

**JALSA SALANA UK 2018**

**Part 1**

**A Personal Account**

***By Abid Khan***

## **Introduction**

With the *Grace of Allah*, the 2018 UK Jalsa Salana proved extremely memorable and blessed in all respects.

As I write these words towards the end of 2018 and look back on that period, I recall how so many thousands of people, from so many countries, once again joined together for the sake of their faith.

I recall the vibrant and faith inspiring spirit that permeated Masjid Fazl and Hadeeqatul Mahdi. I think of the men, women and children whose lives were transformed after meeting their beloved Imam.

Or of the recent converts to Ahmadiyyat who told me what had motivated them to entirely change the course of their lives forever by accepting the Promised Messiah (as).

I also recall the intense heat of an unusually hot summer that seemed to last forever.

Above all, I remember and reminisce about how Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) showered his love upon the members of the Jamaat and spared no effort in spreading the true teachings of Islam amongst Ahmadi Muslims and the guests of Jalsa Salana.

In fact, there were certain days where I honestly wondered when Huzoor might have slept or when he might have eaten.

I shall share some experiences and moments I observed that illustrated the unique bond of love that unquestionably exists in our Jamaat between the Khalifa-Waqt and Ahmadi Muslims across the world and showed how Huzoor is guiding the Jamaat with wisdom, love and absolute devotion at all times.

### **Inspection of Jalsa Salana UK**

This year, the inspection of the Jalsa Salana UK took place on 29 July 2018. As in recent years, the inspection took place at three locations – the Baitul Futuh Mosque, Jamia Ahmadiyya UK and finally at Hadeeqatul Mahdi itself.

Huzoor and the other members of the Qafila departed from the Fazl Mosque at 3.15pm and proceeded directly to Baitul Futuh where Huzoor inspected various Jalsa departments including *registration, accommodation, bookstall* and the *langhar khana* (kitchen).

In the *langhar khana*, Huzoor was offered some *zarda* (sweet rice). It is known that Huzoor likes the *zarda* that is taken from the base of the pan and is slightly crisp. It is known as *kurchan*.

Thus, when Huzoor was offered the *zarda* the chef confidently mentioned that they had prepared some *kurchan* for Huzoor.

Upon seeing it, Huzoor remarked:

***“This is not kurchan, this is burnt rice! There is a difference between burnt rice and kurchan!”***

I think Huzoor's comment reflected not only the fact that the rice was burnt but also his desire that all Jalsa volunteers remained humble at all times.



Thereafter, the Qafila proceeded to Jamia Ahmadiyya where Huzoor arrived at 5pm.

Many guests of Jalsa Salana from different countries are hosted at Jamia Ahmadiyya and so Huzoor inspected the accommodation arrangements and the kitchen where food was being cooked for guests.

As he entered Jamia, Huzoor received a loving welcome from Arab and African Ahmadis who had arrived for the Jalsa Salana.

As Huzoor walked past the main Jamia Ahmadiyya lecture hall, many duty volunteers were stood in line to greet Huzoor.

Upon seeing some of Jamia students stood extremely seriously, Huzoor smiled and remarked:

***“You all seem very worried and so how will you give duty?”***

Often Huzoor will say just a few words but those few words have a deep meaning and a great deal of wisdom. Here, Huzoor was indicating that those on duty should maintain a happy demeanour at all times and to do so was part of their duties and this was something that Huzoor strongly reiterated during his address later that evening at Hadeeqatul Mahdi.

Huzoor also noticed three African students of Jamia Ahmadiyya International in Ghana who had come for the Jalsa.

Very affectionately, Huzoor enquired their names and where they were originally from. The students responded in Urdu, which Huzoor appreciated.

Lovingly, Huzoor said:

***“At least it can be said that you have all learned Urdu well!”***

Over the years, I have seen that when Huzoor conducts inspections of Jalsa Salana, Huzoor’s focus is directed towards the comfort of the Jalsa guests.

I observed the same on this occasion, as Huzoor personally checked the mattresses upon which guests would sleep and enquired about how much bedding was available.

Furthermore, a great benefit of the Jalsa inspection is that even one glance from Huzoor or a brief interaction is a means of great encouragement for the duty workers.

When Huzoor stops and meets Ahmadiis or asks them where they are from or about their duty, it serves to inspire them to offer even greater service to the Jamaat in the days, weeks and even years that follow.

In 2006, the year before I started serving as a *Waqf-e-Zindighi*, my duty was as a photographer at the Jalsa Salana.

At that time, I had recently become interested in photography and would take photos at different Jamaat events. As Huzoor conducted his inspection that year, he noticed me with my camera at Hadeeqatul Mahdi.

Upon doing so, Huzoor turned to Ameer Sahib UK and said:

***“Abid also takes good photos.”***

Even now, 12 years later, I recall how happy that one comment made me feel and increased my determination to take the best possible photos I could.

### **Inspection at Hadeeqatul Mahdi**

After departing from Jamia Ahmadiyya at 5.15pm, Huzoor arrived at Hadeeqatul Mahdi at 5.45pm.

As he inspected the main Jalsa site, Huzoor asked Zaheer Khan sahib (Naib Afsar Jalsa Salana) about the system of authorising car passes at Hadeeqatul Mahdi.

Huzoor said it should not be that some people are given car passes because they are friends with Zaheer sahib or other senior people in the Jalsa administration. Rather, car passes should be distributed fairly according to the stipulated criteria.

Upon this, Zaheer sahib said that the Jalsa administration was following the criteria strictly and, as a result, some people had become upset and angered that their car pass requests had been rejected.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“Let them become angry. It does not matter. You must be fair and treat everyone equally.”***

As always, Huzoor spent a significant amount of time in the *langhar khana* personally tasting the main staples of Jalsa such as *aloo ghosht* and *daal*.

Huzoor very carefully assessed the quality and tenderness of the meat, he checked the cooked potatoes and the level of salt and spice.

As he continued with the inspection, Huzoor spoke about the prospect of the weather being extremely hot during the Jalsa days. Nasser Khan sahib (*Afsar Jalsa Salana*) informed Huzoor that a ‘heatwave’ was predicted.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Even if there is a heatwave, everything will be fine, Insha’Allah.”***

Nonetheless, Huzoor instructed the Homeopathy Department at Jalsa Salana to ensure that all participants, especially children, were given a homeopathic remedy to prevent heatstroke.

Huzoor visited many other departments including *security, registration*, and various others. Huzoor also visited Lajna and inspected several departments on the ladies’ side.

### **Huzoor’s address at Jalsa Inspection**

As the inspection concluded, Huzoor proceeded to the main marquee where he delivered an address to the thousands of duty workers of the Jalsa Salana.

During his address, Huzoor reminded the volunteers and duty workers to remain patient and humble at all times. He said that even if guests became rude or impatient, the duty workers should remain polite and considerate at all times.

Thereafter, Huzoor mentioned the need to show respect and courtesy to the neighbours of the Jalsa Salana and specifically to the neighbours of Fazl Mosque.

Hundreds, if not thousands of Ahmadis were congregating at Fazl Mosque daily to offer their prayers behind Huzoor and Huzoor said he had received



complaints that some Ahmadis were blocking the entrances of people's homes.



Huzoor narrated an incident which he said had caused him much embarrassment. A few weeks before, a neighbour living close to the Fazl Mosque had commented that he often received gifts at Eid or New Years from the Jamaat but that their basic rights as neighbours were not respected by Ahmadis.

Narrating further, Huzoor said:

***“Our neighbour went as far as to say that ‘You claim to listen to your Khalifa in all matters and so either your Khalifa does not care about these issues or you are false in your claim that you listen to whatever he says because you are always parking your cars in a way that blocks our driveways’. At least for me personally, this was a source of great embarrassment.”***

Huzoor instructed Ahmadis to park in proper bays and said they ought to park at a distance if appropriate spaces near the Mosque were not available.

### **A prayer answered**

After the concluding dua, and before joining the duty workers for dinner, Huzoor visited the MTA complex set up for the Jalsa Salana and met MTA staff working in various departments.

As he walked past some MTA volunteers, Huzoor noticed a Jamia UK student called Adeel Shah. Later, Adeel told me that brief interaction was both a very emotional moment and extremely faith inspiring for him.

Explaining, Adeel said:

***“During the silent prayer after Huzoor’s address at the inspection, I prayed to Allah the Almighty with the words ‘O God! We are offering our prayers behind Huzoor-e-Anwar, a person who has a direct link with You and I have no doubt that because of him so many of our prayers are answered and accepted. I then prayed specifically that somehow Huzoor would visit the MTA compound, as he had not visited it last year. I also prayed that it would somehow be possible for Huzoor to see me and even to speak to me.’”***

Adeel continued

***“After the silent prayer concluded, Huzoor went to the Lajna Gah and then, to our surprise, Huzoor suddenly turned towards the MTA***

*compound and after visiting some other departments in MTA, Huzoor came to the Programming department where I was doing duty. Not only did Huzoor see me but he lovingly said to Asif sahib that he should feed me some ladoo! (Asian sweet). Then Huzoor most graciously asked me if I was well.*

Reflection on how Allah had accepted his prayers, Adeel said:

*“I honestly looked up to the sky and said ‘Alhumdolillah’ how great is the Mighty Lord that He honestly listens to the lowest of people too. My body was literally shaking from the prestige and awe I could feel of Huzoor-e-Anwar. I love him so much.”*

It was another beautiful example of how Allah the Almighty listens to sincere prayers and of how the love of Khilafat is unlike any other.

After joining all of the duty workers for the evening meal, Huzoor returned to London.

Whilst the preparations for the Jalsa Salana would continue at Hadeeqatul Mahdi in the coming days, Huzoor’s duties would continue non-stop in London.

