grace of Allah* their presence was greatly appreciated by the local people and local authorities.

A few days later, a large-scale vigil to remember the victims and to pay tribute to them was organised in Toronto.

Prior to that event, I was informed that a few Ahmadis in Canada were unsure if the Jamaat should send a large presence to attend the vigil, given that the attack was not conducted by a Muslim.

There was a view that it could be seen that the Jamaat was '*exploiting*' this tragedy by sending Khuddam in large numbers to offer their sympathies in order to gain media coverage.

I was unsure about the best way to proceed. Certainly, I felt they should still send some Khuddam to offer their sympathies but I was unsure whether they should seek to give media interviews or to attend in large numbers.

Thus, I presented this matter to Huzoor and sought his guidance.

Without any hesitation, Huzoor said that his instructions remained and that members of the Jamaat should attend and that if media opportunities arose they should avail them.

Huzoor said:

“Just because the attacker was not a Muslim does it mean that we don’t want to express our sympathies to our fellow citizens? Does it mean that we feel this loss any less? Our love for the nation in which we live is constant and wherever there is loss of life or harm to the country we feel grief and we should stand with the people of the nation in solidarity at that time of grief.”

Regarding the point about whether giving media interviews or attending in large numbers could be considered ‘exploitative’, Huzoor said:

“To give media interviews expressing our grief or to send as many people as possible is not exploitative or wrong. The truth is that, in all circumstances, our mission remains to spread the message of Islam and to introduce the peaceful teachings of the Promised Messiah (as) to the world.

“Whether it is a time of happiness or sadness, it is our duty to convey this message and to share the beautiful teachings of true Islam with the rest of the world. Thus, if media opportunities do arise we should consider it a blessing of God that He has given us this opportunity.”

Huzoor continued:

“We are not seeking personal publicity for any individual. If the Umoor-e-Kharija Secretary or any other Jamaat representative gives an interview it is not to make themselves famous, rather it is for the sake of Islam Ahmadiyyat and it is for the sake of spreading peace in the world. It is for the sake of conveying the true teachings of the Holy Prophet (sa) and we believe that such teachings can only benefit every nation and every society. This is why it is not ‘exploitative’ because we do not have any personal interest, our only interest is to help mankind and to bring humanity together.”

It was a beautiful answer and certainly removed any doubts in my mind about whether availing media opportunities on such occasions was appropriate.

Healing two grieving hearts

In early May, I met a young *Missionary* from the United States called *Hammad Ahmad (31)* who was waiting in the Private Secretary’s office. He had travelled to London, along with his wife, *Nazia Khurshid Ahmad*, to meet Huzoor.

I had first met Hammad in Chicago in October 2017 when we were both attending a Jamaat Media conference. A few weeks later, I was very sad to learn that the first child of Hammad and his wife had been stillborn, despite the fact that the pregnancy proceeded normally until delivery.

Though accepting of the *Will of Allah*, the grief and sadness they felt over this personal tragedy remained and so they sought Huzoor's permission to come and meet him.

Later, they told me how meeting Huzoor and receiving his love had given them true comfort and the strength to move on.

Nazia sahiba said:

“Alhamdulillah, from day one of this heart-breaking journey, we felt Huzoor's gentle and patient love from thousands of miles away. His message to us was to remain patient and steadfast, and that everything would be okay. There's nothing that could have given us more strength to bear this trial other than hearing that this man of God thought that things would be okay.”

Sharing his own feelings of that time, Hammad said:

“It still boggles my mind to think that this man of God and carrying the burdens of not just Ahmadis but of more than 7 billion people, took the time out to address the sorrow of two of his such lowly and worthless servants. Although the next few days were so heart-wrenching, those loving prayers and messages of Huzoor were so heart-warming that they gave us an overwhelming sense of peace during that difficult time that we cannot explain.”

Nazia sahiba told me how the weeks that followed the stillbirth of their child had increased their love and bond with Khilafat.

Nazia sahiba said:

“In the darkest moments of despair, there was literally only one thing that brought stillness to our trembling hearts: Our Huzoor. Talking about Huzoor, hearing from him, watching him on MTA, and reassuring ourselves that we would make a plan to visit him in the near future was the only hope that pushed us forward.”

Nazia sahiba continued:

“There was one moment of desperation when my husband asked me what it would take to make me feel happy again, and I answered: ‘Only Huzoor’. There was nothing else in this world that I could think of that could possibly have lifted me out of the indescribable pain of my fleeting motherhood. Can followers of any other faith or denomination say that their spiritual leader makes them feel joy while in the midst of a personal tragedy? Allah graciously put resolve in our hearts that if, in exchange for our beloved and long-awaited firstborn, we could move forward with a deeper love for Huzoor and a deeper bond with Khilafat, then: ‘razi hain hum usi main jis mein teri raza ho’ – that ‘we are content only with that which pleases Allah’.”

Speaking about their visit to London, Nazia sahiba said:

“Huzoor graciously offered us a Mulaqat during our visit. There we were - two insignificant servants of his, showing up at his office from across the world, four months after the fact. Yet, when we mentioned to him that we had lost our daughter, his immediate response was: “I already gave

you the prescription of which medicine to take". We were blown away! Is it humanly possible to remember the specific stories of millions of people? The only explanation is that he must be a true man of God, and only through Allah's Grace could he have the ability to personally know each individual that comes into his office."

Narrating his recollections of meeting Huzoor and spending time close to him in London, Hammad said:

"We spent approximately 10 days in London, UK and it was the most spiritually uplifting and enlightening 10 days of my entire life. With each prayer behind Huzoor, it seemed as if our worries melted away one by one. Each prayer behind Huzoor developed a sense of spiritual tranquillity that had gotten lost somewhere along the way. Just to see Huzoor walking to and from Salat everyday was a joy that knows no parallel anywhere else in the world."

Hammad continued:

"I cannot express or describe in words how the Mulaqat went, how Huzoor treated us, or how we felt after. With the love Huzoor showed to us during that time, it seemed as if nothing else mattered. Huzoor prayed for us for everything to be alright and advised us on how we should pray, and even wrote with his own hands on a piece of paper the name of a medicine for us. What greater doctor and what greater prescription in the world could there be than this?"

A special prayer

Whenever I write a *diary*, I first of all show it to beloved Huzoor. In the same way, I shared this as well and after reading the comments of Hammad and his wife, Huzoor wrote with his own blessed hand a special prayer for them.

Huzoor wrote:

“Allah the Almighty grant them long living, healthy and pious children. May He fulfil their prayers and desires and soothe their hearts.”

A different pen

As a young Missionary, who had trained in *Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada*, Hammad had been the recipient of Huzoor’s guidance and love for many years.

He told me of his very first experience of meeting Huzoor and how its impact continued until this day.

Hammad said:

“In June-July 2004, beloved Huzoor made his first trip to Canada. During this historic trip, our family was blessed to have our first Mulaqat with present Huzoor (aba). When Huzoor met me, my parents told Huzoor that I had decided to dedicate my life, join Jamia, and become a Missionary. I still remember the look Huzoor gave me in that moment and the warmth

with which he smiled at me. Huzoor then gave my siblings and me each a pen.”

Hammad continued:

“It was only after we had left and settled into our car to head back home that we started looking at the pens Huzoor gave us and we realized that mine was different! Whereas all my siblings got regular ballpoint pens, Huzoor had given me a completely different, and a very beautiful looking, ink-style calligraphy pen. It made me feel like the most special person on the planet.”

Hammad further said:

“Even to this day fourteen years later, after having gone through the 7 years of Jamia and then having spent 7 years in the field now, I still think back to that Mulaqat and the look Huzoor gave me, his smile, his squeeze of my hand, and the very special pen which has gone with me everywhere I’ve been posted, and it gives me inconceivable strength to carry on even in the toughest of times and roughest of days. Such is the love of the Khalifa – one drop of it can carry you on for years and years and years.”

Unnecessary haste

With the *Grace of Allah*, during those days, one afternoon I received a box of chocolates from Huzoor. It so happened that when I opened the box, I opened it the wrong way. Hence, the chocolates were faced down when opened and fell to the ground.

Given that they were a gift from Huzoor, I did not wish for them to be wasted and so I quickly gathered them up and returned them to the tray.

The next day I told Huzoor about how I had dropped and then retrieved the chocolates.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“Did you not look at which side you were opening the box from? You were trained as a lawyer and lawyers are meant to be meticulous!”

Upon this, I responded by saying:

“Huzoor, I am no longer a lawyer! That seems a different life to me!”

Hearing my response, Huzoor said:

“Yes, you are no longer a lawyer but you are in the Press Office and even good media people need to be meticulous!”

I nodded knowing that Huzoor was right.

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

“I have observed that it is your nature to do things in a hurry. For example, if you stand or sit you will do it suddenly but you should try to develop the habit of being calm in all matters and not rushing.”

Again, Huzoor was absolutely right. Whilst I like to think of myself as quite calm, it is also very true that I can easily get flustered and nervous as well.

Advising me further, Huzoor said:

“Pehla kadam aaraam say liya karo aur phir dhor lagao.”

