

JALSA SALANA UK 2018

Part 2

A Personal Account

By Abid Khan

Introduction to Part 2

In *part 1* of the diary I recently wrote about the *Jalsa Salana UK 2018*, I narrated some incidents pertaining to the week preceding the *Jalsa* and the first two days of the *Jalsa* itself. In this second part, I shall write about the concluding day of the *Jalsa Salana* and some of Huzoor's activities in the days that followed.

International Bai'at Ceremony

With the *Grace of Allah*, we had reached the third and final day of the *Jalsa Salana 2018*. It was the day of the *International Bai'at* ceremony and the concluding address of Huzoor.



At 1pm, Huzoor came out of his residence wearing the beige coloured blessed overcoat of the Promised Messiah (as) and proceeded directly to the *Jalsa Gah*.

After sitting down facing the thousands of Ahmadi Muslims seated before him, Huzoor announced that over 647,000 had joined the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community during the past year and then Huzoor led the Bai'at ceremony.

Those few minutes were simply unforgettable. The crescendo of emotion echoing across the Jalsa Gah was felt by all present.

Each year, those few minutes are unlike any other. Tears adorned the faces of people of all races and nationalities before finally all bowed down in prostration in *Sajdah-e-shukr* (prostration of gratitude to Allah the Almighty).

A Russian representative

Amongst the very fortunate people to take *Bai'at* directly at the hand of Huzoor was *Rustam Hammad Wali*, a 61 year old convert to Ahmadiyyat from Moscow, Russia.

I was curious as to how and why Rustam sahib had been drawn to Islam. After all, he had grown up in an era of *communism* and had been part of a generation who had been taught from childhood that religion was dangerous and forbidden.

Rustam sahib told me that following the collapse of the Soviet Union and as he entered his forties, he began to reflect upon the 'true meaning of life'. As he searched and struggled for answers, he somehow came into contact with *Khalid Ahmad*, the *Missionary* of the Jamaat in Moscow. He subsequently met

Khalid sahib many times and asked questions and read all the books of the Jamaat that had been translated into Russian.

It soon dawned upon him that the propaganda and negative publicity he had heard about Islam was patently false. He became increasingly drawn towards Islam and started to offer the five daily prayers.

Soon, Rustam sahib was invited to attend the UK Jalsa Salana and it proved to be a life-changing experience.

Rustam sahib said:

“In 1998, I was fortunate to take part in Jalsa Salana UK for the first time and the highly spiritual atmosphere, the smiling faces and the words ‘Assalamo Alaikum’ that were heard from everyone left a very strong impression upon me. I had never in my life seen such a large number of people gathered together who had filled the entire atmosphere of Jalsa with kindness, tranquillity and love. At that moment, I said to myself that ‘This is the true Muslim Jamaat and true Islam that I had been looking for’.”

After taking *Bai’at* at the 1998 Jalsa, Rustam sahib also had the opportunity to meet with Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) for the first time.

The meeting inspired him and led to a decision that would change the course of his life forever.

Rustam sahib said:

“When I saw the Spiritual Head of the Jamaat, the Khalifa of the time, I saw a person who was a true man of God and from whom radiated the Light of Allah. I understood instantly from where the members of the Jamaat received such peace, light, love and kindness. After meeting him, a strong and fervent desire arose in me to carry and convey the light of Ahmadiyyat to my people. So, I decided to devote my entire life to the service of the religion and I considered that as the purpose of my life and my mission. I wrote a letter to Huzoor and he accepted my waqf (life devotion).”

Ever since, Rustam sahib has strived to bring his people back towards religion. It has not proved an easy task, given Russia’s historic suspicion of religion.

Rustam sahib said:

“After 1917, religion was banned in the country. All temples and mosques were destroyed or closed, whilst many clerics were killed or arrested. Religious literature was destroyed and was strictly forbidden. People did not have the opportunity to read the Torah, the Bible or the Quran. The ideology of communism replaced religion. It was taught to children from early childhood, in schools and in the institutions of higher education. Thus, two generations of Soviet people were brought up bereft of religion and spirituality from 1917 until 1991.”

Rustam sahib continued:

“After 74 years of state-ruled atheism, people finally had the opportunity to study religion and to take to spiritual values. Though, this process has begun, it is a slow and painful process. The remnants of atheistic ideology continue to exert their destructive influence upon the current generations of Russian people.

“The exception are those Ahmadi Muslims, whom Allah the Almighty has granted the understanding of the truth of Ahmadiyyat and Khilafat. We are thankful for His Mercy that He enabled us to rid ourselves of atheism and to be associated to that Jamaat which Allah has Himself created. This is why Ahmadi Muslims from countries of the former Soviet Union have great love for Allah and His Jamaat and the institution of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyyat.”

It was inspiring to hear of how Russian people and those from other Soviet nations were accepting the truth of Ahmadiyyat.

Personally, I have seen many Ahmadis from Russia or other former-Soviet states who are utterly consumed by their love for the Jamaat and for Khilafat. Given how entrenched the Communist ideology was in the Soviet Union, it is incredible to see how their hearts and minds have been transformed and drawn to the truth of Islam.

Rustam sahib told me of about his experience at this year’s Jalsa and being able to take the *Bai’at* at the hand of Huzoor as a representative not just of Russia but of all Europe.

Rustam sahib said:

“Exactly 20 years after I took Bai’at for the first time, I had the honour to take the oath of allegiance directly under the hand of the Fifth Khalifa of the Promised Messiah (as), Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. When I learned of this news, I experienced great excitement and wondered how and why, out of thousands of more deserving people, was this unworthy one chosen to take the Bai’at directly at Huzoor’s hand.”



Rustam sahib continued:

“Those moments of taking Bai’at at Huzoor’s hand were extremely emotional. On one side, I was emotional simply at taking Bai’at directly under the hand of the Khalifa, whilst on the other, I felt enormous responsibility because I was touching directly his hand and was the first link along the chain through which millions of Ahmadi Muslims around the world were able to join in the Bai’at ceremony. It is impossible to

describe my emotions and sensations with words and instead my emotions manifested themselves in the tears that flowed during the sajdah (prostration) immediately after the Bai'at."

Healing an old wound

There are always some weaknesses or problems that arise during the course of the Jalsa Salana. It is not possible for everything to be arranged perfectly when the numbers of guests approach 40,000 and especially given that the UK Jalsa takes place in a makeshift tent-city.

Yet, the spirit of hospitality and generosity of the vast majority of volunteers is exemplary. This is not only the case in the UK but in all nations where our Jalsas are held. Each volunteer strives to keep in mind that they are hosting the guests of the Promised Messiah (as).

Given this, I was very shocked and horrified when I met an elderly African-American, who told me about an incident she had experienced more than 20 years earlier at the USA Jalsa Salana.

The lady, now in her mid-sixties, had accepted Ahmadiyyat in the 1970s and had hoped that her family would accept it as well, however this desire of hers remained unfulfilled. Nonetheless, over the years she kept telling her family about the beauties of Islam and about the loving nature of Ahmadi Muslims.

She had hoped that her mother would attend a *Jalsa Salana* in the USA but for years she was not convinced to attend, until finally in 1997 she agreed to come. At the time her mother was aged 73.

The African-American lady told me that she had told her mother that she would be welcomed at the Jalsa and would see how kind Ahmadi Muslims were.