### **Always an objective**

Each day the number of family Mulaqats were increasing, as Ahmadis arrived from across the world. Furthermore, Huzoor had to prepare for his various addresses at the Jalsa Salana.

As there were so many Mulaqats, Huzoor encouraged me to be brief in my daily Mulaqats.

On a normal day, I would share a dozen or so media reports with Huzoor, however, in those days preceding Jalsa I would present three or four reports only.

Given the fact he was so busy, I was surprised one afternoon to see Huzoor take particular interest in a story in which the President of the United States had described the tiny Balkan country Montenegro as ‘very aggressive’.

After enquiring about exactly what the President had said, Huzoor started asking me questions about Montenegro itself.

Huzoor asked whether there was religious freedom in the country and whether the population was ethnically diverse. Whilst I had done some reading about Montenegro it was not enough and so I took out my phone and quickly tried to pull up some information through Google.

At the same time, Huzoor searched ‘Montenegro’ on his iPad and over the next ten minutes, Huzoor read about the country’s population, its geography, religions and general attitudes of the people. Initial searches suggested that compared to other former Yugoslav states, Montenegro had a greater degree of religious freedom.

As Huzoor continued to research Montenegro, I continued to be surprised that Huzoor was taking such a keen interest. Though, I should have realised that Huzoor never does anything without a reason or objective.

After concluding his investigations and setting aside his iPad, Huzoor said:

***“I think there is scope for us to increase our Tabligh efforts in Montenegro. In fact, we must do it but with wisdom. We should reach out to the local people and send our Jamaat representatives to that land so that they can inform the people what Islam is and what it truly represents. It is time that we stepped up our efforts to propagate the message of the Promised Messiah (as) in that country.”***

Thus, from the outset, Huzoor’s desire to learn more about the country was because he wished to ascertain the potential of increasing Tabligh in the country and trying to spread the message of Islam.

### **Emotions of Ahmadis**

As I left Huzoor’s office, a long session of family Mulaqats began immediately.

Amongst the people to meet Huzoor were two Nigerian Ahmadis, *Abdur Rasheed Sanni (51)*, who was serving as a Jamaat Missionary and *Dr Nur-ud-Din Akindele (60)*.

After their Mulaqat, I met both of them and they were extremely emotional and overjoyed.

They also reflected upon the love Ahmadi Muslims in Africa felt for Khilafat.

Abdur Rasheed Sanni sahib said:

*“You cannot imagine the spirit of love for Khilafat in the African continent. Every Ahmadi Muslim is waiting to meet their Khalifa and to express their deep love and total obedience to this blessed institution. I have brought the letters of dozens of Ahmadis and those who do not know how to write called me and desperately asked me to pray for them whenever I had the good fortune to pray behind Huzoor.”*

Abdur Rasheed Sanni sahib continued:

*“Personally, after meeting Huzoor all I can say is ‘Subhan’Allah’. When you see him and talk to him you realise that he is the most holy person in the world today and he is the person whose prayers Allah the Almighty listens to the most. Despite his great status, Huzoor is meek and completely humble. He takes a personal interest in your life and asks about your family. He shows love to every Ahmadi and not just those who are personally close to him. At the same time, he is firm on ensuring that Islamic principles are followed at all times. He strives to ensure that no one in our Jamaat acts against the teachings of Islam. In this one aspect, Huzoor is strict, in every other way he is compassionate, merciful and loving.”*

Thereafter, Dr Nur-ud-Din Akindele sahib said:

*“Huzoor’s personality is magnetic and you automatically fall in love with him and have the deepest respect for him. In his presence, you are overwhelmed by a spirit of happiness and joy. It is a spiritual privilege of*

***the highest order to be in the presence of Huzoor and to feel the spiritual fragrance that emanates from him at all times. He is kind, he is love, he is affection.”***

Another person I met was *Waqar Ahmad Khan (60)* a lawyer from Sargodha, Pakistan.

In addition to his private practice, he had represented the Jamaat in Pakistan in certain legal cases over the years. He told me it was his opinion that the situation for Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan continued to deteriorate and that religious hatred had reached an all time high.

He spoke of the unjust legal system, whereby extremists were free to spout whatever hatred and lies they wished about Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan and were free to incite the masses and to call for the murder of Ahmadi Muslims.

Yet, if an Ahmadi Muslim so much as responded to such accusations they would be charged under section 298-C of the Pakistani penal code and potentially faced life imprisonment or even the death penalty.

Reflecting on the futility of such persecution, Waqar sahib said:

***“Those who persecute us may hope or expect it will destroy our Jamaat or force some Ahmadis to recant their faith. Yet, with the Grace of God, it has the opposite effect. Rather than weaken their faith, the resolve of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan continues to grow in the face of such adversity.***

Waqar sahib continued:

***“Our attachment and bond of love with Khilafat continues to increase because as we go through these trials, Huzoor is our constant companion. He may not be with us physically anymore in Pakistan but through his prayers and love we feel his nearness and reassurance at all times.”***

Waqar sahib further said:

***“It is impossible to describe the feelings that you get when you see Huzoor or have any interaction with him. He is the most beautiful personality, who you wish to spend your every moment with. He is my master and I am his disciple. To be able to see him with my own eyes, to touch him, to attain his prayers is beyond all words. He inspires us to be better people and to improve ourselves. Every word he speaks proves that he has a connection with God Almighty. I have seen that whatever he has said to me has always come true. Sometimes, he will say something clearly, whilst at other times his instructions or guidance are implied but either way, what Huzoor says is always for the best and always comes true.”***

### **A few precious moments**

The next day when I reported for Mulaqat, Huzoor was going through a file of official Jamaat correspondence, known as *daftari daak*.

As he worked, I remained silent until Huzoor himself looked up and glanced towards my left wrist.



Then, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Is your watch still working well?”***

In reply, I mentioned that it was working extremely well but that the ‘date’ would sometimes fall a day behind.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

***“Such traditional watches are different to modern digital watches and they do not recognise which months are less than 31 days and so they are programmed for 31 days and must be manually corrected.”***

Having grown up in an increasingly digital age, it had never occurred to me that it was necessary to change the date manually. Rather, I had assumed there was a malfunction.

At that moment, Huzoor told me to take the watch off and hand it to him.

Most graciously, Huzoor corrected the date himself and advised that, in future, whenever I needed to change the date, I should do it in the afternoon and not the morning.

It seemed as though Huzoor wanted a moment or two to relax and take a break from going through the files on his desk.

Thus, after correcting the date on my watch, Huzoor asked me if I knew how many days were in each month.

I replied by saying that we learnt a poem in school and though I did not remember the poem, I did remember how many days were in each month.

Smiling, Huzoor said:

***“The way we were taught as youngsters in Pakistan were to use our knuckles and the grooves between your knuckles. Every month that ends on a knuckle is 31 days and every month that lands on a groove between your knuckles are 30 days or in the case of February it is 28 days!”***

Huzoor demonstrated what he meant and it was an accurate means of showing which months were 31 days long and which were less!

Huzoor said:

***“In Pakistan often, such methods are used to teach things that need memorising and not subject to any change.”***

Next, Huzoor asked me if I knew the colours of the rainbow.

I was sure I did and so I started to read them out one by one. I said:

***“Red, yellow, green, blue, orange...”***

As I tried to remember the remaining colours, Huzoor said:

***“VIBGYOR”***

I did not follow at all and so I simply replied:

***“Ji Huzoor?”***

Huzoor explained by saying:

***“VIBGYOR – Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red!”***

I laughed out and Huzoor also laughed!

I felt so much joy to be able to share a few lighter moments with beloved Huzoor, especially at a time when I knew how consumed he was with the great burdens placed upon him and his unimaginable workload at Jalsa time.

Truth be told, I had forgotten the reason why I had reported for Mulaqat and was waiting for the next memory technique that Huzoor will share with me.

Just as I was thinking this, Huzoor said:

***“Now, what report have you brought today?”***

I suddenly scrambled for my notes and began to present, whilst Huzoor returned to his office work.

My mind though remained lost in those precious moments where I saw my beloved Huzoor laugh and smile repeatedly.

### **Comment on Pakistan elections**

Thereafter, I mentioned to Huzoor that we had been asked to give our opinion about Pakistan's election results a few days earlier and what our hopes for the new government were in a forthcoming BBC radio programme.

Most graciously, Huzoor guided me about how to respond. He said we did not need to go into any specifics but should express our hope that the new Government of Pakistan would be just.

Huzoor said:

***"In the interview, you should say that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community prays that the new Government acts with wisdom and is fair and just. We pray that it protects the rights of all citizens and looks after the rights of all minorities such as Christians and Hindus."***

I was struck by Huzoor's answer. Where it was brief, it was filled with beauty and insight. Huzoor did not mention the rights of Ahmadi Muslims by name, rather he said that he prayed that new government would respect the rights of *all* citizens.

It showed that *Khalifa-Waqt* cares for the rights of *all* people and *all* communities and feels the pain of others like no other. It also suggested to me that Huzoor did not have any expectations from the new government when it came to the rights of Ahmadi Muslims. Rather than place his trust or hopes in person or party, Huzoor continued to place his trust in Allah the Almighty alone.

### **Be silent, be patient**

After presenting a few more reports to Huzoor, I mentioned that a young Missionary had confided in me that he was personally struggling. He had felt a sense of injustice in the treatment he had received from some senior Missionaries.

As a result, he was finding it hard to concentrate on his own duties and kept replaying certain recent events in his mind that were the cause of his angst.

Despite being so busy, Huzoor told me to tell the Missionary to come and meet him that week.