Meaning:

“Take your first step slowly and then run fast.”

It was beautiful advice and a means of guiding me not only in my personal habits but also in my work. That if given a task, I should take some time to assess and understand the issue and once prepared work quickly and diligently.

A sip of water

Certainly, if I want to become calmer, I need look no further than the blessed example of Huzoor himself.

Unquestionably, the most composed and collected person I have ever met is Huzoor.

For example, one morning in late 2017, Huzoor was engaged in *daftari Mulaqats* at the *Fazl Mosque*.

Later in the morning, Huzoor came out of his office and into the *Mahmood Hall* where he met a group of Khuddam who had travelled from Norway.

During the meeting, Huzoor laughed, smiled, showed great affection to the Khuddam and answered all of their questions.

I later found out that moments before he met the Norwegian Khuddam, Huzoor had received some troubling and upsetting news in which an Arab Ahmadi, who had worked for the *Jamaat* for a long time and had long been the recipient of the love of Khilafat, had come to Huzoor's office to tell Huzoor that he was leaving the *Jamaat*.

Thus, when Huzoor advised me to be calmer, I mentioned that incident to him and said that I could never have imagined that he had received such upsetting news just moments before.

Upon this, Huzoor remarked:

“I do not let such things affect me and always look forward because no matter what obstacles are placed in our way the *Jamaat* will continue to progress and we must continue with our duties. Thus, after receiving the news I took 30 seconds to myself and took a sip of water. Thereafter, I was completely fine and was ready to meet the Khuddam and did not give a second thought to the issue.”

I remember when I heard this, I sat in silence amazed at Huzoor's composure and patience.

A loving reply

One afternoon in early May 2018, I mentioned to Huzoor that I had received some further feedback to the diary I had written a few weeks earlier about the *UK Peace Symposium*. Whilst he continued his office work, Huzoor permitted me to share a few comments I had received.

I took the opportunity to share a comment from an Ahmadi lady from Pakistan who had expressed her love for Khilafat in very moving terms. She wrote that her dream and lifelong desire was to meet Huzoor just once in her life.

The Ahmadi lady had concluded by writing:

“I am a very humble and ordinary person and so I cannot ask you to waste Huzoor’s precious time by giving my salaam to that person who is more dear to me than anyone else. Instead, Abid sahib I seek your prayers that I am able to meet Huzoor once in my life, even if it is just for a few seconds.”

As I read these words, Huzoor looked up from his work and it was apparent that he had been touched by the sincerity of the Ahmadi lady.

With great love and affection affecting his voice, Huzoor said:

“Even if she did not send her salaam for fear of wasting my time, you should say ‘Wa-alaikum salam, wa Rehmatullah wa Barakatohu’ from me. And may she ever increase in sincerity and faith.”

Absolute faith

In the same Mulaqat, I mentioned to Huzoor I had heard that some Ahmadi Muslim scholars, versed in Arabic, had sought to highlight certain 'errors' in the Arabic writings of the Promised Messiah (as). I had been shocked to hear that our own scholars could raise such objections.

In response, Huzoor confirmed that it had been the case and he told me his own response to such claims, which highlighted his unshakeable faith in every aspect of the Promised Messiah's (as) claims.

Huzoor said:

"At the beginning of my Khilafat a few Arabic experts brought this issue to my attention and suggested that certain excerpts of the Promised Messiah (as) in Arabic should be edited or even removed. In response, I said to them that 'No matter what you say or argue, I will never let you alter even a single word of the Promised Messiah (as) as he was directly guided by Allah the Almighty'. I told them that no matter what they or any other scholars thought, the Promised Messiah (as) was right!"

Thereafter, Huzoor formed a committee to investigate further, whilst some Arab Ahmadis also researched the Arabic language.

As a result, Huzoor told me that up till now the investigations had proven that 80% of the objections raised had been entirely without foundation.

Rather, it had been proven that the Promised Messiah (as) had used an old style of Arabic grammar that was centuries old and in line with ancient Arabic.

Regarding the other parts of text that remained disputed, Huzoor said:

“I have no doubt that eventually the research will prove even those few remaining excerpts of the Promised Messiah (as) were written in authentic Arabic. Certainly, the fact that these questions were raised has had a positive effect because the faith of a number of Arab Ahmadis has increased after they saw how the Promised Messiah (as) was versed in the old-style Arabic that most contemporary speakers were not aware of.”

An emotional meeting (part 1)

In early June 2018, Ms. Rameez Abbas, an *Assistant Professor at the National Defence University* in Washington D.C. who teaches South Asian politics and Islam, amongst other things, had the opportunity to meet Huzoor at the *Fazl Mosque*.

I was instructed to attend the meeting and also to receive Rameez sahiba when she arrived at the Mosque.

Upon meeting Rameez, it was soon apparent that she was very excited and somewhat nervous to meet Huzoor and extremely grateful to have the opportunity.

I found her to be very respectful when speaking about Huzoor and the Jamaat in general.

After Huzoor had spent the early part of the morning engaged in *daftari Mulaqats*, Rameez sahiba was called to meet Huzoor at 12.30pm in his office.

Her request for Mulaqat had only been received by Huzoor the evening before and, as he had a full schedule already planned, Huzoor had indicated that he would only have a few minutes available to meet her. Yet, in the end, Rameez sahiba was able to meet Huzoor for over 20minutes.

I was very grateful to have the opportunity to be present and to listen to the beautiful and often very emotional answers and comments delivered by Huzoor during the meeting.

At the beginning, Rameez sahiba expressed her gratitude that Huzoor had agreed to meet her at such short notice.

In response, Huzoor said:

“I already had a full schedule for this morning but when I received your request to meet me I thought that because you have come from so far that I should make time to meet you.”

Rameez sahiba, who had been researching about Ahmadiyyat for some time, asked Huzoor about the concept of leadership so she asked Huzoor specifically about what influenced his leadership as Khalifatul Masih.

Specifically, Rameez sahiba asked:

“In terms of your leadership, I am interested to know how the leadership of the Third Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (rh) and the Fourth Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) have influenced your leadership during the current era?”

In response, Huzoor said:

“Neither the leadership of Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) or Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (rh) influences my leadership, rather it is the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (as) who governs and influences what I say and do.

“I am the Khalifatul Masih, as were my predecessors Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) and Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (rh) and so just as they followed the Promised Messiah (as) in all matters and sought to fulfil his mission, so do I. Every Khalifa follows the guidance of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (as) because we are his successors”

Huzoor continued:

“Whilst our objectives and goals are exactly the same, it is true that each Khalifa has his personal style and additionally the contemporary issues of each era play a role in determining some of the things that the Khalifa focuses upon. Yet the basic concept of leadership and what we preach to the world is exactly the same and always will be.”

Explaining a particular focus of his Khilafat so far, Huzoor said:

“In this era, the lack of peace and security in the world has been the most pressing issue and so my focus has been on trying to harness peace in the world. Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) and Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (rh) also placed emphasis on the need for peace but perhaps not as much as me because there were other issues of greater concern during their respective eras and so they focused their efforts on those.”

As Huzoor paused, Rameez sahiba interjected and said:

“I recently read an article by your respected wife, Hazrat Amatul Sabooh Begum, in which she said that you were very close to Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) and so I assume that he will have been a big influence upon your life?”

In response, Huzoor said:

“When I took the Bai’at of the Khulafa who preceded me it meant that I had sold myself. Bai’at literally means in Arabic to ‘sell yourself’ and when you sell yourself it means that you no longer control your own destiny and that your life is in the hands of someone else. Thus, my relationship with the Khulafa who preceded me was exactly like this that I listened and obeyed them in every matter.”

Huzoor continued:

“I was 15 when Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (rh) was elected Khalifatul Masih and at the time of his demise, I was 32. During those 17 years, he guided me both when I was a student and later when I became a Waqf-e-Zindighi.”

Huzoor further said:

“When I was a student the situation for Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan became increasingly fraught and dangerous. As a result, some people very close to me suggested that I should not go back to university because it was too dangerous. Yet at that time, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) told me not to be scared and instructed me to go to and attend the classes.

“Hence, perhaps the first great lesson he personally gave me was to instil courage and bravery in me. Where others were telling me that I would be beaten and mercilessly attacked if I went to university, my Khalifa told me to disregard any fear and to not let the conditions cower me and stop me from attending my classes.”

After narrating this incident, Huzoor also mentioned that the *Vice Chancellor* of the University later stopped Ahmadis from coming to the University until conditions improved.

Nonetheless, Huzoor never forgot the lesson that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) had taught him.

Huzoor said:

“When I became a Waqf-e-Zindighi, Hazrat Mirza Nasir Ahmad (rh) instructed me to go to Ghana and he said that I should set the highest moral standards and set the best example for others to observe and learn from. That was his sole instruction to me as I set off for my new life. I was very fortunate that during my time in Ghana, Huzoor visited the country and so I was able to watch him very closely and to learn from his personal example. I used to observe him and see how he acted and how he spoke and it was a great blessing for me to see him at such close quarters.”