On her request, her mother wore a long skirt to the Jalsa but because she was not used to such a length she accidentally tripped over her skirt as she exited a car at the Jalsa site. She badly hit her head and suffered some other injuries.

Regrettably, her mother was not cared for in the proper way by the Jamaat both in the immediate aftermath and subsequently. For example, after she fell, the lady told me that though Khuddam were present they did not come to the aid of her mother.

The African-American Ahmadi said:

“With so much excitement and happiness, I had told my family about how well they would be treated at the Jalsa. When my mother finally came, the opposite occurred. My siblings were shocked and asked me why I was a member of the Jamaat. They even threatened to sue the Jamaat but my mother stopped them. Nonetheless, this has strained my relationship with my family ever since and for some time it even made me question whether I should leave Ahmadiyyat. Yet, in the end, I decided that I should not lose my faith in Allah over an issue where some people had treated my family wrongly.”

As she told me this story, I was shocked. Of course, there are human weaknesses and people make mistakes but the way she described the

treatment her family received was unlike anything I had heard before. It was not an example of the Ahmadiyyat that I knew and had been raised in.

As tears flowed from her eyes, the African-American lady said:

“Even now, I think my mother still holds that incident against me. I think she thinks that I do not love her but nothing could be further from the truth.”

At this point, she completely broke down in tears. I did not know how best to console her and so I asked her if there was any way in which I could help.

After composing herself, she said:

“There is one thing you can do. Please tell Huzoor my story. I need his prayers and I need his love.”

I assured her that I would inform Huzoor. I also apologised to her and told her that whatever had happened had been completely wrong. She seemed relieved and reassured knowing that her story would reach her Khalifa.

A few days later, in Huzoor’s office at the *Fazl Mosque*, I narrated the entire incident to Huzoor and he was very upset when he heard how the Ahmadi lady and her family had been treated.

Despite the fact that he had to meet almost 100 families in Mulaqat that evening, Huzoor immediately paused his work.

Then, Huzoor said:

“The way she was treated and the fact the Khuddam did not help her was completely wrong and un-Islamic. Where anyone is in distress or injured it is the duty of a Muslim to be the first to aid them. Just a few days ago, a lady came with her husband for Mulaqat and she stumbled and it appeared she might faint and so I helped her by supporting her arm so she did not fall.”

Huzoor continued:

“In the mid to late 1990s there were some Tarbiyyat failings amongst the Pakistani-origin Ahmadis in the USA which caused some African-American Ahmadis to become distant from the Jamaat. Thus, it is not so surprising that this incident happened. I understand the psyche and emotions of the African people and the African-Americans and so I have focused a great deal on bringing these people back towards Ahmadiyyat in recent years.”

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

“Start dictating. I wish to write to a letter to this lady apologising to her and to her mother for the lack of courtesy they received and the very bad treatment they were subjected to.”

Huzoor then dictated a beautiful and sympathetic letter to the African-American lady and in which he apologised for the incident.

In one part of the letter, Huzoor said:

“Treating guests in the best possible way is a fundamental teaching of Islam and the way your mother was treated was extremely wrong. As the incident took place so long ago it is not possible to ascertain why such mistakes were made and by whom, however let me take this opportunity to offer my personal sincere apologies to you and your mother. May Allah the Almighty grant you and your mother good health and happiness and remove any difficulties or hardships that you may face. Ameen.”

After completing the dictation, Huzoor told me to print the letter on his letterheaded paper and bring it to him to sign. Huzoor said it should then be sent to the Ahmadi without delay.

Having witnessed first-hand the distress of the lady, I was extremely grateful and emotional upon receiving Huzoor’s message to her.

Later, after receiving Huzoor’s letter, the African-American lady was overwhelmed with emotion and gratitude.

She told me how grateful she was that Huzoor had made this gesture more than 20 years after the incident. She said:

“I am greatly appreciative of Huzoor’s kind consideration of our family. His graciousness speaks volumes to the office of Khilafat. May his beautiful response remove any vain excuses for the rejection of the message of the Mahdi and Messiah of the age of my family and may they embrace Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya.”

Concluding Session

On 5 August 2018, the concluding session of Jalsa Salana began at 4.05pm and one of the guest speakers was Sir Ed Davey MP, who had been a friend of the Jamaat for many years. He had met Huzoor on various occasions and had condemned the persecution of the Jamaat on many occasions.

During his remarks, Ed Davey praised Huzoor for his leadership and focus on peace and spoke of the continued peaceful and humanitarian efforts of our Jamaat.

Thereafter, he mentioned the election of *Imran Khan as Prime Minister of Pakistan*.

Sir Ed Davey MP said:

“Prime Minister Imran Khan you now have huge responsibilities. You now have the chance to reduce and end the persecution and discrimination against religious minorities in your country – not just Ahmadi Muslims but Christians and people of faith from other groups too. I think you cannot be a friend to the Taliban in Pakistan and come to Britain and pretend to be a ‘liberal’. So, I call today on Prime Minister Imran Khan to promote tolerance and to throw open the door to freedom and human rights to everyone in Pakistan.”

Often politicians come to our events and speak in favour of the Jamaat and condemn the persecution. Some may be sincere, whilst I am sure there are others who forget about our issues as soon as they leave our event.

Nonetheless, it was interesting to hear the comments of Mr Davey which were stronger than those made normally by politicians.

Concluding address

Yet another great manifestation of the wisdom and grace of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya was Huzoor's concluding address that afternoon.



Throughout his address, Huzoor spoke of the high moral standards required of true Muslims and how the members of Jamaat should always seek to follow the commands of Allah the Almighty.

Huzoor said:

“It is the hallmark of a believer that he stops others from evil and unnecessary speech. However, before stopping others, it is necessary that he or she purifies their own state and leads by example. A person can only wield a good influence over others when he or she sets a positive example for them to follow.”

Speaking about the need to counsel with wisdom, Huzoor said:

“One must choose the appropriate time, place and method to guide others away from wrongdoing or sin. To prevent others from engaging in evil is virtuous and if done in the right way is a favour, however it is never right to humiliate others. For example, it is wrong to publicly expose the sins of other people.”

Further speaking about the importance of pursuing the highest levels of morality, Huzoor said:

“If moral weaknesses or sins are not quickly arrested, they continue to grow and this can greatly damage and weaken society and not just the individual. For example, some people claim benefits from the government under false pretences. This is not a victimless crime, rather it does harm others and weakens society. Such falsehood and immorality is completely against Islam.”