Further, Huzoor said:

***“Tell him that he should leave the matter in the Hands of Allah rather than let this matter consume him and stop him from fulfilling his own duties. If a person has been wronged and remains silent and patient then Allah the Almighty will speak on his behalf. The truth will prevail.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Furthermore, if a young Missionary has seen something in his elders that he does not like it should increase his determination to serve the Jamaat and to ensure that such wrongs die away and do not continue in his generation. It is up to him to set an example for the Missionaries who follow him and all Missionaries should think in this way.”***

## **Brexit, Trump and women's rights**

During the weeks leading up to the Jalsa Salana, our *Press & Media* team was engaged in inviting journalists and media to cover the Jalsa. In response, a famous Spanish language news agency, *EFE*, said they were very interested in writing about the Jalsa and interviewing Huzoor.

Due to Huzoor's schedule, it was not possible to arrange a formal interview, and so the *EFE* agency sent some written questions which I presented to Huzoor during *Mulaqat* and he dictated responses.

In the interview, *EFE* asked Huzoor about the state of *Brexit* negotiations and what the Jamaat's advice was to world governments.

In response, Huzoor said:

***"The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious community and I am a religious leader, not a political one. It is up to Governments and politicians to determine the political direction of their nations. My only concern is for the well-being of humanity and for peace and justice to prevail at all levels of society."***

Regarding Brexit, Huzoor said:

***"In terms of Brexit, when the referendum took place, I was of the view that it was better for the UK to stay in the European Union and so I voted in favour of Remain. Now that the decision has been made to leave, it is up to the British Government to handle the negotiations in a way that will***

***ensure the long-term peace and prosperity of the nation. In this regard, it is my opinion that a deal which is fair to both sides and in which there will continue to be a high level of mutual co-operation between the UK and the EU is preferable.”***

As I listened to Huzoor’s words in response to *EFE*, it was clear that Huzoor continued to believe that co-operation between European nations was the means to the long-term prosperity of our continent.

It is now November 2018 and the UK Government and leaders seem ever more confounded by the issue of Brexit. There are increasing calls for a so-called ‘People’s Vote’, which could potentially open the door to the UK staying in the European Union. As the nation passes through this turbulent period, I wish that our leaders and people had listened to Huzoor’s advice in 2012 at the European Parliament where he said that Europe’s strength lay in its unity.

*EFE* asked Huzoor about the United States and the policies of the Trump administration.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“It may well be that President Trump believes that whatever policies he is enacting are for the benefit of his country. However, he should remember that diplomacy and treating others with respect is of great importance and so rather than threatening other nations, the US Government should seek to pursue diplomacy and build a relationship of trust with others.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“For example, when dealing with Iran, the United States should be fair and try to ease tensions rather than escalating them. Most experts believe that Iran has complied with the terms of the nuclear deal it made with the major world powers in 2015 and so it was not right for the United States to arbitrarily cancel it. Thus, the American Government and, indeed all nations, should avail every opportunity to increase peace, rather than to allow hatred and division to spread.”***

EFE also asked Huzoor about the fact that he would be addressing around 15,000 members of Muslim women during his Lajna address at the Jalsa Salana. They asked Huzoor whether it was right to say that Islam was a ‘patriarchal’ male dominated religion.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Islam is certainly not a patriarchal religion dominated by men. In fact, Islam teaches that in the establishment and development of any nation or community, women play a fundamental and vital role. From the very outset, Islam established the rights of women based on their role in society and keeping their best interests at heart.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Generally speaking, Islamic teachings have ascribed a division of labour between the sexes but nowhere does Islam say that women should be confined to the home as is sometimes alleged. Many Ahmadi Muslim girls***



***and ladies excel in studies and achieve extraordinary results and Islam does not instruct that they should waste their talents or skills and only stay at home. Islam does not restrict them from fulfilling their potential, rather they can pursue those professions through which they can benefit humanity and serve mankind.”***

Finally, the EFE agency asked Huzoor if he was saddened by the fact that Ahmadi Muslims have been declared as non-Muslims in Pakistan and cannot freely perform Hajj.

Huzoor said:

***“Certainly, we feel deep regret and grief that there are restrictions placed upon us that deny us our basic religious rights. However, we do not require a certificate of any person, nation or group declaring us as Muslims because our bond is with the Holy Quran and the Holy Founder of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). This bond is unbreakable and will never weaken no matter how much hatred comes our way or how difficult the circumstances become. We are true Muslims and forever will be.”***

*Alhamdolillah*, as a result, 14 Spanish language media outlets wrote very positive articles about the Jalsa and included many quotes of Huzoor.

Those articles reached a combined audience of several million.

## **Emotions of Ahmadis**

Each year a delegation of Ahmadi Muslims from Rabwah and Qadian come to attend the Jalsa Salana UK.

The delegation is personally chosen each year by Huzoor and includes some senior Jamaat office bearers, some Missionaries, *Waqf-e-Zindighis* and also general office staff and workers.

Amongst the delegations are always some people who have never had the opportunity to attend the Jalsa before.

An Ahmadi delegate from Pakistan attending this year's Jalsa was *Hanif Ahmad Mahmood*, a Missionary from Rabwah. He had previously served in Sierra Leone for a number of years before returning to Pakistan some years ago.

I met him shortly after his Mulaqat with Huzoor. He said he felt incredibly fortunate to meet Huzoor and to be attending the Jalsa. He also told me about his experiences in Sierra Leone.

Hanif Mahmood sahib said:

***"There is one incident that I will never forget from soon after I arrived in Sierra Leone. I was taking shade under a tree when suddenly I heard someone announce something in a very loud voice. Suddenly, many young African children came running towards me. I was confused and asked my interpreter to tell me what was happening."***

Hanif Mahmood sahib continued:

***“It turned out that the elder of that village had instructed all the children to come and meet me by saying ‘He is a representative of Khilafat and so go to him and reap the blessings of Khilafat’. It showed me right from the start that the African people had a profound bond and deep attachment with Khilafat and this was something I continued to see throughout my stay in Sierra Leone.”***

Hanif sahib also had memories of Huzoor before Khilafat, which he shared with me.

Hanif sahib said:

***“I saw Huzoor on various occasions before he was elected Khalifa and his personality was magnetic. You were drawn to him and wanted to be close to him. He had great dignity, a sense of awe and was extremely wise. Furthermore, as an administrator, he was respected by all and had a great presence. He had a strong hold over his work in that he never let things fall behind, rather Huzoor completed whatever tasks he was given promptly and in the best possible way.”***

From Qadian, one member of the official delegation was *Shamim Ahmad Ghor*i (31) who had recently been appointed as the Waqf-e-Nau department in-charge in India.

A few days prior to the Jalsa Salana, we sat together and Shamim sahib told me he read my writings about Huzoor.

Shamim sahib said:

*“I have learned that sometimes in Jamaat offices we have a more ‘old-fashioned’ approach but Huzoor is extremely broad-minded and open to new ideas. This is a real blessing of Khilafat because otherwise I believe many of our Missionaries and scholars would be extremely rigid and like the non-Ahmadi Maulvis.”*

Shamim sahib continued:

*“When you see how Huzoor works you are amazed and ashamed at your own inefficiency by comparison. Sometimes, we write to Huzoor for guidance over a Jamaat issue and we get a reply within two hours! Even non-urgent things are responded to swiftly. For example, I sent a standard monthly report to Huzoor of our office on 11 May and on 12 May I received Huzoor’s reply.”*

Shamim sahib further said:

*“Having seen how Huzoor responds to our queries and solves issues has made me feel that the rest of us are lazy and weak. If there is ever any delay in Jamaat work it is from our side and so if general Ahmadis ever complain that there is a delay, we should be honest and admit it is our fault because Huzoor always sends his response extremely quickly.”*

Speaking about meeting Huzoor:

***“When I met Huzoor for the first time I was left completely stunned. Huzoor stood up to meet me and at the end of the meeting he stood up again. I am a servant, I am his slave. I am nothing and yet my master stood for me. His personality is soft but at the same time you feel his great status and are left entirely awestruck in his presence.”***

Shamim sahib told me he had a daughter who was now three years old. Just over a year before she had developed a severe fever and was diagnosed with a serious blood illness and doctors were not hopeful that she would recover.

Shamim sahib said:

***“Doctors in the ICU told us that our daughter’s condition was very critical but we remained very hopeful because we knew we had Huzoor’s prayers with us. Anyway, the doctors said that no matter what there was no chance of any improvement for at least 72 hours, yet within 24 hours there was a huge change for the better. This was only due to Huzoor’s prayers.”***

Shamim sahib continued:

***“When my daughter’s condition was at its worst my cousin wrote to Huzoor for prayers and he received his reply a few days later in which Huzoor had written back that she was now recovering. It showed that Huzoor had not only received my cousin’s letter but also the updated report we had sent subsequently. For me, this was amazing, as it showed***

***that Huzoor reads every single letter and not only reads it but also absorbs every word and remembers the details. It is an expression of his heartfelt love for Ahmadi Muslims that Huzoor does not just sign pre-written replies without looking, rather he carefully reads the letters and writes individual responses to each person. It is truly incredible!"***

### **Meeting Huzoor for the first time**

On 1 August 2018, I met a Jamaat Missionary called *Tariq Hayat* from Rabwah.

Like me, he was 35 and so we talked about our young families and our experiences serving in the Jamaat. The more we spoke, the more I could feel his intense love for Huzoor and how his life had been shaped by Khilafat.

Tariq sahib told me he had graduated from Jamia Ahmadiyya Rabwah in 2006 and thereafter attained a Masters degree from a university in Pakistan.

Later he spent time in an African country for further training before returning to Rabwah where he was now serving in the *Archive and Research* department.

I asked Tariq sahib if it was his first visit to the Jalsa and after confirming that it was, Tariq sahib told me about the moment when he found out he would be attending.