Huzoor continued:

“Thereafter, the Fourth Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) was elected in 1982. Of course, there was a close familial relationship between us, as he was my uncle and I had grown up with him and had a close personal relationship with him from before his Khilafat. In fact, to some degree there was frankness between us but as soon as he was elected as Khalifatul Masih our relationship changed. It was as though a barrier had appeared, whereby the frankness from my side was converted into a complete and utter respect for him as my spiritual leader.”

Describing vividly his complete love and respect for Khilafat, Huzoor said:

“In fact, in my heart I was determined to be his most obedient follower and vowed that no matter what I would listen and obey everything that he desired from me. I was determined that more than anyone else, I

would be the one who would honour and obey him at all times. This was the way I had been brought up by my parents and their influence upon me has lasted a lifetime.”

As I listened to Huzoor’s words, I felt a shiver run down my spine. I thought of how he had pledged to be the most obedient follower of Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) and how he fulfilled this pledge in every possible way so that when the time came, Allah the Almighty chose him as Khalifatul Masih V after the demise of Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh).

I also reflected upon Huzoor’s recollections of the period of Khilafat of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) and how he had instilled courage and fortitude within Huzoor by instructing him to go to University, even as others said that it was too dangerous. And how Allah the Almighty had blessed that seed planted by Khalifatul Masih III (rh).

Later, I mentioned to Huzoor that I had not heard before that some people had advised him not to go to university in Pakistan.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“Yes, even my father (Hazrat Mirza Mansoor Ahmad) was worried and initially did not want me to go. However, our home training was always that once the Khalifa has made a decision we must follow and obey it. Saboohi (Huzoor’s respected wife) also tells of how in her home her parents instructed her and her siblings that if they ever said anything that was contradictory to what the Khalifa-Waqt has said then their

children should disregard their parents and only follow what the Khalifa had said. This was the atmosphere in which we were raised.”

A daftari Mulaqat – Canada delegation

Throughout the year, Huzoor permits various Jamaat officials to meet him so that they can take his guidance on various projects and how to best fulfil their Jamaat responsibilities.

For example, in early May, a small delegation from Canada consisting of Farhan Khokhar (*Naib Ameer Canada*), Asif Khan (*National Secretary Umoor-e-Kharija Canada*), Safwan Choudhry (*Canada Media team*) and Ahmad Sahi (*Mohtamim Tabligh, MKA Canada*) visited Huzoor to seek his guidance and instructions on various issues.

During the meeting, where Huzoor provided profound guidance, he also told some very amusing stories and jokes to lighten the mood.

Huzoor’s style was a means of not only guiding but also increasing the personal bond of love between Ahmadis and their spiritual leader.

One question the Canadian team asked was about politics in Canada. They wanted to know if the Jamaat could ask Ahmadi Muslims to vote for a particular party or politician.

For example, if there was a politician who had particularly good relations with the Jamaat.

In response, Huzoor said:

“You cannot force any Ahmadi Muslim to vote for a particular party or candidate in political elections. However, if there is someone who you think is better for the Jamaat you can seek to influence the Ahmadis through love. Just as we seek to win the hearts of non-Ahmadis and non-Muslims, in such matters seek to win the hearts of the Ahmadis and if you do so they will listen to you. Nonetheless, in politics you cannot force or try to compel them because as citizens they have the right to vote for who they please.”

Asif Khan sahib sought Huzoor’s advice about making contacts with governmental or political officials.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Don’t only focus on politicians because they come and go. It is important that the Jamaat seeks to build contacts with civil servants and bureaucrats who formulate and implement policies. At every level, from national, to provincial, to local, try to increase contacts. Our aim is not to get political benefit but to spread the teachings of Islam and to increase awareness of the Jamaat. Short-term and long-term plans should be made and implemented in parallel. The work of public relations is extremely vast and far-reaching and so do not limit yourselves but always seek to increase the scope of your activities.”

Another member of the Canadian team informed that following Huzoor’s guidance, many Khuddam went immediately to offer their condolences

following the van attack in Toronto a few days earlier. He informed that, according to Huzoor's advice, the Jamaat members also laid flowers at the site of the attack.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

"It is good that you took flowers but you should have taken roses."

A member of the Canadian team responded:

"Huzoor, we would have taken roses but due to Mother's Day the stocks of roses were running very low in the shops."

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

"Well you should have travelled further afield to get them. That would also have shown people how you had particularly strived in order to express your sympathy and love for your fellow people."

Huzoor continued:

"It may seem like a small thing but when you turn up and give flowers you are expressing your love for the community and making it clear that you are part of them and you feel their grief. When you meet people or have the opportunity to give media interviews you should say 'Do we not grieve just like you do?' You are not doing any type of 'show' or drama, rather, as Ahmadis, our love for our fellow citizens is part of our faith."

Thereafter, Huzoor advised the Canadian team about how to formulate their teams and how to progress.

Huzoor said:

“It is very good to have younger people in your teams but do not ignore the elders completely. Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) was once asked why he normally kept some elder people in each department. In response, he said that the elders have experience and so can play a key role in developing strategies, whilst their deputies should be younger people who have the energy and ability to implement and to work passionately.”

Huzoor continued:

“Where the experience of elders is to be valued, the elders themselves should not be rigid but should be willing to listen and absorb the opinions and views of younger people as they know the latest trends and have new ideas. Hence, in Jamaat we should utilise the experience of the elders, whilst harnessing the street knowledge of the youth. This is actually the philosophy underpinning our Nizaam.”

After seeking Huzoor’s guidance on various further matters, Asif Khan sahib asked Huzoor if Ahmadi Muslims who were involved in politics could be elected as Jamaat office bearers.

In response, Huzoor said:

“Yes, but there are two conditions. First, the Ahmadi must ensure he is not breaking any rules of his political party or wherever he is elected and has permission. Second, he should be a good Ahmadi Muslim, who is regular in prayer. We should be broad-minded and so as long as someone is following the tenets of Islam and has firm faith in Allah we should not get overly concerned by small issues, otherwise we will be like the non-Ahmadi Maulvis who seek to control every aspect of people’s lives and are intolerant of so many inconsequential things.”

It had been a very interesting meeting and following the Mulaqat, Farhan Khokhar and Asif Khan shared their personal experiences with me.

Farhan Khokhar sahib said:

“It is with great trepidation that I approach each daftari Mulaqat but Huzoor always makes us comfortable by pleasantries and light comments. Huzoor has an amazing sense of humor. Whenever he cracks a joke or makes a light-hearted comment, one cannot help but to laugh out loud. More importantly, even his jokes or light-hearted comments are not said in jest, but his words are full of wisdom.”

Farhan sahib continued:

“During the meeting, Huzoor continued with his own work, whilst guiding us at the same time. Further, at one point, Huzoor’s phone rang because his grandson had fallen and hurt himself but Huzoor remained

unimaginably calm. All this while listening to us with complete attention and giving guidance. How is that even humanly possible without Divine assistance!”

Asif Khan sahib said:

“Being with Huzoor for the length of time we were in his office was simply incredible. We had our questions written down and had went over them for a few weeks prior to arriving. Yet, when in the presence of Huzoor, you are just in awe! You forget how you wanted to ask the questions, your hands are shaky while writing down the responses which takes immense concentration to do! “

Asif sahib continued:

“Of course, the guidance that Huzoor provides is timely and precise and can only be obtained by one guided by Allah. I feel so blessed to have this opportunity. At the same time, I am also sad in that I realise that it may not always be such. Either Khalifatul Masih will simply be too busy to hold such meetings or I simply will be replaced by a smarter and more deserving member. I will always be grateful to Allah for these opportunities and I pray that, one day, I may be able to share my stories with my grandchildren, Insha'Allah.”

Masroor International Cricket Final

Later that afternoon, Huzoor attended the final of the tenth *Masroor International Cricket Tournament*, which was held at a park near the Baitul

Futuh Mosque. Hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims, as well as some local residents, had gathered to watch the final between England and Canada.

England batted first and posted a modest total and for much of Canada's innings it seemed as though they would reach their target with ease.

However, three wickets in the penultimate over changed the match and suddenly England seemed set to grasp victory from the jaws of defeat. There was time for one final twist as Canada were able to score two runs off the final ball which gave them their seventh title in ten years.

Huzoor stayed at the ground for over an hour and watched the conclusion of the match before awarding the trophy to the winning captain and medals to the players, as well as various individual awards.

A special memory

Despite the exciting conclusion to the match, my favourite *Masroor cricket* final will always be the third tournament that took place in 2011. Though I cannot remember who won (probably Canada), I will never forget that day.

On that occasion, Huzoor had also graced the final with his presence and as soon as it concluded, I rushed back to *Masjid Fazl* as I was due to report for Mulaqat.

Upon returning from the match, Huzoor went straight to his office and was surprised that I had managed to reach the Mosque so quickly.

The final itself had been somewhat one-sided and so during the closing ceremony Huzoor had thanked both captains by joking that they had saved his time by ensuring the match finished quickly.

In Mulaqat, I said to Huzoor that the fact that the match had finished quickly had also benefitted me.