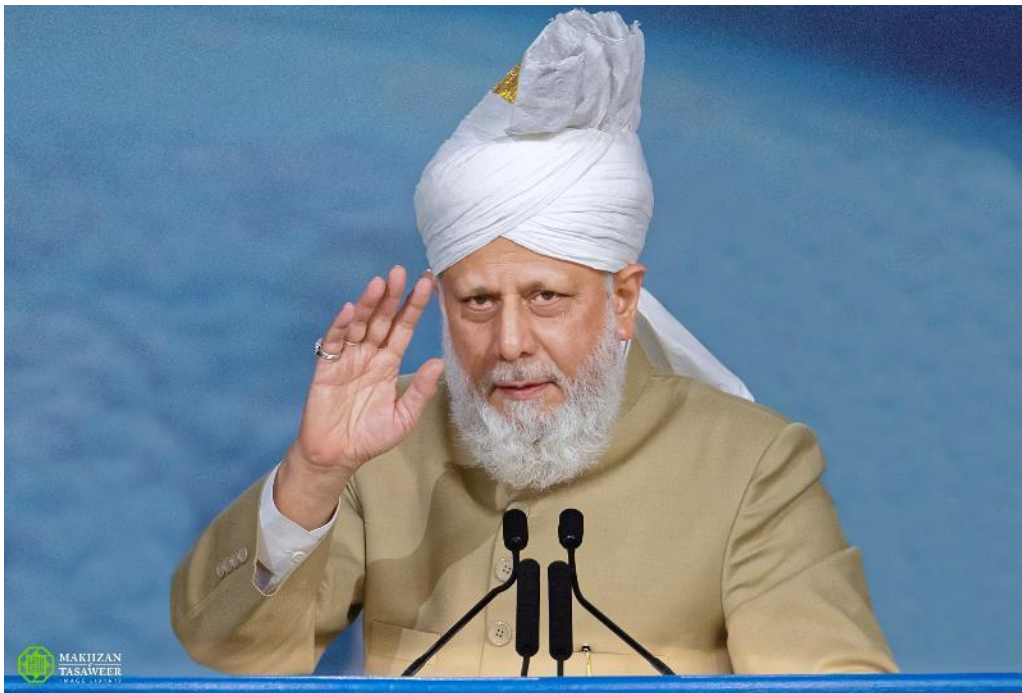
At the end of his faith-inspiring address, Huzoor led a silent prayer to conclude the Jalsa before announcing that, with the *Grace of Allah*, more than 38,500 people from 115 countries had attended the Jalsa Salana.

Thereafter, as per tradition, various groups performed *taranay* (poems) and *naaray* (slogans) in gratitude to Allah the Almighty were raised.

Each year, those final moments are amongst the most emotional of the Jalsa. They are moments when the thousands of Ahmadis express their love for

their Khalifa. A sense of unity and brotherhood pervade tinged with a degree of sadness that the Jalsa has ended for another year.

After the various groups had presented their poems, Huzoor waved goodbye to the Ahmadi Muslims in attendance and to those watching across the world on MTA.



Meeting with Turin Shroud scholars

Huzoor returned to his residence for a few minutes before returning to his office for meetings with guests at 7.30pm.

As I observed Huzoor, it was apparent he was happy. He smiled and joked with some of the guests and answered all of their questions. Above all, Huzoor's gratitude to Allah the Almighty that the Jalsa had concluded successfully was visible in his demeanour.

After granting several different groups the opportunity of a photo with him, Huzoor met a group of non-Muslim *Turin Shroud* scholars who had come to the Jalsa to display a replica *Turin Shroud* and to make various presentations under the *Review of Religions* department.

Huzoor initially spoke to *Barrie Schwartz*, the scholar who had been coming to the Jalsa for several years.

Huzoor said:

“This year there was a journalist who came to the Jalsa who strongly challenged your research (into the authenticity of the Turin Shroud).”

In response, *Barrie Schwartz* said:

“Yes, Your Holiness and we responded to the challenge!”

Huzoor smiled and said:

“I hope you robustly refuted his claims and questions!”

Mr. *Schwartz* informed Huzoor that some female scholars had come to the Jalsa for the first time.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“Yes, it is a pleasure to have them. In this room there are more men than women but the ladies dominate through their high intellect!”

Also, present was *Razwan Baig*, the founder of the *Al-Qalam* project and Huzoor asked him about whether people had come to participate in *Al-Qalam* at the Jalsa.

Razwan Baig sahib said:

“Huzoor, many people came and they particularly loved your beautiful Arabic writing in which you have written Surah Fatiha.”

In reply, Huzoor said:

“My writing is not at all beautiful but at least it is now done!”

Thereafter, one of the female scholars, *Emanuela Marinelli* from Italy, informed Huzoor that she had been to worship at a local church earlier in the day.

Emanuela Marinelli said:

“Whilst in the church I prayed that all Muslims become Ahmadi Muslims because then there will be true peace in the world! Also, I wish to mention that I sometimes read the Holy Quran and there are many verses I love and are beautiful.”

An English guest, a photographer by trade, asked Huzoor to pray for his daughter as she was not yet married.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“I think your daughter probably compares potential partners with you, as she considers her father to be her role model.”

The wife of the photographer, seated next to her husband, seemed surprised and said:

“Your Holiness, you are exactly right! My daughter actually often says that she cannot find a man who is the standard of her father!”

Huzoor’s comment was perhaps unexpected, as he had just met the man for the first time and had never met his daughter, yet despite not knowing the family, Huzoor’s analysis proved prescient and entirely accurate.

It was an example of how Allah the Almighty has given Huzoor the foresight and wisdom that enables him to personally relate to people of all backgrounds.

A long day

As the Turin Shroud delegation left Huzoor’s office, I took the opportunity to offer *mubarakbaad* to Huzoor regarding the Jalsa.

In reply, Huzoor smiled and said:

“My mind is feeling tired this evening, as I prepared three quarters of my address early this morning and since then it has been non-stop all day.”

Huzoor continued:

“Physically today was tiring as well, because I had to stand for two hours. First of all, I presented 114 students with academic awards at the Jalsa and then delivered my address.”

As Huzoor said these words, I felt emotional and saddened.

Not only had Huzoor presented over one hundred awards in the concluding session but a similar amount in the ladies session, a day before. Furthermore, Huzoor had individually signed the certificates awarded to each student, as well as signing a copy of the Holy Quran given to each.

It is a tradition that Huzoor himself re-established of giving educational awards at the Jalsa Salana and a manifestation of Huzoor’s desire for Ahmadi students to excel.

At the same time, with each year Huzoor’s age increases and though he never complains or objects, it seems the list of students increases each year.

Meetings with foreign delegations

Where Huzoor felt somewhat fatigued, as soon as subsequent groups, comprising guests from *Austria, Italy, Algeria* and *Ivory Coast* entered, Huzoor appeared fresh and met the guests with a lot of affection.

A guest from *Algeria* said that some Ahmadi had written articles condemning the Algerian Government for their treatment of Ahmadi

Muslims. In his opinion, this was not helping the cause of the Ahmadis in Algeria.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“In my sermons, I say that the situation in Algeria is not good for Ahmadi Muslims and they are suffering and so we should all pray for them. Perhaps, some Ahmadis have gone beyond this and written in their personal capacities but it has not been done at a Jamaat level.”

The guest also suggested that Huzoor send a representative of the Jamaat to appear on Algerian talk shows and on other media platforms.

Huzoor said:

“I would not mind but your own country would not allow an Ahmadi Muslim to be given prominent coverage in this way.”

Huzoor continued:

“Anyway, our message is that irrespective of our different beliefs, we should focus upon those things that unite us. To re-establish the great name and position of Islam in the world it is necessary that all of the different Islamic sects unite as brothers and join together in promoting peace in the world.”

Whilst meeting guests from the *Ivory Coast*, Huzoor heard an ambulance siren and, despite the fact that he was in the middle of a meeting, Huzoor gestured to me to go and find out what had happened.

A moment or two later, *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed sahib informed that everything was well and an ambulance on site had just switched on its siren to make way as it travelled through the Jalsa complex.

Nevertheless, the way Huzoor was concerned and worried illustrated his love and constant worry for Ahmadi Muslims and all the participants of the Jalsa.

Meeting with *First Nations* people

The next to meet Huzoor were a group of indigenous *First Nations* people who had travelled from Canada to attend the Jalsa.