Tariq sahib said:

***“In March, I was sitting with a friend when I found that the lists have come for those people from Rabwah’s Jamaat offices, Waqifeen and other Ahmadis who would be going to the UK for the Jalsa Salana. It occurred to me that I will again be watching the Jalsa Salana on MTA.”***

Tariq sahib continued:

***“A few days later, I was asked to report to Wakalat-e-Tabshir in Rabwah and this made me a little apprehensive and nervous. However, when I reported, I was handed an envelope and the person who gave it to me said ‘Mubarak ho, Huzoor has approved the request of MTA London for you to come as a representative for the Jalsa Salana UK’. There is no language in the world that can express what that moment felt like. Surely, Khalifatul Masih is the source of all kindness!”***

I asked Tariq sahib, that now he was in London, how it felt to be here and to have met Huzoor for the very first time.

Describing his experience, Tariq sahib said:

***“At 5.30pm, I entered the Mahmood Hall and there were already more than a hundred people present. I tried to calm my nerves by reciting Istighfar. My Mulaqat was number 9 on the list and so it was not long until I was called to meet Huzoor. I passed through various rooms and finally I entered a room where I looked up and saw my most beloved master for the first time.”***

Setting the scene and with much emotion, Tariq sahib said:

***“At the age of 35, I saw Khilafat with my own eyes for the very first time. Though, I could not look at Huzoor for more than a fleeting moment. I am certain that my heart rate was the highest possible for a human during those moments! I have never met anyone as kind as Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba). Huzoor’s love was all encompassing! How can I express that radiant and delightful smile of his?”***

Tariq sahib continued:

***“Huzoor is so gracious and so kind! So lovingly Huzoor said ‘You are Tariq Hayat who writes to me every Friday’. Those moments have given me a new lease of life and have further increased my faith in God Almighty and the way He accepts our prayers.”***

I asked Tariq sahib about Huzoor’s comment about him writing every Friday.

In response, Tariq sahib told me how his relationship with Khilafat prior to that day had been through letters and correspondence.

Narrating the blessings of written correspondence with Huzoor, Tariq sahib said:

***“Around 10 years ago, I received a letter from Huzoor in which he had written a prayer for me saying that ‘May you attain expertise in English’. I was very surprised and shocked when I read this.”***



Tariq sahib continued:

***“No prayer of Khalifatul Masih is without reason or is ever wasted. A full decade later, when Al-Hakam was relaunched in English, I sent some regular contributions in Urdu and they asked me to translate it and said that they would improve it or correct if needed. Thus, I started sending my contributions in English and the Al-Hakam editors told me that my English was good enough and did not need to be changed. I know for a fact that this is only due to that prayer Huzoor wrote for me ten years ago. Undoubtedly, every word and every prayer of the Khalifa is fulfilled in ways that we cannot imagine.”***

### **An everlasting blessing**

Thereafter, Tariq sahib told me a story that illustrated how Huzoor cares for each individual, especially those who are grief-stricken or facing trials.

In 2010, Tariq sahib had been sent to an Arab country to learn Aramaic. However, whilst he was away, he and his family suffered a personal tragedy when their new born son, *Awwab*, died aged just 15 days.

He had been born healthy but after a few days developed a serious flu-like condition and this led to the choking aspiration that caused his death at such a tender age.

Tariq sahib and his wife were consumed by grief and devastation and sought solace by turning to Allah the Almighty and to His chosen Khalifa.

Speaking about how Huzoor personally comforted him and his family during that devastating period, Tariq sahib said:

***“Huzoor is the busiest man on earth and has the weight of the world placed upon his shoulders. Yet still, when he heard about our loss, Huzoor called my wife in Pakistan and spoke to her for 3 minutes and 14 seconds. Thus, in just fifteen days my son gave more than I could ever have desired from him if he had lived a long and full life. My infant son left behind such great blessings for his parents that are indescribable. The way Allah has honoured him is truly beyond our comprehension.”***

As Tariq sahib said these words, I could not help but become emotional, especially when he said that his young son had given more in fifteen days than a child who would go on to live a full life.

On the one hand, I could not help but wonder how it would feel, *God forbid*, to lose a child. On the other, I thought of the immense power of Huzoor’s love and how its force was such as to remove even the most intense grief.

Tariq sahib continued:

***“Weeks after Huzoor had spoken to my wife on the phone, my sister met Huzoor in London and requested his prayers for my wife. Upon this, Huzoor said ‘I spoke with Ayesha some days ago’ – when we heard this, we were overwhelmed that Huzoor had even remembered my wife’s name. I swear that all of our grief evaporated through the love of our Khalifa and transformed our pain into joy and happiness. That child of ours is gone but he did not leave empty handed. All the world’s treasures***

***cannot compete with the treasures he attained and left behind for his parents."***

*Alhamdolillah*, Tariq sahib and his wife had since been blessed with three more children, Rohana, Nayab and Muqarrab who were growing up fast and were healthy and well.

### **An erroneous email**

A day before the start of the Jalsa Salana, I reported to Huzoor and told him about a strange incident that had occurred.

For over a month we had been reaching out to journalists to invite them to cover the Jalsa Salana. Truth be told, it was not easy.

Many journalists told us they were taking advantage of the school holidays and were going away with their families on the weekend of Jalsa.

Whilst others expressed interest, still the number of confirmed media guests were fewer than we had hoped. Nonetheless, we continued to make calls and send out Press Releases and emails.

We also invited some journalists who we thought might be interested in seeing the *Turin Shroud* exhibition being hosted by the *Review of Religions*.

Upon this, a journalist working at a prominent national newspaper wrote an email in reply to a Jamaat Missionary working in our office.

In the reply, he had spoken ignorantly about the participants of the Jalsa Salana and mocked the work of the Turin Shroud scholars.

We soon realised that the journalist had meant to send the email to his editor but had accidentally sent it to us. I told the Missionary not to respond with any anger but just to let him know that it seemed he had sent the email to us mistakenly.

Upon realising his mistake, the journalist frantically called to apologise. God knows better whether he was sincere in his apology or was more concerned that we would leak his email in which he had disparaged Muslims and academics alike.

However, we reassured him that it was not our way to hold grudges and he was still welcome to come to the Jalsa to see for himself what Islam was. He immediately accepted our invitation and said he would attend on Friday morning.

As I told Huzoor this story, he seemed interested and said it was right that we had not responded rudely or angrily.

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

***“Sometimes, Allah the Almighty creates opportunities in the most unlikely or unexpected ways and now you should avail this opportunity and try to change his heart and show him what true Islam is.”***

It was very beautiful guidance from Huzoor.

If I am honest, if I had not received training from Huzoor, I would have been very tempted to react to his email angrily or by seeking to take advantage by publishing it online.

Quite possibly, if we had taken that step, we would have received a lot of media coverage, as I am sure other media outlets would have run the story of a senior journalist mocking Muslims.

Yet, I can also honestly say that this thought did not cross my mind for a second because I knew that Huzoor would never want us to lower our own moral standards for the sake of cheap publicity. Furthermore, he would never desire for us to put at risk the career of someone else in this way.

*Alhamdolillah*, Huzoor teaches us to not only preach a message of *love for all, hatred for none* but to live it and to act upon it at all times.

The journalist did attend the next day and spent a few hours meeting various people and conducting interviews. At the outset, he appeared quite nervous but the Missionary hosting him, told him not to worry and reiterated the fact that we did not hold any grudge and were not seeking to expose him.

After spending a day at the Jalsa, the journalist told one of our Ahmadis that he had learned a lot about Islam and considered us to be extremely kind, moral and good people.

I felt happy that, with the Grace of Allah, we had been able to show Islam's high moral teachings to a true sceptic of religion.

**'A shining light, amongst a world of darkness'**

The morning before Jalsa, on 2 August 2018, I met with three Arab Ahmadi ladies attending the Jalsa Salana, *Nadia Shabooti* and *Kholoud Safir* both from Jordan and *Manal Odeh* from Kababir.

Nadia sahiba and Kholoud sahiba were Ahmadi converts who had moved to the United Kingdom a decade ago. Manal sahiba, the wife of Sharif Odeh sahib (*Ameer Jamaat Kababir*), was a born Ahmadi.

They each told me about their experiences of Khilafat and very movingly explained what being a member of the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as) personally meant to them.

Telling me about how Ahmadiyyat had always been part of her life, Manal Odeh sahiba said:

***“My father was a poet and he wrote in Arabic that Ahmadiyyat is the right path for all believers and that Ahmadiyyat was a shining light amongst a world of darkness. This was the spirit with which I was raised.”***

Manal Odeh sahiba continued:

***“I first met Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) in 1994 and it is impossible to explain what it felt like to meet the Khalifa for the first time. The majestic grandeur I felt from him was something I had never felt before. Ever since that first meeting, the longing to be close to the Khalifa is an***

***unquenchable thirst. The more you meet him or see him the more you love the Khalifa and more you want to be near him.”***

Manal sahiba had met Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) on various occasions and had seen the impact of his guidance and prayers.

Narrating her experiences, Manal sahiba said:

***“Since 2003, I have been fortunate to meet Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) on many occasions and I have seen how every word he has spoken has come true. The advice and guidance he has given to my husband who is the Ameer Jamaat has always been profound and led to the blessings of Allah. Even though he has such a high status, Huzoor is very approachable and permits us to tell him our personal issues. There must be times when Huzoor is tired yet he never shows it. He continues to smile and manifest the highest levels of patience no matter what.”***

Continuing, Manal sahiba said:

***“Before I met Huzoor for the first time, I asked other people what he was like. The word that kept coming up was ‘humble’. Everyone said that Huzoor is the most humble person and when I met him I realised that it was true. Huzoor’s humility knows no bounds. At the same time, I also saw someone who is strong, very deep and controls his emotions. Often you cannot tell from Huzoor’s expressions if he is happy or sad, whether he is pleased or displeased. However, even though we cannot read Huzoor’s expressions, it is clear that he can read ours! He knows what we are thinking, what we are hoping and he knows who we are. It is as if he***

***can scan our true personality and state of morality. This makes you more aware of your own weaknesses and forces you to pray more.”***

Kholoud Safir from Jordan narrated the blessings she had personally felt and received since she accepted Ahmadiyyat.