Hearing this, Huzoor seemed surprised and said:

“Kis tarah?” meaning ***“How so?”***

In reply, I said:

“Huzoor, if the match had gone on for long then perhaps you would not have had time to meet me today but as it finished earlier, now I have the opportunity for Mulaqat.”

Huzoor smiled and nodded in agreement. At that moment, Huzoor was holding the blessed ring of the Promised Messiah (as) that he wears in his hand and he asked me if I had ever seen it from close.

As I had not, Huzoor graciously called me towards him and let me observe the blessed ring that was now worn by the *Khalifa-Waqt*.

Thereafter, Huzoor proceeded to show me some blessed items belonging to the Promised Messiah (as) including a very beautiful comb used by the Promised Messiah (as).

After showing me the comb, Huzoor expressed his intense love for the Promised Messiah (as) by saying:

“Dekha hai ke kitni pyari hai?”

Meaning:

“Have you seen how beautiful it is?”

After this, I began to mention some of that day’s main news stories. As I did so, I was slightly distracted as I could see that Huzoor was cutting something with scissors but I was not sure what.

It was only when I had concluded my report that Huzoor told me that he had cut a piece of cloth from a *chaadar* (shawl) of the Promised Messiah (as) and placed it into a small clear zip-lock bag.

Alongside it, Huzoor had written my name and a short note confirming that the piece of cloth enclosed was *tabarruk* of the Promised Messiah (as).

I was completely overwhelmed. I said to Huzoor that I would never forget that day because not only had I received *tabarruk* of my master, the Promised Messiah (as) but it had been received from the blessed hands of my beloved Khalifa.

I left Huzoor’s office in an extremely emotional state and such emotions increased as I offered *Asr* prayer behind Huzoor immediately after. As *Namaz* concluded, I drove straight home so that the *tabarruk* was not misplaced or damaged in any way.

Years later, every detail of that *Mulaqat* remains etched vividly in my mind, even though my memory is otherwise not the best.

Certainly, no matter how good the future tournaments are, nothing will ever beat 2011's cricket tournament for me.

Very sad news

Late evening, 6 May 2018, we received the very sad news *that Sahibzadi Amatul Hai Khan sahiba (Khala Amatul Hai)*, who had been suffering with cancer for over a year, had passed away at her home in London. *Inna lillahey wa inna illehey rajeoon.*

She was the great-granddaughter of the Promised Messiah (as) and the granddaughter of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra). She was also the cousin of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba).

It was extremely sorrowful to hear of her passing. Along with her husband, Dr. Hamidullah Khan sahib and family, she had lived in England for more than 40 years and served the Jamaat in many different ways.

Having grown up in the north of England, where Khala Amatul Hai's family resided for many years, she had been a constant presence in my own childhood memories. She was a close friend of my mother and there are many photos of the 1970s and 1980s of our families together on various outings in the Lake District or at each other's homes. Thus, at a personal level, Khala Amatul Hai was a direct link to my childhood and to my parents.

After receiving the news, we went immediately to offer our condolences to her family and inevitably it was a scene of grief and devastation.

However, when I returned to their home the next day, the atmosphere had noticeably changed. Of course, sadness and grief remained, yet at the same time there was an air of contentment and peace.

I mentioned this to Khala Amatul Hai's son *Daud* and he told me that everyone was in better spirits and the reason for this was the love of Khilafat they had all received.

His elder brother, *Dr Hammad Khan*, also told me about how Huzoor's love and guidance had been a constant source of comfort for their family.

Hammad bhai said:

“Throughout my mother's illness, Huzoor took a special interest in her wellbeing. At every opportunity he would ask about her. We would take his advice regarding her medical treatment and Huzoor would always respond with love and kindness and suggested homeopathic medicine that my mother would take diligently knowing it was Huzoor's prescription.”

Speaking of Khala Amatul Hai's own love for Khilafat and the example she had left for her family to follow, Hammad bhai said:

“Both my parents impressed a love of Khilafat on us from a young age and they showed obedience to Khilafat through their own examples.

During the last days of my mother's illness, when she was barely able to walk, she insisted on going to Huzoor twice. There was an urgency in that insistence, as I think she knew these would be her last opportunities to see Huzoor."

Hammad bhai continued:

"A couple of weeks before she passed away, I was sitting with her when our family was preparing to visit Huzoor. She was sleeping in her chair but could clearly hear the preparations around her. She suddenly said: "Let's go". At that point she was very weak and so I asked her where she wanted to go and she said: "To see Huzoor". Even in that weakened state she wanted to see beloved Huzoor one last time."

Mentioning the day of her passing, Hammad bhai said:

"After my mother passed away it was a time of grieving for our family. My father, brother and I went for a Mulaqat the next morning. We had no appointment but requested a meeting and Huzoor kindly met us despite his other pressing meetings and gave us significant time. He offered his condolences and asked about the funeral preparations. He was concerned about the smallest details and gave us advice on what to do."

Hammad bhai continued:

"Huzoor kindly visited our house in the late afternoon to offer his condolences and sat with our family for quite some time. He recalled my mother's love for Khilafat, her energy and hard work. He recalled when

they were children together in Rabwah and Huzoor would come to play with my mother's brother. Huzoor's touching concern and interest was a great source of comfort for us as a family."

Hammad bhai's wife, *Dr Fariha Khan*, also shared her recollections of how the love of Khilafat had been the greatest possible source of comfort and support at that time of grief.

Fariha baji said:

"I don't have the words to describe the way Huzoor showed care towards Phoopo Amatul Hai since her diagnosis. Huzoor even visited her on occasions. I remember once, she called me and asked me to come as they had just received a call that Huzoor was coming to visit. I rushed and she was worrying that what will we serve Huzoor and she supervised everything. Huzoor and Phoopi Saboohi (Huzoor's respected wife) came and sat for a long time and kept asking about her treatment and many other things. It was a beautiful evening and Phoopo Amatul Hai was so pleased."

Reflecting on the blessings of Khilafat, Fariha baji added:

"The way Khilafat changes your state of anguish and pain into a state of calm is like no other. I experienced this when my own father (Sahibzada Mirza Umer Ahmad) passed away. It was a huge loss for me and I felt lost. Yet there was no moment of grief or darkness when my spiritual father did not lift me up."

Never a backward glance

Where Huzoor's love and compassion for Ahmadi Muslims is forever apparent, it is also clear that he never lets any grief or upsetting news stand in the way of fulfilling the mission of our Jamaat to spread the true teachings of Islam to all parts of the world and to all people.

I witnessed another example of this upon Khala Amatul Hai's passing.

After hearing the news of her demise, I immediately sent a message offering my condolences to Huzoor.

Upon this, late at night Huzoor responded by saying: *'Inna lillahey wa inna illehey rajعون'*.

Thereafter, Huzoor immediately said:

"Abid, come tomorrow morning to my office with your laptop for dictation."

Thus, whilst Huzoor had just learned of the passing of his cousin and he was offering his love and support to the family members, he was also immediately focused upon preparing for the inauguration of two new Mosques being held that coming weekend in Walsall and Nottingham.

A model of simplicity

As instructed, I reported to Huzoor's office the following morning on 7 May 2018 and upon sitting down I saw that Huzoor was holding a small pocket spiral-bound notepad. It was the same notepad I had seen Huzoor use on many past occasions.

Huzoor would often write some brief notes or points in the notepad which he then utilised as a basis for various speeches and addresses.

I was amazed to see that on this occasion Huzoor was not writing in the notepad but was mending it!

The notepad had become frayed and part of it had become detached and so Huzoor spent a few minutes carefully patching up the notepad using *Sellotape*.

Over the years, I have seen countless examples of Huzoor's simplicity and humility and have mentioned some in previous diaries, yet still I was taken aback by this scene.

Here was the Khalifatul Masih, divinely commissioned by Allah the Almighty and who has the weight of the world on his shoulders and whose every moment is precious, diligently reattaching an old notepad.

Rather than asking his office to mend it or to get him a new one, our Khalifa preferred to himself mend the old notepad.

As I saw this scene, I recalled how it is narrated that the Holy Prophet (sa) used to mend his own clothes and live extremely modestly and I was reminded of how in today's world, it is Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) who follows every single aspect of the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (sa) more than any other.

An emotional few moments

Whilst, Huzoor fixed his notepad, I again offered condolences about the passing of Khala Amatul Hai.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“This is how life is that we come and we go. There are people in the world who think they are great and all-powerful yet we are all destined to depart from this temporary life and so we should always be humble and realise that all power is in Allah’s Hands alone.”

Thereafter, Huzoor mentioned some Urdu couplets that reflected the fleeting nature of human life.

One referred to elegant flowers that briefly open their petals to the world but soon die away.

In another couplet, a poet had written that life was like the song of a bird which comes and goes.

It was a privilege to be in Huzoor's company as he reflected so beautifully on the transitory nature of life and I particularly became emotional when for a few precious seconds, Huzoor sung one of the couplets in a most melodious and beautiful voice.

Those moments in which Huzoor sung were so enchanting and captivating that I almost forgot that Huzoor had called me to his office to work!