During the meeting, Huzoor enquired about the literacy rate amongst *First Nations* people and also asked if they were able to maintain their traditions and own culture.

A *Chief*, representing the group, responded by saying that their culture and traditions had been '*stolen*' during the course of history but they were trying to bring them back. He said that one of their ancient traditions was *fasting*.

In response, Huzoor said:

“The Holy Quran states that fasting was prescribed to all of the prophets and there are many other common things if we all look at our histories. By focusing on the common things, we can improve our relations and this is a reason I asked the members of our Jamaat to meet the First Nations community so that we can show you that there are similarities between all of us and so that you can see what Islam is.”

Hearing this, the *First Nations Chief* replied:

“We were never included by others, rather we have always been excluded and so we appreciate that you have included us in your event. We are learning to ‘trust’ again and in you and your people we see truth.”

Another *Chief* informed Huzoor that the *First Nations* people tried to live like trees, as trees were ‘sinless’.

Upon this, Huzoor responded:

“If this is your philosophy then the best trees are those that give beautiful fruits.”

I understood from Huzoor’s comment that it was not enough to seek to be ‘sinless’, rather a person should seek to be virtuous and of benefit to others.

As the meeting reached its conclusion, Huzoor said:

“You should hold an annual event to bring your youth who live in cities to join together so that you remind them about their ancestral roots, values and traditions. We can send some members of our youth association, Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, to help you. It is important that you try to instil your values and heritage amongst the coming generations.”

As they left his office, Huzoor turned to me and said:

“It can be difficult to wear the paghri (turban) as it is heavy but the feather hats worn by the chiefs seemed even bigger!”

Whilst, in size the feather hats worn by the *First Nations* peoples were bigger, they also appeared relatively light and so my view was that the *paghri* worn by Huzoor remained heavier on the head.

Meeting with Canadian politician

Huzoor’s next meeting was a young Canadian politician, Stephen Lecce MPP, who had recently been elected as a *Member of the Provincial Assembly* in Ontario.

A few days earlier, Mr. Lecce had used his maiden speech in the *Legislative Assembly* to speak about our Jamaat. He had praised the Jamaat as reflecting the ‘*best of Canada*’ and strongly condemned the persecution faced by the Jamaat.

When he entered, Huzoor recognised him and said:

“I saw your video speaking about our Jamaat on social media.”

Upon this, Stephen Lecce MPP said:

“I am very grateful that you saw it.”

In response, Huzoor said:

“Rather, I should thank you for your kind words. It appeared that the entire assembly appreciated your words as well.”



Describing modern day politics as ‘divisive’, Mr Lecce said that Ahmadi Muslims were one group who brought society together.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“It is the purpose of Ahmadi Muslims to unite mankind.”

Mr Lecce asked Huzoor if he had any advice for him, as he remained a ‘new politician’.

In response, Huzoor said:

“The people elected you as their representative and so your main objective is to serve the people and to develop the area. Also, do not discriminate between your own supporters and opposition supporters – rather always treat them equally.”

Hearing this, Mr Lecce said:

“It means I should stop heckling Opposition MPs in Parliament!”

Huzoor smiled and said:

“In Parliament do what you like but when it comes to your constituents and the people of the nation you must serve them and treat them with love and care.”

The politician informed Huzoor that he was using social media to communicate with his constituents.

Upon this, Huzoor jokingly said:

“Don’t use it like the US President though, as he tweets so much that I do not know when he has any time for actual work!”

Meeting with USCIRF delegation

Huzoor’s next meeting was with *Reverend Johnnie Moore* from the United States, a *Commissioner* at the *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)*.

Another representative of *USCIRF* who had travelled to attend the Jalsa and was present was Dr Waris Hussein.

At the beginning of the meeting, Rev Moore mentioned his experiences at the Jalsa. He said:

“To be here and to experience the Jalsa was extremely moving and meaningful. I will not forget the Bai’at ceremony and nor will I forget the amazing message you delivered today. What I have seen here was the very best of faith.

“It is very surprising to me that some people try to shut down your message (through persecution) because your voice is antidote to the division and conflicts of this time. Also, I noted that several points you raised were very similar to the teachings of the Old Testament.”

In response, Huzoor said:

“If we believe that religion is from God then the basic teachings of each religion should be the same. This is why the Holy Quran has said that we should come together and focus upon those common things that unite us, instead of highlighting our differences.”

During the meeting, Rev Moore informed Huzoor that he had a personal relationship with President Trump.

Rev Moore said:

“Is there anything you would like me to directly communicate or convey to President Trump?”

In response, Huzoor said:

“The message is that the US Government and leadership should honour all religions and respect each and all. Further, those countries where the United States has some influence, try to guide them about the importance of religious freedom and to end the influence of extremist clerics.”

Thereafter, Rev Moore said:

“Your Holiness, if you met President Trump, I believe you would have a different opinion of him. He listens to religious people.”

As the meeting concluded, Huzoor said:

“If what you are saying is true that he respects religions and religious people, that is good.”

Thereafter, Huzoor stepped out of his office and met some new converts to Ahmadiyyat from Canada before returning to the Jalsa Gah for Namaz.

Following the conclusion of Namaz, Huzoor returned to his residence briefly before leaving Hadeeqatul Mahdi to return to the Fazl Mosque where he arrived very late in the evening.

Whilst a very blessed Jalsa had come to an end, Huzoor’s meetings with Jalsa guests were to resume the next morning.

Meetings with foreign delegations

On the morning of Monday 6 August, Huzoor held meetings with delegations, from *Cameroon, Spain, Algeria, Haiti, Kababir, Nepal, Singapore, Tunisia, Trinidad, Burkina Faso, Croatia, Iceland and Estonia*. The meetings continued for over four hours without any break.

During the meetings, Huzoor answered questions from the guests, listened to the reflections of the guests regarding Jalsa Salana and Huzoor conveyed the message of Ahmadiyyat to many non-Ahmadi and non-Muslim guests.

The smaller groups met Huzoor in his office, whilst the larger groups met Huzoor in the Mahmood Hall.

Spanish delegation

During Huzoor's meeting with a delegation from Spain, a Spanish lady said:

"Your Holiness, being at the Jalsa was an incredible and unique experience for me. There were so many different nationalities and ethnicities all living together so peacefully and harmoniously. Also, I saw that the Muslim women here were not oppressed but were completely free and I was so impressed by their high levels of education."

Another Spanish lady said:

"The Ahmadi Muslim women are all extremely firm in their faith. In Europe, generally, people are increasingly selfish and materialistic but I did not see that amongst any of the women or girls at the Jalsa."

A Spanish guest presented Huzoor with a pen, which he asked Huzoor to accept.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

"Jazak'Allah, we believe that a pen has far more power than a sword and so we are people who use pens to convey our message."

Another guest presented Huzoor with an olive plant.

Huzoor smiled and said:

“Thank you, that is good as now I will have various types of olives growing in my garden!”

As the meeting drew to a close, a Spanish lady said:

“I was very moved by seeing how the daughters and mothers at the Jalsa were so closely linked and had a very strong bond. This had a deep effect on me. Further, I took handwritten notes of all your speeches and I have re-read them and will continue to because your words are path through which I can gain inner reformation and will forever be a source of guidance for me.”

Meeting with Algerian lawyer

Huzoor also met an Algerian lawyer, who represented a number of Ahmadi Muslims who had been falsely charged or imprisoned in Algeria.