Kholoud Safir sahiba said:

***“My biological father is not an Ahmadi and so when I accepted Ahmadiyyat I thought that I will have no male role model but then I came to realise I was wrong. Huzaor is that person who is my model and example. Huzaor is responsible for millions of Ahmadi Muslims, yet out of millions, he still looks after me personally. He is so loving and when I meet him, I know that he remembers who I am.”***

Kholoud Safir sahiba continued:

***“Personally speaking, I was very attached to the Fourth Khalifa because of the Liqa Maal Arab programme and so when he passed away in 2003, I thought it will be difficult for me to love the Fifth Khalifa in the same way. However, I was wrong because as soon as I met Huzaor the same love that I had for the Fourth Khalifa entered my heart. I felt as though I had no human control over this, rather Allah has placed this love directly in my heart.”***



Kholoud Safir sahiba further said:

***“When I meet Huzoor and Huzoor’s wife (Hazrat Amatul Sabooh Begum sahiba), what stands out is their humility and simplicity. We attended a function with Huzoor’s wife and I saw how kind she was and I saw that Huzoor and his wife do not consider themselves in anyway superior or better than us. They eat with us in the same way we eat. They talk with us as though we are their loved ones. They never let us feel distant or that they are better and they take interest in our personal lives and try to help and guide us like a person’s parents would do.”***

Nadia Shabooti from Jordan told me she had accepted Ahmadiyyat in 1999 and explained how being an Ahmadi had brought her much closer to Allah the Almighty and reflected on her experiences with Khilafat.

Nadia Shabooti sahiba said:

***“I did Umrah three times before I became an Ahmadi but I never felt as close to Allah as I feel today. This year I did Etikaf during the final days of Ramadan and on the final day, Huzoor came to meet us and he called me by my name ‘Nadia’ and I was so amazed and humbled by this. I have never seen anyone who is as gracious and merciful as Huzoor is. He forgives us and if anybody on earth embodies the Attributes of God in the world today it is Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba). It is said that all of the companions of the Holy Prophet (sa) felt his love and, in this era, all of us Ahmadis feel as though we are the closest to Khilafat and that Huzoor especially loves us. His love permeates the hearts of people of all races, of all nations, of all backgrounds.”***

## **Blessings in the Arab world**

During the period of the Fifth Khilafat, Ahmadiyyat has spread much more amongst the Arab people. Thousands of Arab Ahmadis have accepted the Promised Messiah (as) during the past fifteen years. Whilst thousands have joined and continued to increase in faith, it is also true that a handful of Arabs have left the Jamaat in recent years.

As I spoke to the three Arab ladies, I realised this was a cause of great distress amongst sincere Arab Ahmadis. However, if anything, it had served to increase their faith in the truth of Ahmadiyyat.

Manal Odeh sahiba said:

***“One or two people may have departed from the Jamaat but the vast majority of Arab Ahmadi Muslims are completely firm in their faith and know that without Ahmadiyyat and without Khilafat we are nothing. Without our faith we are dead. When I see that a few people have left it has actually increased my faith and I feel as though now Allah the Almighty is purifying the Jamaat so that only the sincere are left amongst the fold of the Promised Messiah (as).”***

Manal Odeh sahiba continued:

***“If occasionally an Ahmadi loses his faith it hurts, especially if you have known that person but our faith teaches us how to respond to such issues. It is our duty to increase in our worship of Allah and that is what I have seen amongst the Arab Ahmadis over the past few years. It has motivated***

***us to increase our prayers and to increase our attachment to the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as)."***

Nadia Shabooti sahiba said:

***"If any Ahmadi, whether Arab or not, ever has any doubt or weakens in faith, I say to them that just look at Huzoor. He is the one we have taken Bai'at from and he has all the moral qualities that a person should have. No one can act so purely and honestly for their entire life and never stumble or show some weaknesses unless they have the direct support of Allah the Almighty."***

Kholoud Safir sahiba said:

***"If some people leave Ahmadiyyat then it is merely a case of history repeating itself. We saw over a hundred years ago how the Lahoris split away and how the true Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as) did not suffer in any way but went from strength to strength! In nature, sometimes the weak plants have to be removed in order for the stronger plants to grow and I believe the same is true with our Jamaat. If a few weaken in faith, it means that the Jamaat overall will become purer and stronger."***

It had been fascinating to hear the reflections of the Arab Ahmadi ladies and to see how firm they were in their faith. They had seen what Ahmadiyyat had given them and how it blessed their lives and were witnesses to the truth of the Promised Messiah (as).

### **A few moments with Huzoor**

On Thursday evening, Huzoor travelled to Hadeeqatul Mahdi where he would reside for the period of the Jalsa Salana.

Prior to leaving Masjid Fazl, Huzoor met dozens of families in Mulaqat and I also had the chance to meet with Huzoor.

After presenting Huzoor with a brief report, I informed him that *The Economist* magazine had published an article by Farhad Ahmad, a Missionary serving in the *Press & Media Office*, in which he had introduced the Jamaat and also spoken about religious tolerance.

Huzoor knew about the article because the week before I had sent a draft for Huzoor to review before it was sent for publication. Even though both Farhad and I had checked the article we had failed to realise that the introduction to the Jamaat was misleading and gave a false impression about the true status of the Promised Messiah (as). Despite his intense work schedule, Huzoor checked the article and highlighted our mistake. When we saw Huzoor's note, we were both extremely relieved and grateful to him and were embarrassed that we had drafted it incorrectly.

After we had redrafted and submitted it for publication, Farhad was informed that *The Economist* would pay him a fee of £200 for the article.

Upon receiving this notice, Farhad told me that he had no desire or right to accept the fee. I told him that before rejecting it, he should wait and I would ask Huzoor how to proceed.

After I presented the matter, Huzoor said:

***“Tell Farhad to donate the money to Save the Children and to tell the Economist that we have no desire for any remuneration and our only interest is in serving humanity and seeking to promote good in society.”***

With only a few hours left until the start of the Jalsa Salana, I asked Huzoor to pray that we were able to attain positive and far-reaching media coverage.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Your team should continue to strive to spread the message of Jalsa and Islam through the media. However, at the same time, there are many other ways to spread our message. I was thinking about this a few days ago and it occurred to me that whilst the media is a means of introducing the Jamaat to a large audience, we rarely get Bai’ats through media coverage. On the other hand, the meetings I have with delegations during and after the Jalsa, often lead to people accepting Ahmadiyyat. In the past, I have met African Chiefs or leaders who then accept Islam and through them hundreds or even thousands of people become Ahmadi.”***

Huzoor then smiled before saying:

***“Anyway, this time my speeches at the Jalsa Salana will be focused on our own Tarbiyyat and the need to morally reform. These are not the type of speeches that the worldly media will be interested in!”***

In reply, I said:

***“Huzoor, I wish for you to know that we invite the media and strive for coverage because this is our Jamaat duty otherwise we have no personal interest in the media. Our only desire and prayer is that we never disappoint you in any way.”***

Hearing this, Huzoor smiled before indicating that I should leave so that the session of family Mulaqats could begin.

### **Emotions of Ahmadis**

Shortly after, I met the three graduates of *Jamia Ahmadiyya International* in Ghana who had come for the UK Jalsa Salana and who Huzoor had spoken to during the Jalsa inspection a few days before.

They were *Mussa Ibn Issa (28)* from Tanzania, *Akere Abdul-Hafeez (26)* from Nigeria and *Soro Allasane (27)* from Ivory Coast.

Mussa ibn Issa said:

***“The moment I saw Huzoor for the first time I felt as though I had entered heaven. I have never seen such a blessed personality before in my life and now I have seen with my own eyes what others had tried to explain to me. Khilafat is truth and Huzoor is truly a man of God.”***

Akere Abdul-Hafeez said:

*“I received my first glimpse of Huzoor a few days ago at the Asr prayer and it was a life changing moment and that prayer was a life changing prayer. Then, we were so lucky that Huzoor met us at Jamia Ahmadiyya UK and we even had the chance to shake his hand. As I met Huzoor, I felt a spirituality unlike anything I have ever felt before.”*

Akere Abdul-Hafeez continued:

*“When Jamia Ahmadiyya International was opened in 2012 it was a great illustration of Huzoor’s vision for Africa. It proves that he continues to be the father of Africa! And the love the African people have for Khalifatul Masih is immeasurable. After hearing that I was going to meet Huzoor, countless people came up to me and said, ‘Please just say our name once to Huzoor and we know that all our problems will be solved and that our lives and futures will be blessed forever’.”*

Telling me about his one previous visit to London, Soro Allasane said:

*“I came once before to the Jalsa UK in 2016 and when I went back to Ghana all my friends and classmates came running to greet me and they were all competing with each other trying to be the first to meet me. They kept saying ‘You met Huzoor and so we want to be the first one to meet you and to gain the blessings that you have received in London’.”*

### **A stressful morning**

It was 3 August 2018 and with the Grace of Allah, after months of anticipation and preparation, the Jalsa Salana UK had finally arrived.

As I arrived early morning at Hadeeqatul Mahdi, I felt the same mixture of happiness and nervousness that I felt each year.

Truth be told the morning hours passed by quite stressfully. There are two different media teams who serve at the Jalsa Salana, our central team and also a UK Jamaat team.

Some of the media guests attending had been invited by both Jamaat teams and so members of both teams desired to host them and to show them around the Jalsa.

In the scheme of the Jalsa, it was a very small thing but during Jalsa days most volunteers are sleep deprived, somewhat stressed and so small things can escalate. The extremely hot and humid weather was also probably not helping!