Nevertheless, to be able to work and to take dictation from Huzoor over the next hour was a great privilege and honour.

First, Huzoor dictated an address that he would deliver to guests at a reception in Walsall the next week.

Thereafter, Huzoor dictated two brief addresses to be delivered to Jamaat members in Walsall and Nottingham.

A reprehensible proposal

The next day, I informed Huzoor of a recent news report from France where a group of senior politicians, intellectuals and other influential figures had published a proposal for certain verses of the Holy Quran to be removed (*God forbid*).

Their argument was that any verses that they believed could be interpreted to permit violence should be removed.

Rather than condemn the false interpretations of certain Quranic verses made by extremist Muslims they sought for the Quran itself to be changed.

Upon hearing of this report, Huzoor said:

“Over time the Bible was changed and corrupted and as a result Christianity was severely weakened and harmed. Having seen what happened to Christianity they now wish to weaken Islam in the same way and so they are proposing to remove verses of the Holy Quran. Yet this can and will never happen, Insha’Allah.”

Huzoor’s point was profound and extremely interesting. Having witnessed how their own religion and traditions had weakened over the centuries, an attempt was being made to weaken Islam through the same method but in the name of ‘helping’ Islam and increasing peace.

Inauguration of Baitul Muqees Mosque

On the weekend of 12 and 13 May 2018, Huzoor visited the Midlands region of England to inaugurate two new Mosques.

On Saturday 12 May, Huzoor travelled late afternoon from London to inaugurate the *Baitul Muqees Mosque* and arrived in Walsall shortly after 6pm and after unveiling a plaque to mark the opening, Huzoor led the Asr prayer at the Mosque.

There had been a lot of opposition to the construction of the Mosque in Walsall and many efforts had been made to frustrate its progress.

Complaints had been lodged with the council and a petition to stop the Mosque being built received hundreds of signatures.

As a result, initially the local Council had turned down the planning application of the Jamaat but on appeal the decision was reversed. In the main, the opposition had not come from non-Muslims fearful of Islam, rather it had come from within the Muslim community itself.

Sadly, anti-Ahmadi prejudice and bigotry raised its head but, with the *Grace of Allah*, such efforts were ultimately frustrated and the Jamaat was able to proceed and build the Mosque.

After the Asr prayers, Huzoor addressed the local members of the Walsall Jamaat and said that it was not enough to build a Mosque but that it was essential they increased in both their worship of Allah and their service to mankind.

Huzoor said:

“You should always strive to set the very best example for others, so that you inspire them towards righteousness, rather than causing them pain or grief of any kind.”

Speaking about the need to spread the true teachings of Islam, Huzoor said:

“You should seek to build closer bonds of affection in your relations with one another and with the wider society at large. Strive to be

ambassadors of true Islam and to remove the misconceptions that exist in the world about our religion.”

An ‘internal’ introduction

Later in the evening Huzoor graced a *special reception* held with local dignitaries and guests and Huzoor delivered the keynote address in which he reassured the local people about the peaceful objectives of a true Mosque.

Prior to Huzoor’s address, the UK Jamaat’s *Regional President* gave a welcome address.

During his speech, he mentioned the names of certain Ahmadis who had made large financial sacrifices contributing towards the new Mosque. He also mentioned his gratitude to the national Jamaat office bearers who had helped the local Jamaat in their efforts.

I felt a little uncomfortable during this part of his speech because such comments seemed more ‘internal’ in nature and I did not think they needed to be mentioned in a public reception with external guests present.

Apart from anything else, I thought that the guests would probably not be interested as they would not be aware of the people mentioned and would be more interested in learning about the Mosque and Islam.

I remained unsure if I was being over-sensitive until the next day when I saw Huzoor speak to the Regional Amir Sahib. Very lovingly, Huzoor guided that such comments were unnecessary in public events with guests and that our

focus should be on those things that would interest them and through which they could learn about Islam.

Where I saw that my initial reaction had not been wrong, more than that I observed how Huzoor guided with such affection.

Whilst standing on a set of stairs at the Mosque, Huzoor lovingly held the arm of the Regional Amir and guided him with great love.

Thus, I am sure that rather than look back at the moment with any sadness, the Regional Amir will remember it as a special moment in his life.

Guest remarks

Before Huzoor addressed the reception, several local dignitaries gave brief remarks.

One of the guest speakers was a local representative of the Queen. During her remarks she appeared to be rather nervous and for a few seconds struggled to speak before composing herself. I felt sorry for her knowing that public speaking can be difficult and nerve wracking.

As she returned to her seat, I saw Huzoor speak to her. Later, Huzoor told me that she had apologised for getting nervous and so he had told her not be embarrassed and that it was nothing to be worried about.

The guest speakers all spoke in tribute to the Jamaat and welcomed Huzoor to their town.

One of the guest speakers was Steve McCabe MP who said:

“Your Holiness, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge your work in promoting peace and exemplary work in helping those less fortunate... You suffer from persecution and intimidation in Pakistan and, in such circumstances, it is tempting to retreat, but the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community continues to practice what it preaches – Love for All, Hatred for None.”

Huzoor’s address in Walsall

In his keynote address, Huzoor spoke openly of the potential fear the local people might harbour about Islam given the terrorists attacks by so-called Muslims in recent years.

Contrasting such atrocities with the true teachings of Islam, Huzoor said:

“The Holy Quran has made it crystal clear that it is the duty of Muslims to protect all religions and the people of all beliefs and to preserve the sanctity of all places of worship. It has enshrined freedom of belief as an indispensable and paramount tenet of Islam.”

Huzoor continued:

“Therefore, if any of you fear that this Mosque will prove to be a centre of extremism filled with cruel and heartless people, let me reassure at the outset. Our religion seeks to bring people together through love and dialogue and never through force or fear. Islam completely rejects all

forms of extremism and terrorism. There is no ambiguity or doubt in this matter.”

Huzoor spoke of how Allah the Almighty was the *‘Rabbul Aalameen’*. Generally, in our Jamaat we translate this as *‘Lord of all the worlds’*.

However, Huzoor has told me in the past that he does not think this translation does justice to the true meaning of *‘Rabbul Aalameen’* and Huzoor prefers in his speeches to use *‘Provider and Sustainer for the entire universe’*.

Speaking about Allah’s Attribute as the *‘Rabbul Aalameen’*, Huzoor said:

“When a Muslim bows before that Supreme Being, who is the Provider and Sustainer of all mankind, and who is the Source of all Creation, it is impossible for him to harm any other person, whether from amongst his own community or not.”

Huzoor mentioned that Ahmadi Muslims were persecuted in certain countries and were prevented from the basic aspects of their faith in Pakistan and contrasted it with the situation in the UK.

Huzoor said:

“We are extremely appreciative of the fact that the local people here in Walsall have enabled us to build this Mosque and consider it testimony to your open hearts and respect for human values... We will never forget this favour and consider it our religious duty to care for the people in this community, to be loyal to this nation and to be ever ready for your service

and to offer our help and assistance wherever and whenever it is needed.”

Thereafter, Huzoor spoke about the humanitarian efforts of the Jamaat around the world and particularly in Africa and of the *‘unbridled joy on the faces of young children’* when they saw water flowing from a tap for the very first time. He spoke of the schools and hospitals and energy projects set up by the Jamaat and how every effort and project was motivated by Islam.

Huzoor said:

“We do not consider that we are doing them a favour, rather by enabling us to fulfil our duties to serve others they are helping us. This is true Islam. It is a religion of compassion and benevolence and a religion that seeks to knock down the walls of injustice that divide us through the power of love and humanity.”

Impact of Huzoor’s words

Alhamdulillah, Huzoor’s address had a profound impact on many of the guests.

It was clear that any fears or concerns that existed about Islam or about the Mosque itself had been eradicated in the people who I met.

One guest I met was *Seth*, who was of African origin but had lived in the Walsall area for a long time. He told me that he had previously held some reservations about Islam and was concerned by the Mosque being built.

Seth said:

“I did have some fears about this Mosque but they have completely evaporated and it is as if I never had any fears or worries. The speech by the Caliph was very emotional, especially when he spoke about my continent of Africa and how children don’t have water but the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is providing it to them.”

A Member of Parliament, Steven McKay MP, said:

“It (Huzoor’s address) shows why Ahmadi Muslims are so well mannered and why they integrate so well into society. They have a leader who provides answers to the problems of the world. His words were emphatic and superb.”

A Member of the European Parliament, Bill Etheridge said:

“It was more than an honour for me to be here to listen to the words and wisdom of the Caliph. There are so many adjectives than can be used to describe his speech like ‘terrific’, ‘superb’, ‘wonderful’ but none will do justice to being present to listen to him. You could feel his love for humankind and how sincere his desire for peace in the world is.”

I also met *Inderit Singh*, a charity worker and *Councillor Marcus Lapsa*, who had come to the event together.

They were both delighted and visibly emotional to have heard Huzoor’s address and to have met him.