At the beginning of the meeting, Huzoor said:

“I have read every single report about our Algerian Ahmadi Muslims. I have read every file of how they are being treated. I know what false allegations have been made by the Jamaat’s opponents against the Ahmadis there. I know every detail. My only question is whether they will be given a fair hearing?”

I was struck by Huzoor's love and overwhelming concern for the Algerian Ahmadis. Rather than speak about other issues first or about the Jalsa, Huzoor immediately desired to know what could be done to better the situation of the Ahmadis there and bring an end to the persecution.

The lawyer said that the scale of the persecution was beyond comprehension. He gave the example of an Ahmadi woman who was compelled under duress to sign a document divorcing her husband. He described that the lady was in tears throughout.

As the meeting ended, Huzoor said:

"Thank you for striving for the rights of Ahmadi Muslims. For this, I am personally very obliged and grateful to you because I know that you personally have had to face pressure and opposition in your defence of us. May Allah help you in all your efforts."

In response, the lawyer said:

"It is my objective that Ahmadis are able to build Mosques in Algeria."

In reply, Huzoor said:

"In the short term that is highly unlikely but at the minimum we should be able to practice our faith as Muslims."

As the guest left his office, I asked Huzoor if he had been able to rest at all during the night.

In reply, Huzoor smiled and joked:

“Araam hi araam!” Meaning: ***“Rest and more rest!”***

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

“I reached home at 11.10pm last night and I went to sleep around midnight and was able to rest for a few hours before Fajr. What more rest do I need than this?”

Meeting with Kababir delegation

During his meeting with a delegation from *Kababir*, a young Arab Ahmadi Muslim told Huzoor he had found it very easy to wake for *Tahajjad* during the days of Jalsa Salana but found it much more difficult in his normal daily life.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“A person should be determined that they are going to offer Tahajjad and they should sincerely pray before sleeping that Allah wakes them up. If you follow this you will start waking up and develop the habit of regular Tahajjad.”

Another Arab Ahmadi informed Huzoor that he had recently visited Makkah and Medina but had not felt anywhere near the spirituality he had felt at the Jalsa Salana.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Recently, I saw a video clip in which some people were doing the Tawaaf (circling of the Kaabah) and whilst doing it they were slapping one another. This is the standard of their worship! If people are fighting during Tawaaf then how can any peace or spirituality ever be expected from such people?”



Another Arab man told Huzoor he felt ‘*spiritually cleansed and purified*’ after attending the Jalsa.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“If you have attained such spiritual purification you should consider it the Grace of Allah because there are some people who attend the Jalsa but return to their normal immoral ways as soon as they go back to their daily lives. Certainly, everyone should pray that they attain the spiritual cleansing and purity that the Jalsa atmosphere can develop and that they are able to remain steadfast on the right path in the long term.”

Nepal, Tunisia and Trinidad delegations

A small delegation of guests from Nepal also had the opportunity to meet Huzoor and amongst them was a police officer who kneeled down and said he wished to attain blessings by touching Huzoor's feet.

Upon this, Huzoor immediately and firmly stopped him.

Huzoor said:

"No, this is not permissible."

Then, Huzoor met him in a normal way by shaking his hand and lightly embracing him.

The way Huzoor stopped him showed that wherever there is anything that could potentially be *shirk* or considered a form of worship, Huzoor is extremely quick and firm in stopping.

During a meeting with a delegation from Tunisia, an Arab Ahmadi told Huzoor his age and said that he was now an '*old man*'.

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and said:

"You are a similar age to me and I do not consider myself to be an old man!"

Speaking about the growth of Ahmadiyyat in Tunisia, Huzoor said:

“It is good that the Jamaat is increasing in Tunisia but always act with justice and tread with caution so that you can avoid the problems faced by Ahmadi in Algeria. Always be careful.”

An Arab Ahmadi, who had just accepted Ahmadiyyat very recently, said:

“For more than twenty years I prayed daily after Fajr that the sun would rise from the West. Now, Huzoor as I see you and sit before you, I see that my prayers have been answered.”

The new Ahmadi was brimming with love for Khilafat and was extremely emotional. Nonetheless, Huzoor’s humility meant that he changed the subject immediately and asked the Ahmadi about his Jalsa experiences.

In his meeting with a delegation from Trinidad, the *Ameer Jamaat Trinidad* informed Huzoor that his wife had been extremely ill and doctors had said she would not be able to walk.

However, after writing to Huzoor for prayers his wife had made a speedy recovery, was now walking and had come to attend the Jalsa.

With a great deal of affection for Ameer sahib and his wife, Huzoor said:

“Not only can she walk, I think your wife can now run as well!”

Thereafter, Ameer sahib mentioned Huzoor’s forthcoming visit to the United States and Guatemala and asked Huzoor to also visit the Trinidad Jamaat during the same tour.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“You have made your request at the 11th hour and such late efforts cannot bear fruit. You should have asked me a year before like other Jamaats do.”

Press Conference with international media

During the morning session, Huzoor also held a *Press Conference* in which 22 journalists and media representatives from Europe, Africa, North, Central and South America and other regions attended.



The journalists had all travelled to London to attend the Jalsa.

An Argentine journalist asked Huzoor what his message to the people of Argentina was.

In response, Huzoor said:

“The Argentinians are people who remain religious minded and believe in God and so I would ask them to always remain firm in this belief. Always remember that God Almighty is Omnipotent and looking at your every act. If you fear God you will naturally fulfil His rights and discharge the rights of your fellow man. You will naturally be peaceful because Allah the Almighty has taught man to be kind. Further, no matter your beliefs or religion, seek to uphold basic human values.”

A journalist from Guatemala said it was a ‘privilege and honour’ for her nation that *Humanity First* was building a hospital in her country. She asked Huzoor why Guatemala was chosen for this project.

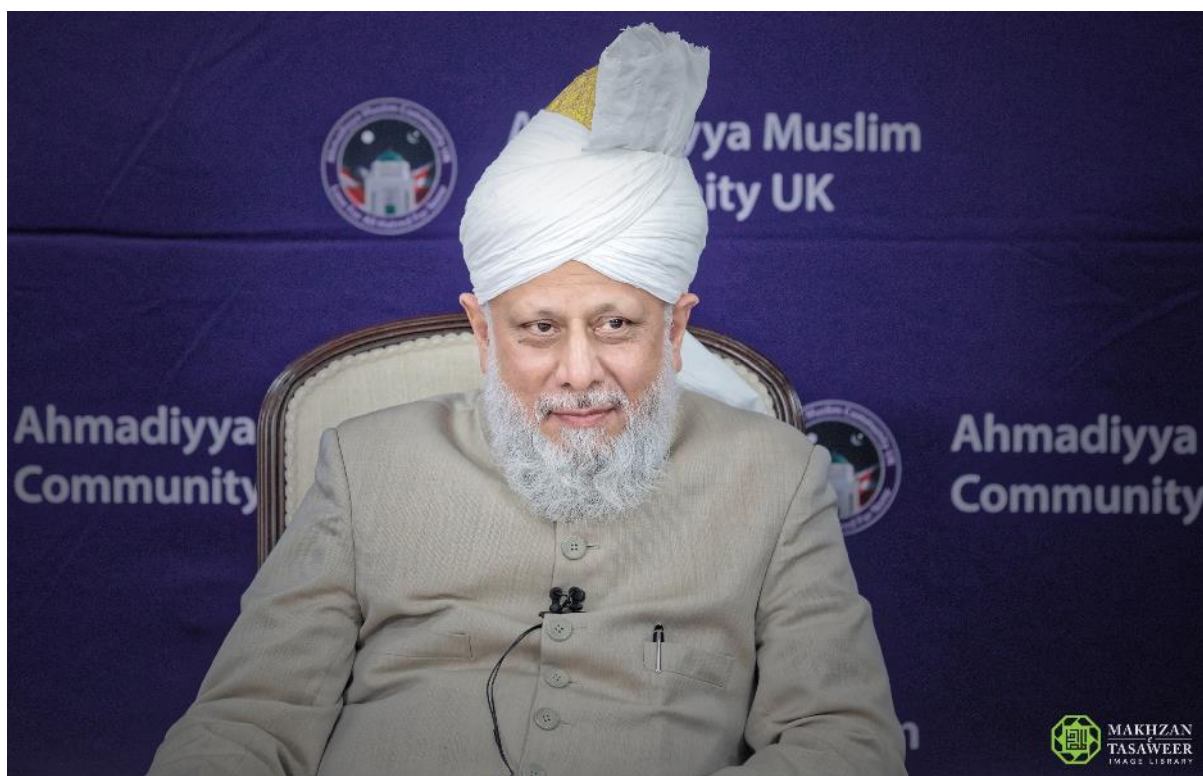
In reply, Huzoor said:

“We love all humanity and wherever there is a need we seek to serve mankind. In Guatemala, a local Ahmadi Muslim strongly desired that Humanity First build a hospital due to the pressing need of high-quality healthcare in that country. We will try to build in other countries as well wherever there is a need.”

A journalist from the United States asked Huzoor why the Jamaat had increased its Tabligh efforts in Latin America during recent years.

In answer, Huzoor said:

“Each endeavour and effort has its own time and so Allah put it in my heart that we should spread the message of Islam in Latin America with much greater effort than before. I want the hundreds of millions of people in Central and South America to hear the true teachings of Islam and I desire that our Jamaat is the one that removes all the misconceptions that have developed about Islam. This is the right time for this effort and so we have started and will continue, Insha’Allah.”



A journalist from Holland asked Huzoor about the anti-Islam Dutch politician *Geert Wilders*, who had been planning to hold a contest of drawing cartoons of the Holy Prophet (sa). The journalist asked Huzoor about whether such a competition should be permitted in the name of *free speech* or whether it should be stopped.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“I have said many times that if absolute free speech is necessary then why do anti-Semitism laws exist? If absolute free speech is the objective why do such limits exist? Even those who claim to believe in free speech acknowledge the need for limits. Certainly, I believe that there has to be some limits to free speech, otherwise enmities and hatreds between different people and groups will develop. The world needs love, not hate. So, holding such competitions that will offend and hurt the sentiments of millions of Muslims is wrong.”

100 letters

During Mulaqat the next day, I reported to Huzoor that a prominent British politician, Boris Johnson MP, who had recently stepped down as *Foreign Minister* of the United Kingdom, had written an article in which he had described Hijab in a very disparaging fashion.

He had written that women who wore the *niqab* resembled ‘letterboxes’ and that the *burqa* was oppressive.

In the past, Huzoor had met Boris Johnson on a number of occasions when he was the Mayor of London. Huzoor had accepted Mr Johnson’s invitation to *City Hall* and Huzoor had invited him to meet him subsequently at the Fazl Mosque. Regardless, it was clear that Huzoor found the comments made by Boris Johnson about Muslim women and their attire as offensive and inflammatory.

Immediately, Huzoor instructed:

“Tell Sadr Lajna UK that our Lajna should be at the forefront of responding to his comments in the media. Within the next 24 hours they should have sent at least 100 letters condemning his article and highlighting the importance of their faith and responding to his allegations. They should respond on social media as well.”

As instructed, over the next 24 hours, members of *Lajna Imaillah* wrote letters in droves and several of their letters were published in national newspapers.

As per the desire and instructions of Huzoor, Ahmadi Muslim women were at the forefront of responding.

Huzoor’s own granddaughter had a letter published in the *Daily Telegraph* and when I showed it to Huzoor he was pleased and read it carefully. Huzoor was even more pleased when he heard the report of how many letters by Lajna members had been published.

The next day, *Sadr Lajna UK*, Dr. Fariha Khan sahiba mentioned to me that a national newspaper was ready to print an article she had written in response to Boris Johnson’s article.

However, the newspaper had asked her to add a line saying she was ‘disappointed’ that Boris Johnson had not apologised and also that Prime Minister, Theresa May had remained silent on the issue. Thus, during Mulaqat, I asked Huzoor about this.

In response, Huzoor said:

“It is ok for her to write that she is disappointed that Boris Johnson has not apologised but there is no need for her to write against Theresa May. The Prime Minister is not linked to Boris Johnson’s article and did not have any input in his article and so it is unfair to target her.”

It so happened that just a couple of hours later, the Prime Minister, Theresa May condemned Boris Johnson’s article.

Thus, Huzoor’s wisdom and guidance had protected us from an embarrassing situation where a statement could have gone out on behalf of the Jamaat criticising the Prime Minister unjustly.

During those days, I saw first hand the pride Huzoor feels in the members of *Lajna Imaillah* when they take a stand in defence of Islam.

Huzoor greatly appreciated their writing and the different personal styles that each writer took to convey the same points – that Ahmadi women were proud to observe Hijab and were successful and well-integrated women.

Meetings with foreign delegations

On morning of 7 August 2018, Huzoor met with delegations from *Liberia, Indonesia, United States, Australia, Morocco, Japan, Brazil, Bolivia, Honduras, Sierra Leone, Belize, Uganda* and a group of African journalists who had broadcasted the Jalsa in their home countries.

During a meeting with a Liberian national *Senator*, Huzoor enquired how the Senator had come to know of the Jamaat.

In reply, the Liberian Senator said:

“The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is doing so much for our nation. When I need any medical treatment, I go to the Ahmadiyya Muslim hospital because of its high standard.”

Huzoor also met a group of Indonesian academics, most of whom were professors of Islamic studies.

As the meeting started, Huzoor said:

“You are all scholarly academics whose focus is on Islam and so I hope and expect that you did not find anything un-Islamic at our Jalsa?”

All of the guests gladly acknowledged that all they had seen had been according to the teachings of Islam.

Thereafter, Huzoor continued:

“From all over the world, Ahmadi Muslims come to attend the Jalsa and live together with a spirit of brotherhood and unity. This is exactly what is needed amongst the Muslim Ummah that we unite irrespective of sectarian differences. The Holy Quran has taught us to live peacefully with Christians, Jews and the people of other faiths and so why can we Muslims not live together in peace? Muslim unity is the key factor in

enabling the Muslim world to free itself from the clutches of the major non-Muslim powers.”

Huzoor further said:

“We believe in Allah the Almighty, the One God. We follow the teachings of the Holy Quran and have translated it into many languages. We follow the Holy Prophet (sa) and consider him our master and guiding light. The only difference is our interpretation of Khatme-Nabuwwat. Certainly, we consider the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) to be the true Seal of the Prophets and no one can take this title away from him. Till the Last Day he will have this status. Our interpretation though is that subservient prophets, under the banner of the Holy Prophet (sa), can still come. Despite this difference, there is no need for hatred or hostility amongst Muslims.”