*Alhamdolillah*, after a little while, the issue was resolved and for the rest of the Jalsa there were no further problems.

Nonetheless, I felt guilty that, however fleetingly, there had been an element of discord between the two teams, as we were all aware that Huzoor desires for all workers at Jalsa Salana to show the very best spirit at all times and to keep a smile on our faces at all times.



### **Friday Sermon at Jalsa Salana UK**

Just before 1pm, I proceeded to Huzoor's residence and the moment I saw Huzoor step outside his residence it immediately occurred to me that the Jalsa Salana was moments from starting and that in the blink of an eye the three days would pass, as they always did. And so, it proved.



In his *Friday Sermon*, Huzoor addressed both the volunteers and the participants of the Jalsa Salana. He spoke of the objectives of the Jalsa Salana and urged all Ahmadi Muslims to try to take full advantage of the spiritual atmosphere of the Jalsa.

Huzoor spoke about the need to respect the local community and said that no one should smoke on the site as, due to the abnormally hot weather, there

was a risk of wildfires. At the same time, Huzoor made it clear that smoking was a very bad habit that people should strive to avoid at all times.

Later, in his afternoon address, Huzoor further clarified and said that the fact that he had said people should not smoke on site was not a licence to go and smoke off-site. Rather, just as it was wrong to do anything that would pose a risk on site, the same was true in the other parts of the town.

### **A changed perception**

Throughout the Jalsa Salana, I met various guests, Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis, including a Paramount Chief from Sierra Leone, *Alimamy Bockarie Y. Koroma (61)*.

He told me that Huzoor's addresses and the spirit of the Jalsa Salana were having a profound effect upon him and that his views on Islam had completely changed for the better.

Narrating his experiences, Paramount Chief, *Alimamy Bockarie Y. Koroma* said:

***“Before coming to the Jalsa, I was under the impression that all Muslims were the same and truth be told, I had a negative impression of Islam because of the killings in the Arab world that you see on the news. However, at this Jalsa, I have seen a manifestation of true peace as I have never seen before.*”**

Paramount Chief, Alimamy Bockarie Y. Koroma continued:

***“In my country, there is a divide between Ahmadi Muslims and non-Ahmadi Muslims because the non-Ahmadis do not consider Ahmadis as Muslims. However, when I go back, I will defend Ahmadi Muslims and tell the community that I have seen that if there are people today who are making a relationship with God Almighty it is the Ahmadi Muslims.”***

Paramount Chief, Alimamy Bockarie Y. Koroma further said:

***“I have seen that Ahmadis are sincere and truly peaceful. You all love each other and are like one united beating heart. When I see how Ahmadis talk and conduct themselves it gives me joy, however what has given me the greatest joy has been to see the Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad and to listen to him. He has penetrated my heart like no other person. I am a leader of people in Sierra Leone and I will use what I have learned from him and from this Jalsa to help me in my administration.”***

Speaking of what he had seen in Huzoor, Paramount Chief, Alimamy Bockarie Y. Koroma said:

***“Above all, I have seen that the Khalifa is concerned for the wellbeing of every single Ahmadi Muslim and he is a compassionate leader. This is what I wish to learn from and adopt. Truly, when I see him, I feel closer to God Almighty. My heart has told me that the Khalifa is not an ordinary person and though I am a Christian, I firmly believe that he is being guided by God.”***

Paramount Chief, *Alimamy Bockarie Y. Koroma* continued:

***“I trust the judgment of the Khalifa and believe that he is a true man of God. What he says is true and what he says is for my benefit. He is a great blessing for the entire world.”***

### **Flag Hoisting and First Session of Jalsa Salana**

Following a lunch break, Huzoor returned to the main Jalsa area at 4.30pm for the formal *Flag Hoisting* ceremony, which was immediately followed by the first session of the Jalsa Salana.



During his address, Huzoor emphasised the importance and unparalleled power of prayer.

Huzoor said there was no issue or problem that could not be solved through sincere prayer.



Rather than physical weapons, such as guns or bombs, Huzoor said that our weapon was and always would be prayer alone.

Huzoor said:

***“No Ahmadi Muslim should ever think of responding to the cruelties and injustices of the world through worldly and material means. To follow such worldly ways will take us away from the Grace and Blessings of Allah the Almighty. If we forsake our trust in God Almighty and adopt the tactics of those who oppose us by seeking revenge, we will become the ones who create disorder in the world. Remember, the cycle of taking revenge once started is never ending.”***



Huzoor continued:

***“Whilst staying within the limits of the law, we seek our rights and seek justice. However, our faith, trust and confidence should only ever be in Allah the Almighty. Always remember that we have no power or weapon except that of sincere and earnest prayer.”***

Huzoor said it was our duty to pray for Islam and to defend the honour of the Holy Prophet (sa) by invoking *Durood* (salutations) upon him at every opportunity.

It was a very beautiful and emotional sermon in which Huzoor reminded us of our responsibilities as Ahmadi Muslims to constantly try to become closer to Allah the Almighty and to place our trust in *Him* alone.

### **Forever guiding**

Before returning to his residence, Huzoor went to the *langhar khana* (kitchen) and to the *roti plant*.

Huzoor was briefed upon how the lunch service had transpired and how the food was being prepared for the evening.

Somehow, Huzoor finds the time to help and guide the Jalsa administration throughout the Jalsa.

For example, before returning to his residence after any Jalsa session or prayer, Huzoor would be briefed on the arrangements by Amir Sahib UK or the *Afsar Jalsa Salana* and they would seek his guidance throughout on various issues that arose.

Another department to have benefitted greatly from Huzoor's guidance is a Jalsa security team known as the '*Command Centre*'. With Huzoor's guidance, the team's work has rapidly developed in recent years.

During the afternoon break, Farooq Mirza, who was a *Naib Sadr Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* for several years, before recently entering *Majlis Ansarullah*, told me about this particular duty.

Farooq Mirza said:

***“In recent years, at the Jalsa inspection Huzoor has visited what we call our ‘command centre’ and is a base for our operations. He checks the standard of the CCTV and asks us challenging questions and tells us very clearly his expectations of us. Basically, he wants us to ensure we have taken every practical effort to ensure the safety of the participants of the Jalsa Salana. It really is a reflection of his great love for the Jamaat.*”**

Farooq sahib continued:

***“Last year, we told Huzoor how quickly we could respond to any security issue at any part of the site but Huzoor said it was not quick enough and challenged us to improve. Already at this year’s Jalsa we are seeing the blessings of Huzoor’s guidance. For example, some young children got lost and their parents were very worried but we were able to locate them through our system and Alhamdulillah they were found safe and well.”***

Farooq sahib further said:

***“If there is one thing I have learned, whether during my time in Khuddamul Ahmadiyya or through this duty at Jalsa, it is that we are nothing without Khilafat and can achieve nothing without his prayers and guidance. I do not have knowledge of books. I do not claim to be*”**

*righteous. I have many weaknesses and flaws. But one thing I am certain of is that I love Huzoor with all my heart and am ready to sacrifice everything, including my life, for the sake of the Jamaat without a second's thought and the same I can vouch for the members of my team. Khilafat is our guiding light and we would be lost in the darkness without it."*

*Alhamdolillah*, the first day of the Jalsa Salana concluded successfully.

As day turned to night, it remained very warm but thankfully much more pleasant than earlier in the day. Whilst the weather over the following two days remained hot, the intensity of the heat was less.

### **Lajna Session at Jalsa Salana**

On Saturday, 4 August 2018, the second day of the Jalsa Salana began with a series of speeches in both the men's and ladies Jalsa Gahs.

Thereafter, Huzoor arrived in the Lajna Jalsa Gah at midday for his address to the Lajna members.

Upon arriving on stage, Huzoor commented that the air conditioning seemed to be better on the men's side and that this was wrong. Huzoor said that women should have been given priority in this regard.

I happened to be next to the *Afsar Jalsa Salana*, watching MTA, when Huzoor made this comment and I saw a look of immediate concern appear on his face. He immediately spoke with members of his team and it was apparent



that they were making plans to check and improve the air conditioning on the ladies' side.

Huzoor's comment was a demonstration that women and children should be given priority over men when it comes to issues of comfort and ease at the Jalsa.

This is something that I had seen many times on previous occasions. Huzoor was always especially concerned about the comfort of women, children and the elderly.

### **Huzoor's address to Lajna**

During his address to Lajna Imaillah, Huzoor spoke about various issues including the risks of social media and especially how the overuse of modern technology was leading to the breakdown of families.

Huzoor said:

***“Modern technology has many benefits but it also has some harmful effects that should be guarded against. As a result of people spending hours upon hours each day on electronic devices, family members are becoming distant from one another. Family life is breaking down. Instead of sitting together as a family and talking, it is common for each family member to be engaged in their own world on their own electronic device.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“The mental and physical development of young children is suffering because of excessive use of electronic devices. Furthermore, instead of talking through issues with their children, some parents just leave them to their own devices and are not aware of the issues their children are facing. The unity of family life is facing a grave crisis and so it is necessary for parents to maintain close relations with their children and to take them outdoors for recreational activities and to encourage them to read and study things that can benefit them and society.”***

Huzoor said that the responsibilities of Ahmadi parents to raise their children according to Islam’s teachings was of paramount importance and should never be taken lightly.

Huzoor said:

***“Focusing on the religious training of your children is especially important in this era of widespread materialism. It is the task of parents to ensure that their children understand that religion takes precedence over all worldly matters.”***

Following Huzoor’s address, Huzoor walked across to the men’s Jalsa Gah to lead the Zuhr and Asr prayers, which was followed by an interval for lunch.

## **Huzoor's contribution to a handwritten Holy Quran**

Apart from taking lunch, thousands of attendees took the opportunity to visit the various exhibitions and stalls set up at the Jalsa.