Inderit Singh said:

“I am so impressed by the words of the Khalifa. For a long time, I saw His Holiness from afar on TV and dreamed of meeting him and today I had that chance. I am ‘over the moon’ with joy! I was extremely moved by his speech, which was an extraordinarily powerful call for peace. I feel like I have been given a great education today about what Islam truly is. The message of His Holiness was that we are all part of one human race and so should love each other and this is the teaching of the Quran.”

Councillor Marcus Lapsa said:

“The Khalifa is breaking barriers and directing mankind towards peace and justice. It is a great honour for the West Midlands that His Holiness has come here and I doubt that such an esteemed religious figure will have come here before and it shows that the Khalifa is ready to go into the heartland of a nation to win hearts. The Khalifa is very humble, spiritual and he treated everyone with great respect. His Holiness is humanity!”

Grandfather and grandson

Following the event, Huzoor returned to the Mosque to lead the *Maghreb* and *Isha* prayers. After *Namaz* concluded, I stood talking with *Mansoor Dahri* (son of *Fateh Ahmad Dahri Sahib*).

Mansoor is Huzoor’s eldest grandchild and had accompanied Huzoor and *Khala Saboohi* (*Huzoor’s respected wife*) that weekend.

Mansoor told me he had engaged in a discussion with an English lady at the event who asked why Ahmadi men and women were seated in separate rooms.

He said he had explained the philosophy behind Islamic teachings but the lady had not been easily convinced. Nonetheless he persevered and did not shy away from openly expressing Islamic teachings.

At that exact moment, Huzoor walked out of the Mosque and looked in my direction and said he had seen Mansoor talking to some guests during the dinner.

Huzoor smiled and said:

“Aaj Mansoor nay aik do loghon taq paghaam ponchadiya hai!”

Meaning:

“Today, Mansoor conveyed the message (of Islam) to one or two people.”

As Huzoor walked towards his residence, he asked Mansoor further details and Mansoor informed about the fact that he had engaged in a discussion about segregation with a lady.

Huzoor smiled and seemed very pleased that Mansoor had stayed firm in his convictions.

It was a very precious scene to witness. Throughout, Huzoor was smiling, as Mansoor walked very respectfully behind Huzoor. On the one hand, you could see Mansoor's love for his grandfather but also his great respect for him as his spiritual leader.

On the other, you could see Huzoor's love for his grandson and his pleasure that he had been able to convey the teachings of Islam without any fear or complex, just as Huzoor asks all Ahmadis to do.

Inauguration of Baitul Hafeez Mosque, Nottingham

The following morning, Huzoor met some members of the local Walsall Jamaat and also planted a tree at the Mosque before his Qafila proceeded onwards to Nottingham, a larger city in the East Midlands.

I felt quite unwell at night but thankfully a combination of paracetamol and homeopathy meant I was well enough to drive to Nottingham.

Huzoor arrived in Nottingham at 12.35pm and immediately unveiled a plaque and led a silent prayer to officially inaugurate the *Baitul Hafeez Mosque*.

Despite being so busy, Huzoor still kindly asked me how I was feeling and whether I still had a fever or not.

At such moments, Huzoor enquiring is like the best medicine! Certainly, the love of Huzoor made me forget the fact that I was not feeling my best and I was able to enjoy the rest of the day.

After a few minutes, Huzoor led the *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers at the Mosque and this was followed by a short programme, in which Huzoor addressed the members of the local Jamaat.

Huzoor said:

“Upon attaining this new Mosque, you should all be extremely grateful to Allah the Almighty. It is not enough just to verbally express your appreciation, rather true gratitude requires you to constantly strive to fulfil the conditions of Bai’at as prescribed by the Promised Messiah (as) and to act upon all that he taught and desired from his Jamaat.

Huzoor presented various excerpts of the Promised Messiah (as) about the importance of *Salat* and of fulfilling the rights of one another.

Furthermore, Huzoor said he had noticed that some of the local Ahmadi men and women who had come from Pakistan did not yet speak or understand English. Thus, he advised them to make a special effort to learn the English language.

Huzoor said:

“Those who do not know English well should seek to learn it because this is essential for Tabligh and also to ensure the moral training of your children. If mothers do not know English there will be a gap between them and their children and it will be difficult to guide them. If your children become distant from you it will have a lifelong impact, whereas if you are close to them and do their Tarbiyyat in a positive way then

Insha'Allah they will always stay close to the Jamaat and fulfil the purpose for which the Promised Messiah (as) was sent."

Following lunch, Huzoor's weekend visit to the Midlands concluded and after a silent prayer he returned to London.

Alhamdulillah, it had proven a very blessed and historic weekend for the UK Jamaat, in which two more Mosques were inaugurated by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba).

Despite the significant travel of the past 24 hours, Huzoor returned to his office that evening and his normal routine of work re-commenced immediately.

A daftari Mulaqat - USA delegation

On 14 May 2018, Huzoor met a small delegation of Ahmadis from the United States in a *daftari Mulaqat*. Those attending were *Qasim Rashid*, *Mujeeb Ijaz* and *Faysal Sohail*. They were involved in the launch of a *think tank* in the United States being established with the permission of Huzoor.

Huzoor had personally outlined the main objective of the think tank which was to promote the peace and security of the world and so the US delegation had come to present some research to Huzoor and to seek his further guidance for the project.

On several occasions, Huzoor said it was important to target the youth of America and to encourage them to be tolerant of all faiths and beliefs.

At the same time, Huzoor's priority remained the youth of the Jamaat.

Huzoor said:

“Our first objective must always be to reform and save our youth and to guide them because then they can go on to save the nation and to influence a positive change in society and to break down barriers.”

Huzoor continued:

“When appealing to the youth, whether Ahmadi Muslims or not, you should appeal to their emotions. This is the way to influence by winning people's hearts. Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders and so make an ambitious plan to meet as many young people as possible across the country.”

Referring to American politics, Huzoor said:

“The current American administration seems to have made the working classes think they are on their side by imposing import trade tariffs on other nations. However, the opposite is true, as such sanctions will end up hurting their economy and cause job losses. Thus, if your think tank is to be successful you must engage the youth and explain to them that isolationism is wrong and considering America to be completely separate from the rest of the globalised world is harmful.”

Following the meeting I spoke to Qasim Rashid. Anyone who has seen Qasim on social media or the many media interviews that he has given will know

that he is a confident speaker. However, when he was meeting Huzoor, he was nervous throughout and kept a low tone whilst addressing Huzoor. This is something Qasim mentioned himself.

Qasim Rashid said:

“The only thing that gets me nervous is when I speak in front of beloved Huzoor. Not interviews. Not meeting politicians or celebrities. Not lectures before hundreds or thousands of people. But when I stand before Huzoor I feel as if I'm incapable of putting two words together. All I see are my own many flaws and weaknesses and I'm engaged in Istighfar and gratitude to Allah for the opportunity to converse and feel the love and light of His Khalifa.”

Qasim continued:

“This recent Mulaqat with Huzoor was no exception to my nervousness. As I began to speak I noticed I spoke very quickly and mumbled. When I stumbled my words in front of Huzoor I knew it right away. I glanced up briefly to see if I should repeat myself or make my statement another way. The look I saw on Huzoor's face can only be described as that of a loving father comforting his son with a smile when his son falls off his bike. Rather than express the slightest bit of displeasure or annoyance, Huzoor responded with a smile and related a story of another politician who also became nervous in front of him. Huzoor lovingly encouraged me to start again and speak a bit more slowly, which I think I managed to do somewhat despite remaining nervous.”

A blessed month begins

With the *Grace of Allah*, on 17 May 2018, we had reached the blessed month of Ramadan. I woke up at night with the intention to fast, however I felt quite unwell. I continued to suffer from a sore throat and fever that I had first felt in Walsall a few days before and so I decided not to fast.

At the same time, I felt a sense of guilt and sadness to be missing out, especially on the very first day. Throughout the day, I wondered if I should have fasted, as I was not suffering from a serious or long-term ailment.

With this burden weighing on my mind, I reported for *Mulaqat* and it occurred to me that Huzoor may ask how my first fast is going. I feared that perhaps Huzoor will say something indicating that I should still have fasted and that such a comment would compound the guilt I felt.

However, as soon as I entered his office, the first thing Huzoor said was:

“Tum nay tu nahin aaj roza raka hoga.”

Meaning:

“You will not be fasting today.”

Upon this, I told Huzoor that I had hoped to fast but had not felt well enough.

In reply, Huzoor said I had made the correct decision and that during illness it was better to refrain from fasting until a complete recovery was made.

I felt instantly relieved by Huzoor's comments and was extremely grateful for Huzoor's reassurance.

Later, I mentioned to Huzoor that I had read an article about a new trend in which some young Muslims in the *West* were said to have adopted a culture of '*fake fasting*' whereby they would pretend to fast to avoid any cultural disapproval from their Muslim family and friends.

In the article, a young Muslim man had been interviewed who told how during fasts he would eat *fish and chips* for lunch but in the evening would join his family for *Iftari* and gave the impression that he had been fasting all day.

Huzoor listened with interest and actually referenced the article in his *Friday Sermon* the next day.

As I left Huzoor's office, I asked him how his fast was going.