One of the Indonesian academics informed Huzoor that he had checked the Holy Quran on display at the Jalsa and realised that it was the same Holy Quran and had not been altered in any way.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“The only difference is in interpretation on certain points but having such different views does not give a person the licence to attack those whom he disagrees with. If I claim to be a Muslim, no one has the right to say that I am not. If I wish to name my child Muhammad or any other Muslim name then no Government or authority has the right to stop me. You are Islamic scholars and so it is your duty to remove the false

misconceptions and to explain to people that Islam means peace. Don't limit yourselves as just 'teachers', rather be 'preachers' of the true Islam. This is how you can all become closer to Allah the Almighty."

As the meeting ended, Huzoor very affectionately said:

"I firmly believe that 'once a friend, always a friend' and so you will always all be my friends."

Meeting with United States delegation

Huzoor's meeting with a delegation from the United States, included a number of African American Ahmadi Muslims.

An 81 year old African-American informed Huzoor that he had been an Ahmadi Muslim for over 60 years but this had been the first time he had visited the UK Jalsa. As he told Huzoor this, he could barely contain his emotions.

An Ahmadi convert from the United States asked Huzoor about whether the national anthem should be sung at Jamaat events in the United States.

In reply, Huzoor said:

"If there is a law that states the anthem should be sung at such public events it can be done, otherwise it is not necessary to sing the anthem at Jamaat functions. Nonetheless, our loyalty to the country in which we live is and always will be a part of our faith."

In reply to another question, Huzoor mentioned that a *Four-Star General* from the United States military had recently visited the Jamaat Mosque in Baltimore.

Huzoor said:

“I saw the news report of the military General who visited our Mosque. If such a military leader comes to our Mosque to learn about Islam it is all well and good but we should retain our dignity and realise that it is not an honour for the Jamaat or the Mosque. Rather, the General may attain some blessings after visiting the Mosque and so it is an honour for him, rather than for us.”



Another question asked of Huzoor was how to prevent the love of Khilafat exceeding the appropriate bounds and becoming a means of *Shirk* (associating partners with God).

In response, Huzoor said:

“If any single Ahmadi worships Khalifatul Masih then let me make it clear that they are not real Ahmadis. The Promised Messiah (as) came to ensure that man turned towards Allah and worshipped Him alone and so if any person deviates from this, he or she is not an Ahmadi Muslim. Where Ahmadis take the Bai’at and pledge obedience to all maroof decisions made by Khalifatul Masih, it means they pledge obedience to follow all decisions according to the Shariah.”

An American Ahmadi asked Huzoor if he ever listened to music and how he relaxed.

In answer, Huzoor smiled and said:

“I do not listen to music and if I do get a few moments to relax I would prefer to catch up with some sleep!”

A member of the American delegation mentioned that the Jalsa started in Qadian in 1891 with just 75 people present and now there were over 38,000 who had attended this year’s UK Jalsa.

In response, Huzoor said:

“In 2008 in Ghana there were over 100,000 people who attended the Khilafat Centenary Jalsa and when the last Jalsa took place in Pakistan the attendance was around 275,000. We should all pray that in every

country the attendance of the Jalsa reaches hundreds of thousands, Insha'Allah."

An Hispanic lady from Los Angeles asked Huzoor to pray for the migrant children who had been separated from their parents by the American government at the US border.

In reply, Huzoor said:

"It does seem that the government does not have the right intentions and to separate a small child from his parents is completely inhumane. We can only pray for those families and especially the children that they are soon reunited with their parents and are able to recover."

An African-American Ahmadi lady told Huzoor that she had been an Ahmadi from 44 years and had only heard of the *Sanat-o-Tijarat (Trade and Industry)* office during the past year. She said she felt there was a need to activate the department, as many people could benefit from its services.

Expressing his disappointment, Huzoor said:

"Some secretaries or office bearers in our Jamaat think that their title is enough and enjoy the portfolio without doing any work. For such people we can only pray. Remember, if the auxiliary organisations are active it will ensure that the Jamaat benefits and increases its activities as well. As a Lajna member you should also push your Sadr Lajna towards ensuring all departments are fully active."

Another member of the American delegation asked Huzoor if Ahmadis could run for political office.

In response, Huzoor said:

“As a citizen you have the right to seek political office and if Ahmadi Muslims are involved it could help foster a just and fair environment and they will have a direct say in how the government is run. If you look back to the time before the anti-Ahmadi laws in Pakistan, several Ahmadi Muslims were elected in the assemblies and of course Chaudhry Zafrullah Khan sahib was the Foreign Minister of Pakistan. Thus, if you want to enter into politics go ahead, you may.”

An Ahmadi lady suggested to Huzoor that the US Jamaat should buy some land in ‘middle America’ and develop a permanent site for their Jalsa Salana, rather than holding it at a rented site.

Illustrating his great respect for the *Jamaat Nizaam*, Huzoor said:

“I will not impose this upon the US Jamaat or make a decision right now. Rather, you should send your proposal for consideration at the Majlis-e-Shura and I will then look at their recommendations. We should always follow the Jamaat’s system in such matters.”

An African American man, originally from Ghana, spoke to Huzoor with an ‘American accent’.

Huzoor could not fully understand his accent.

Thus, Huzoor said:

“If you speak with your original Ghanaian accent, I would understand you better.”

Upon this the man reverted to ‘Ghanaian English’ and Huzoor did easily understand his accent.

His question was whether a ‘Third World War’ could be avoided through prayer.

In response, Huzoor said:

“On several occasions it appeared that we were on the threshold of another world war but Allah protected the world and so yes prayers can delay but ultimately it seems a Third World War is inevitable so that mankind realise their mistakes and come to recognise their Creator. If you speed up your Tabligh efforts and convert half of your nation and the same in other countries it can be stopped, otherwise not.”

The meeting concluded when an Ahmadi asked if it was possible to send letters to Huzoor by email.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“If your letter is urgent you can send it by fax or post and put your email address on it and my office can send the reply on email.”

With a smile, Huzoor continued:

“I won’t give you my email otherwise I will get thousands of emails every day!”

“From whence I came, to where I am now”

One of the people from the United States to meet Huzoor was *Nasirullah Amin (70)*, an African American convert who now served as the *President of Milwaukee Jamaat* and as the *National Waqf-e-Jadid Secretary* in the United States Jamaat National Amila.

I really enjoyed spending some time with Nasirullah sahib. He had lived a life full of experiences, including living through the *Civil Rights* movement in 1960s America. His father was a Cuban and his mother was Jamaican. Having grown up in Jamaica he considered himself ‘culturally’ Jamaican but had sought to embrace his Hispanic roots in later life.

Speaking about his journey to Islam, Nasirullah Amin sahib said:

“I moved from Jamaica to the United States in 1963 and came to Milwaukee, Wisconsin where I still live. I was part of the ‘baby boomer’ generation and the 1960s were a very turbulent period due to problems with the economy, the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War. Though, I had a Christian background I never felt peace of mind and as I entered adulthood, I felt an inner turmoil. I roamed around trying to ‘find myself’ and became friends with a person who I did not initially know to

be a Muslim. After some time, he gave me the book 'The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam'."