Due to Jalsa duties, I did not have the opportunity to see much but there was one thing I did not want to miss and made a special effort to see.

For the past few years, the Al-Qalam project has been running at different Jalsas and a few days before this year's Jalsa, I learned that Huzoor had graciously taken part in this project and had written *Surah Fatiha* with his blessed hand. The scroll with Huzoor's writing was to be displayed at the Al-Qalam exhibition, hosted by Review of Religions.

I later asked Amer Safir, *Chief Editor of the Review of Religions* about Huzoor's involvement and encouragement for the Al-Qalam project. He told me that an Ahmadi calligraphist and Islamic artefact collector, *Razwan Baig* had contacted him a few years ago and expressed his regret that whilst, through much of Islam's history the Holy Quran had been written by hand, in the modern '*iPad era*' this art was being lost and forgotten. In an effort to reverse this trend, Razwan Sahib had personally launched the Al-Qalam project and asked if the Jamaat could promote it and encourage people to participate.

Amer admitted to me that he was hesitant and unsure if it was feasible or something the Jamaat would be in favour of. However, he sought Huzoor's permission for a Mulaqat so that Razwan sahib could present his idea to Huzoor directly.

Narrating what happened next, Amer Safir said:

***“When Razwan Baig sahib presented his idea to Huzoor, I was surprised by Huzoor’s reaction. He immediately took great interest in the project and gave great support. He asked Baig sahib how long it would take to complete and Baig sahib said it would take 14 years if one verse was written each day.***

Amer Safir continued:

***“Upon this, Huzoor very lovingly said ‘What if I provide you with 30,000 people?’. Thereafter, Huzoor immediately instructed us to launch the Al-Qalam project at the Jalsa Salana UK, where of course more than 30,000 people were due to attend. Razwan sahib was so overwhelmed that he stood up and kept repeating Subhan’Allah, Subhan’Allah’ and was on the verge of tears.”***

Amer told me that during the same meeting, Razwan Baig sahib mentioned his desire for Huzoor himself to take part and to pen a verse.

Explaining Huzoor’s own response, Amer Safir said:

***“Immediately, Huzoor accepted the request of Razwan sahib and said he would take part and Huzoor asked which verse. I humbly suggested if Huzoor would write Surah Al-Fatiha as it is the opening chapter and Huzoor graciously accepted this suggestion. Later in 2016, Razwan sahib gave me a large scroll, which is formed of a special paper for the Al-Qalam project, and I presented that scroll to Huzoor.”***

Amer Safir continued:

***“Interestingly, the blank scroll would often remain seen behind Huzoor’s desk for a couple of years. Occasionally in my Mulaqats with Huzoor he would mention that he still had the scroll and would write out Surah Fatiha when he had time. We always wondered when Huzoor would write his verse. A personal theory is that Huzoor knew as soon as he wrote a verse, every Ahmadi would seek to participate and so he waited right until the end, when all the other verses were penned! Whatever the case, Huzoor kept us guessing and in suspense right until the end!”***

Narrating when and how Huzoor blessed the Al-Qalam project through his own participation, Amer Safir said:

***“We had reached the point where the Al-Qalam project was more or less complete. We were waiting only for the verse that Huzoor would write. Less than two weeks remained for this year’s Jalsa and I did not think that Huzoor could possibly have time to write his verse due to his extremely busy schedule.”***

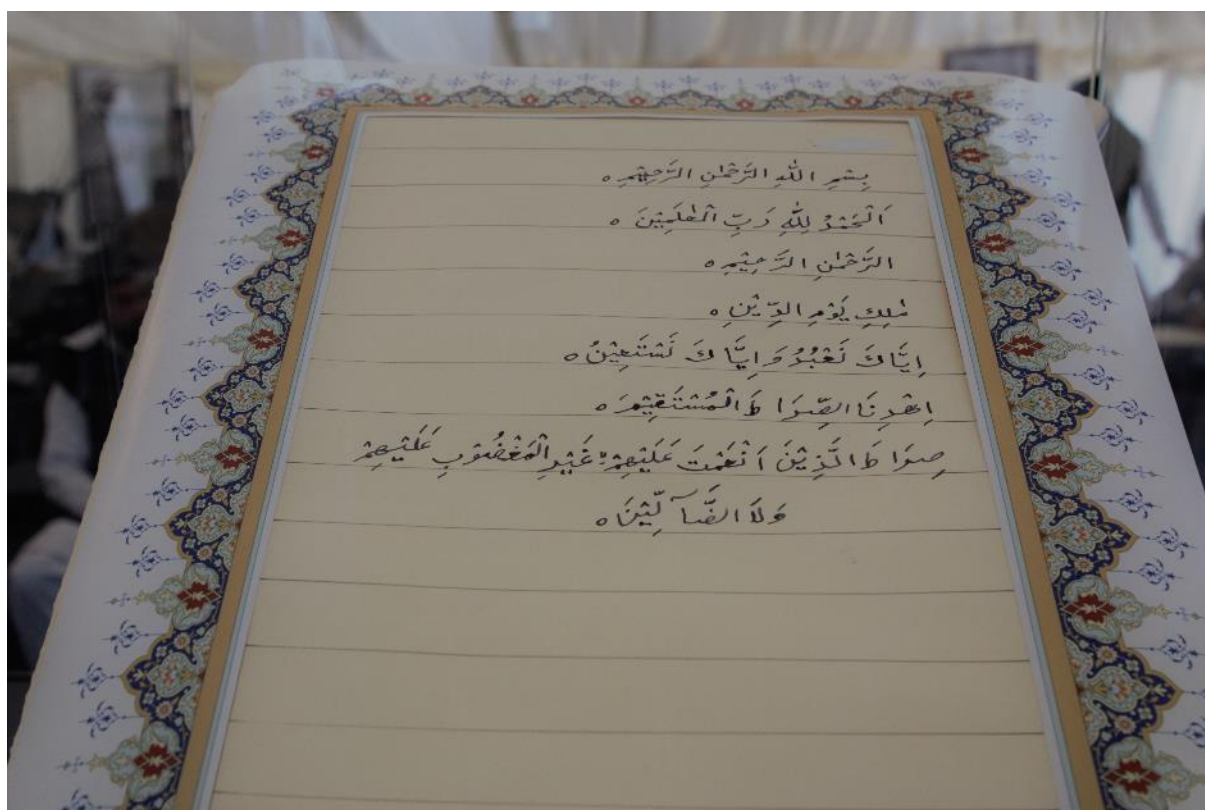
Amer Safir continued:

***“However, around ten days before the start of the Jalsa, I received a call from Private Secretary sahib in which he said that your amaanat (trust) is here. I did not understand initially but then he explained that Huzoor had written Surah Al-Fatiha on the scroll. I immediately rushed to pick it up and took it straight back to the office and called Razwan Baig sahib.***

***Upon hearing the news, he almost fainted with joy! He said he could not believe it and would not be able to rest until he saw Huzoor's writing."***

Amer Safir further said:

***"When I opened the scroll, I saw that Huzoor had written Surah Al-Fatiha, not once but twice, on two separate scrolls. Huzoor had written it very carefully and meticulously. Goodness knows how Huzoor was able to find the time to do so just before one of the most, if not the most, busy periods of his year when Huzoor has to deliver five addresses at Jalsa and has countless other engagements."***



After receiving the scroll, Amer told me that Razwan Baig sahib asked him if he could request a photo of Huzoor together with the scroll.

Amer said that they should not seek any more of Huzoor's precious time. However, Razwan sahib still did not give up hope.

Amer Safir said:

***“Razwan Baig is a very persistent person! He said that the request for a photo was not for us personally but that Huzoor had given so much love and time to Al-Qalam that he sought to preserve this historic moment. It so happened that a few days before the Jalsa, we had a Mulaqat with Huzoor and so at the end of the Mulaqat I mentioned to Huzoor that Razwan sahib wants to ask him something.”***



Amer Safir continued:

***“At that point, Razwan sahib made the request for the photo and initially Huzoor said there was no need but then Razwan sahib poured his heart***

***out and expressed his deep desire that a photo of Huzoor with his scroll be taken. Upon this, Huzoor very graciously permitted. Huzoor's humility is such that he said that his Arabic handwriting was not good. In reply, Baig sahib said 'Huzoor, it is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen'. Thereafter, Huzoor graciously called Baig sahib and me to join the photo."***

It was in this context that I was determined to see the verse written by Huzoor for Al-Qalam at the Jalsa Salana UK.

When I saw it displayed in a special glass case, I was struck by its beauty and elegance and was particularly grateful that I had also been able to take part in the project.

As Amer Safir later said to me:

***"Undoubtedly, Huzoor's interest in the Al-Qalam project is due to his immense love for the Holy Quran and it is Huzoor's way of bringing as many people as possible towards the Holy Quran and attaching them to it. Indeed, some guests would come to our marquee and tell us that Huzoor had specially told them to come and visit and to take part."***

Amer also told me that though the first edition of the handwritten Holy Quran was now complete, Huzoor had instructed to start a second Quran so that more and more people would have the opportunity to participate.



### **A year of blessings**

The afternoon session on the second day of the Jalsa Salana UK is where Huzoor presents a report of the progress of the Jamaat across the world over the past year and mentions some of the blessings of Allah that have occurred.

Thus, over almost two hours, Huzoor presented various reports and also mentioned inspirational stories of how people had come to accept Ahmadiyyat from across the globe.



Huzoor said that Ahmadiyyat had reached East Timor and Georgia over the past year and that the Jamaat was now established in 212 countries or territories of the world.

This was an increase of 121 countries since 1984, which was the year when Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyyat was forced to migrate from Pakistan.