In reply, Huzoor smiled and said:

"It is going ok but not quite as well as that young man who had fish and chips for lunch!"

I laughed out loud and Huzoor also laughed before I left his office.

Over the next month, I witnessed and observed, as I had in previous years, that Huzoor's office schedule did not slow down at all during Ramadan.

Throughout the month, Huzoor continued to hold *daftari* (official) and *family Mulaqats*. He continued to go through the thousands of official and personal letters he received each week.

I am sure the only change to his routine was that he slept even less than normal and further increased the standards of his worship.

In our love for Huzoor, we sometimes forget that he is a normal human being. Just as we tire, there are times when Huzoor tires. Just as we become hungry or thirsty so does our beloved Khalifa. In the same way, Huzoor is not immune from the effects of fasting.

There were occasional days in Ramadan when Huzoor would be working in his office and would comment that he was feeling the effects of the fast more that day or that he had a headache. However, what I never saw was Huzoor slow down or delay any work whatsoever.

'Four days'

Towards the end of May 2018, my nephew Taalay Ahmed, who is a *Waqf-e-Zindighi* (life devotee) serving in *MTA* sent me the first cut of a new documentary he had made on behalf of the *MTA News* department.

The documentary was about the four days in April 2003 from when Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) passed away until the election of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba).

I started to watch it on my phone just prior to reporting for *Mulaqat* and I had seen only ten minutes when I was called in. From what I had seen the documentary seemed promising.

As Huzoor worked in his office, I mentioned the documentary and asked Huzoor if he would like to listen to the first few minutes.

Most graciously, Huzoor said he would listen and so I held up my phone with the intention of playing two or three minutes so that Huzoor would get an idea of what the documentary was and could guide us about whether the style was appropriate or not.

What I was not expecting was that, as he continued to work, Huzoor continued to listen to the documentary all the way until the time for *Asr* prayer.

In total, Huzoor listened to the first 35 minutes of the documentary which was much more than I had myself checked.

With every minute that passed, I became increasingly nervous as I was not sure what was coming next!

As Huzoor listened, I mentioned that Taalay had suggested that the documentary be called '*Four days without a Khalifa*'.

I personally felt uneasy at the title as it seemed somewhat insensitive. I know this was not Taalay's intention but it did not sit well with me.

Upon hearing the suggested title, Huzoor said:

“Factually, Taalay’s title is not wrong but it does not sound appropriate.”

I was very glad to receive Huzoor’s guidance. In my mind I tried to think of other titles but my mind was drawing a blank.

Huzoor continued to listen to the documentary and after some time, I was surprised to hear the voice of my brother-in-law, *Syed Hashim Ahmed*.

Even Huzoor noted my surprised expression and said:

“Yes, it is your brother-in-law Hashim speaking.”

At one point in his interview, bhai Hashim mentioned the word ‘*shepherd*’ and as soon as he said this, Huzoor looked up from his desk and said:

“That is it! That should be the title!”

I looked across the desk and was confused. I did not understand what Huzoor meant.

Seeing my blank expression, Huzoor kindly explained by saying:

“The title of the documentary should be ‘Four days without a shepherd’.”

Hearing this, I was elated. It was a beautiful title that kept the main part of the title Taalay had suggested, whilst at the same time, removed any element of insensitivity.

I thanked Huzoor for himself giving us the title for the documentary but, as humble as ever, Huzoor did not desire for any credit.

Rather, Huzoor said:

“It was Hashim who used the word shepherd in his interview!”

As I left Huzoor’s office, I felt sure that the documentary would *Insha’Allah* be well received given that it had Huzoor’s blessing and that he had given us a title for it.

Alhamdulillah, once it was broadcast a few weeks later this proved to be the case and I am sure that whatever positive feedback we received was due entirely to the blessings of Khilafat.

Shortly after, I called Taalay and told him that I had been uncomfortable with the title of the documentary.

Anticipating my sense of caution, Taalay said:

“I knew you would be!”

I then told him how the Mulaqat with Huzoor had transpired and that Huzoor had given the title ‘*Four days without a shepherd*’.

Hearing the news, Taalay suddenly became emotional and said:

“All I can say is Alhamdolillah! I can’t believe how lucky I am that Huzoor has himself named my documentary!”

It was an example of how Huzoor is able to give joy and contentment in a way that no other person can.

If I had personally told Taalay to change the name of the documentary, I am sure he would have listened but may have felt a tinge of regret.

However, the fact that Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) had changed the name meant that rather than any regret, all he felt was delight and great fortune.

A message received

During the Mulaqat, I had held up my phone facing Huzoor so that he could watch the documentary.

Unbeknown to me, during that period, my wife Mala had sent several *WhatsApp* messages to me.

Having noticed the message notifications, and just moments before I left his office, Huzoor said:

“Mala has sent some messages and so check to see if everything is ok at home.”

It was an example of Huzoor's love and concern for others that, even though we had reached the time for *Namaz*, he told me to check immediately to see if everything was ok.

I quickly checked my phone and told thankfully there was no emergency. Rather, Mala had sent a message saying she had not yet cooked anything for dinner.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“This means she wants you to bring some food from outside today!”

I was taken aback by Huzoor's comment because Mala's message had not appeared unusual at all to me, as it was often her habit to cook later in the day just before I came home from work.

Nevertheless, Huzoor said I should reply back and ask her what type of food I should bring home for dinner.

As instructed I replied to Mala there and then. I was even more taken aback by her reply. She wrote:

“You have read my mind! Today, I was feeling tired and I was hoping you would bring something home for dinner!”

I was genuinely surprised, even shocked, to read her message!

I started to laugh and said:

“Huzoor, you were right! She has written that she was hoping I would bring food home!”

Huzoor himself laughed and said:

“It is important to understand the hints of one’s wife and for this you need to understand the nature of women!”

Later, on my way home, I picked up some *Nando’s* and took it home and we all enjoyed it, especially in the knowledge that it was Huzoor who had helped me understand my family request!

I also wondered how many other messages she had sent over the years that I had failed to understand or had gone right over my head!

A prophecy fulfilled

In late May, an attack took place on an historic Ahmadi Mosque and house in Sialkot, where the Promised Messiah (as) had himself stayed during a visit to Sialkot.

As a result of the attack by a mob of anti-Ahmadi extremists, the Mosque was badly damaged and the house was destroyed.

Following the attack, a vision of the Promised Messiah (as) printed in *Tadhkirah* was widely circulated on social media.

The vision, as narrated by the Promised Messiah (as) himself, was as follows:

“I saw as if our Mosque – the one located near the bazaar – has been demolished by someone who also demolished a house belonging to us, whereupon I said, ‘This was a Mosque, but we commit the matter to Allah’.” (Tadhkirah, page 353, English, 2009 version)

Upon reading this excerpt, it did seem similar to what had happened in Sialkot, however, I was unsure if it was appropriate for people to publicly link the excerpt to the Sialkot attack without the approval of Huzoor.

Thus, I asked Huzoor about the vision during Mulaqat.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“The dreams and revelations of the Promised Messiah (as) are fulfilled in various different ways and at different times and places. Certainly, this vision is applicable here in this case. In fact, 100% I am sure that the vision refers to the attack in Sialkot. There is not any doubt in it.”

As I heard Huzoor confirm that the Sialkot attack was referred to in the vision of the Promised Messiah (as), I thought of how this tragic attack was in itself another great sign of the truth of the Promised Messiah (as) as Allah the Almighty had informed the Promised Messiah (as) of this incident more than a century before.

Public versus private – a lesson in religious freedom

In early June 2018, an interesting case was decided in the *United States Supreme Court* regarding a Christian baker who refused to bake a wedding cake for a gay couple as gay marriage was against his religious beliefs.

The Court held that forcing a Christian to bake a cake for a gay wedding was unlawful violation of his religious freedom rights.

During Mulaqat, I informed Huzoor of the decision and he seemed pleased that the Court had made a judgement that upheld the principle of religious freedom.

I also informed Huzoor that an Ahmadi had mentioned to me that he was unsure of whether an Ahmadi should support this decision or not.

On the one hand he was happy that the *Court* had made a decision in favour of religious freedom but on the other hand, he was worried that if Ahmadis publicly supported this decision it could potentially 'backfire'. He said it could set a precedent for those business owners in Pakistan or elsewhere who refused to serve Ahmadis because they objected to our beliefs.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

“We should analyse such questions calmly and looking at each side of the debate. The Government and public officials should serve all people without discrimination. However, in a private business a person should have the right to follow his religious beliefs and convictions. If it means

that a non-Ahmadi objects to us so much that he will not serve us then that is his right.”

Huzoor continued:

“Let’s look from the other side as well. Do you think an Ahmadi Muslim business owner would want to serve and take the custom of someone who curses the Promised Messiah (as)? I do not think any sincere Ahmadi Muslim would like this. Hence, where there are genuinely held religious beliefs the State should not force people into activities or actions with which they are not comfortable.”

An emotional meeting (part 2)

As her June 2018 meeting with Huzoor continued, Professor Rameez Abbas asked Huzoor about his focus on world peace.