Over the past year, 400 Mosques had been either purpose built or converted by the Jamaat across the world. In addition, 180 new Mission Houses were opened. Huzoor also reported that the Holy Quran had now been fully translated into 75 languages by the Jamaat.

After presenting some more highlights of the past year's blessings, Huzoor gave a report of the various Jamaat departments and briefly mentioned their progress and work.

As his address reached a climax, Huzoor announcing that, with the *Grace of Allah*, during the past year over 647,000 people had accepted Ahmadiyyat. *Alhamdolillah*.

After Huzoor announced this, very passionate *naaray* echoed around the Jalsa Gah, as Ahmadis expressed their joy at the never-ending blessings that Allah showered upon the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as).

### **Meetings with delegations**

Shortly after his address had concluded, Huzoor's next engagements began in his temporarily set up office at Hadeeqatul Mahdi.

Huzoor's office was set up in a marquee divided into three sections.

On one side, was an entrance and waiting area, the middle area was an office area for the Private Secretary and his staff and the far side was Huzoor's own office.

Over the course of just over one hour, Huzoor held several meetings with various delegations of guests and dignitaries who had come to attend the Jalsa Salana from *Sweden, The Gambia, Greece, Sierra Leone and Benin*.

During these meetings, some guests expressed their experiences of the Jalsa Salana, whilst others asked Huzoor questions on a range of issues. Despite being so busy, Huzoor gave time to all of the guests individually and was particularly concerned that they were being well looked after.

A Muslim guest from Sweden, who was working with immigrants in Sweden, told Huzoor that some Muslim immigrants were determined not to 'integrate' into the Swedish society. He sought Huzoor's view and advice in this regard.

In response, Huzoor said:

***"The question is why did such immigrants come to Sweden? The reason most of the Muslims came was so they could live peacefully and with security. Sweden has provided this to them and so there is no excuse for them to isolate themselves. Instead of relying on benefits, they should try their best to find work and contribute to the local society. If they are determined to stay separate and not integrate, they should leave Sweden."***

Upon this, the guest remarked:

***"Your Holiness, some people might think that telling Muslims to integrate and saying that if they don't like it, to leave is 'Islamophobic'."***

Hearing this, Huzoor smiled before saying:

***“People can say what they want but it will not change my view. I do not believe asking people to be loyal to the nation in which they live is Islamophobic, rather it is according to the teachings of Islam. When I migrated to the UK, I came here with the intention of being a loyal and faithful citizen. Ever since I attained British nationality, I have participated in the democratic process and will always be ready to help the nation. This is the duty of a Muslim.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“If your country provides you with security and values your rights as a citizen then, in turn, it is your duty to respect your country and to integrate. If some fanatical people claim that this is Islamophobic then I reserve the right to respectfully disagree! I follow what the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) taught and he said that the love of one’s country is an essential part of Islamic faith.”***

Another person who had the opportunity to meet Huzoor that evening was Honourable Ebrima Sillah, *Minister of Information*, representing the Government of The Gambia.

During the meeting the Minister of Information said:

***“Your Holiness, it is my ardent desire to attain your blessings. Hence, it is my humble request if you would touch my head, as I am sure this will be a cause of great blessings for me personally and my country.”***

Then, the Minister approached Huzoor and bowed his head and with great affection, Huzoor touched his head and fulfilled the request of the Minister.

At the same time, Huzoor prayed:

***“May Allah bless you and your nation.”***

Also present was the Ameer Jamaat of Gambia, who said:

***“Huzoor, I wish to inform you that over the past year there has been a severe drought in our nation and so on two occasions I wrote to you for prayers. Following both those letters I sent, very soon we were blessed with rainfall and we are sure it was only due to your prayers.”***

As the Gambian delegation left Huzoor’s office and he waited for the next delegation, Huzoor kindly asked me how I was.

After responding that I was well, I asked Huzoor how he was.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“I have not yet prepared my concluding address for tomorrow and so I will need to find some time to prepare that tonight and in the morning.”***

As I looked at Huzoor, I felt a surge of love for him in my heart. Huzoor was sacrificing every possible moment for the sake of the Jamaat. Due to the formal sessions and the Mulaqats, it seemed almost impossible that Huzoor would have any time to actually prepare his notes for his addresses.

Next, Huzoor met a Minister representing the Government of Sierra Leone.

During the meeting, the Minister said:

***“Your Holiness, it has been a great honour to be here and I found every word you said in your speeches to be a source of enlightenment for me personally and for the wider society. You touch our hearts and you are able to inspire us in a way that no one else can do so.”***

Ameer Sahib Sierra Leone informed Huzoor that the Minister’s parents had been Ahmadis but that the Minister himself was not.

Smiling affectionately towards the Minister, Huzoor said:

***“It means that you are one of our ‘lost sheep’ who will come home one day, Insha’Allah.”***

Another guest to meet Huzoor was a retired politician from the small African country, Benin. The guest had formerly been a Minister in Benin’s national government.

Upon meeting Huzoor, the former Minister said:

***“I wish to thank His Holiness for your commitment to serving humanity. I honestly believe that you understand the suffering of our people better than we do. The Islam you preach and practice is different to what others say and do. There are Muslims in Africa who are extremists and use***

***weapons but your community only ever shows compassion and promotes peace.”***

After thanking the guest for his comments, Huzoor said:

***“Our only weapon is love and our objective is to serve humanity always. This is our job and our desire.”***

A female guest from Benin informed Huzoor that she had travelled to the United States for further education but had now returned to Benin.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

***“It is very good that after gaining further education you made the decision to return to your country and to use your talents and skills to serve your nation, rather than staying abroad. May Allah bless you for this and enable you to serve your nation with distinction.”***

### **Meeting with Bishop from Georgia**

Huzoor’s final meeting that evening was with the *Most Reverend Malkhaz Songulashvili, Bishop of the Evangelical Church of Georgia.*

The Bishop wore distinctive purple robes and a purple hat and carried with him a wooden staff.

During the meeting, Bishop Songulashvili expressed his deep respect for Huzoor and his astonishment at Huzoor’s seemingly unending schedule.

Bishop Songulashvili said:

***“If I had to preach multiple times in a day like you did today, I would certainly not have the energy to meet people in the evening like you are. Thus, I wish to express my deep gratitude that you are meeting me. It is a great honour.”***

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Even after these meetings, my day will not finish, as I have to attend another function this evening.”***



In response, Bishop Songulashvili said:

***“I wish you energy and I pray for you from deep within my heart. I have seen that Ahmadi Muslims are suffering persecution but under your guidance you respond only with love.”***



Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“The world needs peace and tolerance. We should set aside our religious differences for the common good. Human values should be respected and we should remember that we are all human beings and so we should try to be united. Religion is a matter of a person’s heart and true faith can never be forced.”***

The meeting concluded as Bishop Songulashvili said he was very grateful to be invited to attend the Jalsa and was very glad to have travelled from Georgia to attend.



He also said that he would like to further the inter-faith dialogue by inviting Ahmadi Muslims to attend some Church events in the future.

In response, Huzoor said that Ahmadi Muslims would be always ready to take part in any effort where the objective was to increase inter-faith harmony.

Following the meeting, Bishop Songulashvili spoke of how meeting Huzoor had been a unique privilege.

Bishop Songulashvili said:

***“I was honoured to meet the Caliph (Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad) and I was amazed that he seemed very refreshed. He was full of courage and interest and I was really impressed by his character. I think the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community should be proud of him as a leader who has deep spirituality and the spiritual strength to listen to others. I think this is the most important gift that a leader should have of listening to others.”***

### **Always on duty**

Following his meetings, Huzoor walked out of his office to his car which was parked outside his residence.

On the way, Huzoor lovingly waved at his young grandson Muaaz before proceeding to the Tabshir Marquee, where Huzoor joined hundreds of international guests of the Jalsa Salana for dinner, which was immediately followed by the Maghreb and Isha prayers.

After the meal, as people were gathering for prayers, Huzoor stood outside the Jalsa Gah for a few minutes and called the *Afsar Jalsa Salana*, Nasser Khan sahib and took a report of the air conditioning on the Lajna side.

Huzoor instructed that the Lajna should be trained in how to use the equipment.

Huzoor said:

***“Once they know how to use the machines, the ladies and girls will manage it better than the men can!”***

Huzoor also called *Sadr Majlis Ansarullah UK*, Dr Ijazur Rehman sahib and said that as he was the *Afsar Muaina (inspection)*, his duty was to visit all departments of the Jalsa Salana regularly and at different times of the day to identify any weaknesses so that improvements could be made.

As Huzoor was standing he noticed *Sahibzada Mir Mahmood Nasir sahib* from Rabwah stood a few metres to the side.

Upon seeing Mir Mahmood sahib, now in his late-80s, Huzoor lovingly said:

***“You should not stand but should go inside the marquee and take a seat.”***

In reply, Mir Mahmood sahib said:

***“Huzoor, how can I sit when you are standing?”***

Huzoor smiled and said:

***“I am on duty that is why I am standing, you are a guest!”***

It was a very beautiful comment and most surely beloved Huzoor is always on duty. Every minute of his life is dedicated to the service of Islam and guiding the members of the Jamaat.

It was also a very beautiful interaction between beloved Huzoor and his elderly relative and a reflection of Huzoor’s love and concern for Mir Mahmood sahib.

Moments later, Huzoor was informed that people had now entered the Jalsa Gah and were ready for prayers. Huzoor duly entered the Jalsa Gah and led Maghreb and Isha.

Following Namaz, Huzoor returned to his residence and with that we had reached the conclusion of the second day of the Jalsa Salana.

Everyone was eagerly awaiting the final day, especially the opportunity to partake in the International Bai’at and to hear Huzoor’s concluding address.

Though, where the Jalsa was due to conclude in less than 24 hours, I knew Huzoor’s Jalsa duties and meetings would continue for many days to come.

**End of part 1**

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