In response, Huzoor said:

“I have focused on this issue because this is the main issue facing the world today. I have said for many years that I can see many parallels between the world today and the world in the years leading up to the Second World War. I could sense for a long time that blocs and alliances were forming just as they had in the early 1930s and now everyone else is realising the same. Just look at the G7 Conference this weekend in Canada where some people are saying it is a ‘G6 plus 1’ because the President of the United States has a different policy to the other nations.”

Huzoor continued:

“Anyway, the point is that there are different blocs that have been created and at the same time suddenly the United States appears more isolated than ever before. Hence, it was, and remains the need of the time for me to fulfil my duty to guide mankind towards peace and justice.”

Thereafter, Rameez sahiba took the opportunity to ask Huzoor if he ever prayed that he could return to Pakistan.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Yes of course I pray that it is possible to return to Pakistan but the extremist Maulvis remain hellbent in their opposition to us and so I am not optimistic in the short-term. However, if conditions do not improve in my life, the coming generations will Insha’Allah witness a change for the better and of that I am sure.”

Huzoor continued:

“Look at history and we see that the Pharaohs did not last forever and in the modern age Hitler was defeated after some years. Currently, there are leaders in the world today who are like tyrants but they too will not last and the same is true for the Muslim clerics who have gone beyond all limits in their cruelties.”

At this point, Rameez sahiba interjected and sympathetically expressed her fear that such persecution could continue for a very long period of time.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“You are right that cruelties can continue for generations but in the end our message of love will prevail, Insha’Allah. Sometimes people ask me that what is the secret of the success of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. I respond by saying that there is no secret, rather the truth is that we are people who are willing to make sacrifices for the sake of our beliefs and this is the cornerstone to our success. Whether they be financial sacrifices to help propagate the mission of Islam or whether they are personal sacrifices, we are ever ready.”

Huzoor continued:

“We are not a rich community in terms of money or wealth but we are rich in our faith. In financial terms we are a weak and poor community but we have great objectives and we have a purpose and a mission that drives us forevermore.”

Rameez sahiba asked Huzoor if he was ever concerned for his personal safety.

Huzoor said:

“If you have a mission and a purpose then you do not fear death and cannot waste your time worrying about such things. We all have to die one day and if I die seeking to fulfil a great objective at least my Allah will be happy with me and that is more than enough for me.”

As Huzoor said these words, I struggled to hold back my tears and to mask my emotions. His words were reflective of his humility and complete devotion to fulfilling the great duty placed upon him by Allah the Almighty.

Huzoor continued:

“At times of crisis, other communities have also shown their willingness to make sacrifices for the greater good. During the Second World War, the Germans were very close to conquering the United Kingdom and at that time Churchill made some great speeches which inspired his nation to stand up and defend itself and to give sacrifices to protect the freedom of the country. If they could make such sacrifices for the sake of the nation, why can we not be ready to give every possible sacrifice for the sake of our faith and beliefs.”

Explaining his own personal philosophy in dealing with difficult conditions or a change in circumstances, Huzoor said:

“I myself was arrested in Pakistan on false charges and had to stay in jail for some days and the conditions of Pakistani jails are terrible.

“The room we were initially allocated was filled with murderers and other dangerous criminals and could house up to 80 people and yet there were 240 people jam packed together.

“During those days I thought that I will probably spend the rest of my life in jail. In fact, throughout my life it has been my way that if I was sent anywhere I conditioned myself to believe that I will be there forever.”

Huzoor continued:

“Thus, when I was posted in Ghana I considered that I will be there for life and should be ready for it. Upon return to Pakistan, I thought that I will now be in Rabwah for the rest of my life and the same was true when I went to jail. If you think in this way and do not yearn for change then you remain happy and content and this is my philosophy.”

Huzoor further said:

“At a personal level, I always seek to be content and so during those days in jail I used to tell jokes to the other Ahmadis who were imprisoned alongside me and I used to advise them to not be scared or worried but to enjoy their stay and to be happy.”

As the meeting drew to a close, Rameez sahiba asked her final question. She asked Huzoor how he managed to respond to the thousands of letters he received each week and to keep a personal connection with members of the Jamaat across the world. She asked if it was true that Allah helped him to fulfil his duties.

In response Huzoor said:

“The Help of Allah is not just with me but with all who turn towards Him. The Holy Prophet (sa) taught that even to get bootlaces a person should seek the Help of Allah the Almighty. Thus, if we need anything at all or to fulfil any duty, we should seek the help of Allah the Almighty.”

With words filled with emotion, Huzoor said:

“I personally am a very weak person and I will serve and try my best to fulfil my duties so long as Allah desires and then someone else will come in my place and the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as) will continue to succeed and progress.”

Huzoor continued:

“I do not want or desire any seat of power and never have done. I never desired any power or authority, my only ambition and goal is to fulfil the great objectives of our Jamaat and for that I will continue to strive until my last breath, Insha’Allah.”

It had been a privilege to be present and to hear Huzoor’s words in which he described various key moments of his life and his personal convictions.

What shone through above all was how Huzoor’s greatness was manifest through his humility.

A person who was long noted as a quiet and reserved person had seen his life transformed through Divine Will.

The weight of the world had now been placed upon his shoulders for more than fifteen years and yet he remained forever calm and content in the knowledge that Allah the Almighty was with Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya and would not let anything hinder the long-term progress of the Jamaat.

Eid-ul-Fitr at Baitul Futuh

On morning of 16 June 2018, I was woken by my son Mahid. He had long been excited for *Eid-ul-Fitr* to arrive and after weeks of anticipation the happy and blessed day had arrived.

After getting ready, our family headed to the Baitul Futuh Mosque where shortly after 10.30am, Huzoor led the Eid prayer and delivered the Eid sermon.

During his address, Huzoor spoke about the need for Ahmadis to continue the good habits they had developed during Ramadan.

Huzoor said:

“We must now continue to fulfil the rights owed to God and the rights owed to the creation of God. We must continue offering the voluntary prayers and promptly offering our obligatory prayers. If we became compassionate towards the creation of God, we must maintain this compassion and seek to improve in our good deeds.”

Huzoor continued:

“If we continue the good actions we practiced during Ramadan it can be said that we will truly be celebrating Eid and the joy we feel today will encompass the rest of the coming year. This is the true purpose of Eid. Otherwise, if you do not understand this true purpose of Eid, merely

“dressing up, having nice food and meeting with friends and making plans for the day are meaningless.”

A joyful lunch

With the *Grace of Allah*, later in the afternoon, we were invited to an Eid lunch by beloved Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor’s respected wife*) which we attended after the Zuhr prayer at Masjid Fazl.

Wherever I have seen Huzoor as a host, I have always seen that he follows Islam’s teachings in all respects, as in other parts of his life.

Huzoor is a very loving and hospitable host who takes care of his guests and provides comfort in all respects. At the same time, there is never any sense of extravagance or lavishness.

We all enjoyed the afternoon lunch, in which a barbecue menu of *chicken tikkay* and *seekh kebab* were served alongside some *pilau* and *korma*. The food was very delicious.

The lunch concluded with a silent prayer led by Huzoor before which he met with his guests before returning to his residence.

A few moments rest

Alhamdulillah, I had one further opportunity to meet Huzoor on Eid day, later in the afternoon during *Mulaqat* in his office. The *Mulaqat* occurred after the Asr prayer.

That afternoon, Huzoor had been a few minutes late for *Asr* and so I was worried if everything was ok. Thankfully, after a few minutes Huzoor entered the Mosque and seemed well and led the prayers.

As soon as I entered his office for Mulaqat, Huzoor said:

“Today, you had to wait some time for me in the Mosque.”

I responded by saying:

“Huzoor, to be able to sit and wait for you to arrive is a means of blessings and I am just grateful that Huzoor is well and there was nothing wrong.”

Explaining why he was a few minutes late, Huzoor said:

“After lunch, I went and lay down and I think all the extra lack of sleep and fatigue of Ramadan caught up with me. I set my alarm so that I would wake up in good time but somehow I overslept for a few minutes.”

Huzoor then smiled and said:

“During that sleep in the afternoon I saw some very vivid dreams!”

I was intrigued by Huzoor’s comment and for a split second considered asking Huzoor if he would be minded to tell me what he had seen. However, I was able to control my curiosity knowing that such matters were between Allah the Almighty and His chosen one.

Conclusion

With the *Grace of Allah*, we had witnessed another blessed period in the history of the Jamaat. What I have included in this diary were just a few memories or incidents.

I have not mentioned the profound Friday Sermons Huzoor gave every week or related the stories of people who met Huzoor in *family Mulaqats* during that period.

It does not include the dozens of administrative meetings Huzoor held during this period. What was narrated remains just the very tip of the iceberg.

As *spring* turned to *summer*, I had a strong sense that the coming few months would prove to be even more blessed and historic.

There was a lot to look forward to – Jalsa Salanas in the United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium and a forthcoming visit to the United States and Guatemala.

I hoped and prayed that I would be able to witness the blessings that were sure to unfold.

End

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