Nasirullah Amin sahib continued:

"My friend told me and our other friends he was going to the 'Mission' and we asked what that was. It turned out it was the Ahmadiyya Mosque and he invited us as well. We saw him pray in the Mosque and it seemed very strange but as I read the book he gave me, I realised it contained the answers to the questions I had been asking myself. It was a remedy to the turmoil I had felt in my heart. As I read the book, I could see that I was living a state of Nafs-e-Ammarah (self that incites to evil). I was living in the time of the 'hippy', of 'free love', of marijuana. It was an animal like existence. The words of the Promised Messiah (as) were so deeply profound."

Nasirullah sahib continued to read Ahmadiyya literature which pulled him away from another path he had been set to embark upon.

Nasirullah sahib said:

"I had wanted to be a Communist but I started reading the books of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) and they were spell-binding. As I read, I felt the truth of Allah and realised that I was entering a life-changing phase of my life. Together, a number of African-American brothers accepted Ahmadiyyat and now almost 50 years later most remain Ahmadi Muslims and continue to come to the Jalsa. And this year, I and others

have had the special privilege to attend this Jalsa in the UK with our beloved Huzoor.”

As he mentioned Huzoor, Nasirullah sahib smiled from ear to ear and the great love he felt for his Khalifa was instantly evident.

Nasirullah sahib said:

“How beautiful it has been to see Huzoor and to be near him. My ancestors were slaves and so we have come from nothing and Allah the Almighty has brought us to the most prestigious and beautiful place on earth. We are with Huzoor who is the closest person to Allah in the world today. The elation I feel when I meet him is indescribable. Just a second in his company is enough to rejuvenate your faith. When you see him, you forget all of your pain and grief.”

Nasirullah sahib continued:

“Huzoor is noor (radiance). He is light. Though he is a normal human being, he is not an ordinary person. When you study the life of the Promised Messiah (as) and his successors you are left in no doubt that Allah is speaking with them and guiding them at every step. Huzoor is our compassionate father and no matter your status he makes you comfortable and feel loved. He is my father, my brother, my best friend and Ahmadiyyat has given me life and a true purpose. It has taught me how to live with my fellow humans and has instilled in me understanding, compassion, justice, kindness, truth, love, gentleness, integrity and peace.”

Suddenly the smile on the face of Nasirullah sahib changed into a look of sadness. Tears fell from his eyes. I asked what the matter was.

In reply, Nasirullah sahib said:

“As I thought of the blessings of Khilafat, I also remembered that there are some of our Ahmadi brothers and sisters who have never had the opportunity to meet the Khalifa. I pray for them that Allah has Mercy on them. A few have moved away from the Jamaat and I am restless and anxious about this. We are facing great trials and challenges as we live in the heart of the Dajjal but nonetheless the prayers of dear, beloved Huzoor give us hope. He is the rope that Allah has given us to hold on to. He is the nucleus, the lightning rod. Huzoor is the pilot who will fly us back to Allah the Almighty.”

Nasirullah sahib spoke again about the fact that he was a descendent of slaves.

Nasirullah sahib said:

“My forefathers were slaves but it is only in this era that we have gained true emancipation through the love of Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya. The Promised Messiah (as) and his Khulafa have given us the freedom which we struggled and yearned for.”

As our conversation ended, the gentle Nasirullah sahib who I had come to know reflected on what could have been his path if his friend had not taken him to the ‘mission’ all those years ago.

Nasirullah sahib said:

“As a young black man on the street, I could easily have become completely lost. I would have been in jail or dead long ago. I know this because many of the people I grew up with died young due to their drug addictions or criminality. Ahmadiyyat saved me morally, spiritually and physically.”

Nasirullah sahib continued:

“I truly believe that the only way to save America’s black population today is Ahmadiyyat and so this is our challenge to convey the message. In this effort, our Khalifa is fully supportive.

“Indeed, at a time where the black community are still looked down upon in America, Huzoor has appointed a black person (Maulana Azhar Hanif) as our Missionary in-charge! It shows how our Khalifa trusts us and is giving us the responsibility to change society for the better.”

I thanked Nasirullah sahib for his company and was grateful to have had the opportunity to spend some time with him.

As he walked away, Nasirullah sahib said:

“I can only be grateful to Almighty God, from whence I came, to where I am now.”

Meeting with Australian academic

On Tuesday morning, Huzoor also met with an Australian academic whose field of study was inter-faith relations between the major religions. He had met Huzoor in 2013, during Huzoor's last visit to Australia.

Upon seeing Huzoor, the Professor said:

“Your Holiness, we are meeting for the second time but I have aged quite a lot since then, whilst you remain exactly the same!”

Huzoor smiled and said:

“No, you remain young so don't worry.”

Subsequently, Huzoor and the guest spoke about how anti-immigrant extremist voices were on the rise in Australia.

The academic said that, increasingly, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim extremists were being given a platform to promulgate their views.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

“In such a climate, politicians must lead the way by displaying the highest levels of tolerance and respect. They should not say or do anything that could incite the public or create disharmony in society. It is a pity that people do not recognise the consequences of their actions. Undoubtedly, Muslim extremists have inflicted great harm but rather

than cool down the divisions in society, those who should be responsible have further fanned the flames and so we are seeing the dangerous re-emergence of the far-right in many countries. One example is the media which has portrayed Islam very unfairly and served to incite hatred.”

No time to rest

After further meetings with delegations from Morocco, Indonesia and Japan, Huzoor looked at me and said:

“Having to speak all morning in English with my paghri (turban) on has caused a headache.”

As Huzoor said this I wished I could do something to alleviate his headache or at least that Huzoor could have a few minutes to himself but just as he had spoken these words the next delegation entered his office.

I had noticed Huzoor adjusting his *paghri* quite a few times in the preceding hour but had assumed he was re-positioning it on his head but now I realised Huzoor had been holding his head and adjusting his *paghri* due to the headache.

Brazil, Bolivia and Honduras delegations

In a meeting with guests from Brazil, Bolivia and Honduras, a Brazilian male non-Muslim guest was visibly emotional.

The Brazilian guest said:

“Your Holiness, your address to the ladies on Saturday had a huge impact upon me. If only I had heard that speech 17 years ago, I would have been a far better father.”

In response, Huzoor said:

“Even if you are hearing it late, I pray that you come to see the happiness of your children always.”

A lady from Bolivia who had converted to Ahmadiyyat became very emotional as she started speaking. She said:

“I accepted Islam last September and I have come here to ask your prayers for me. I am the oldest sibling in my family and so have many responsibilities and personal struggles.”

In reply, Huzoor said:

“May Allah remove all your troubles and fulfil all your righteous intentions and may He help you always.”

Sierra Leone delegation

Huzoor also met with a large delegation from Sierra Leone, which included several Paramount Chiefs, Judges, dignitaries and others.

A guest from Sierra Leone told Huzoor that his view of Islam had completely changed for the better during the days of Jalsa.

In reply, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Thank God!”

Thereafter, Huzoor continued:

“This was not just made up or a false projection for just three days but this is how we live our lives every day, in every nation.”

A Paramount Chief said that attending Jalsa had emphasised the need for them to ‘reform’ and to be better leaders to their people.

In response, Huzoor said:

“As Chiefs you should highlight the duty owed by each person to God Almighty and to humanity. If you are able to instil these values then your society and chiefdoms will be peaceful, no matter how many different religions or beliefs they are home to.”

A former Judge representing the ladies attending from Sierra Leone said:

“The Jalsa Salana was an institution of inspiration and let me assure Your Holiness that we are going home laden with the beautiful and wise teachings that you have given us. You have wisely counselled us on the true teachings of Islam and have made us reflect upon how we should

fulfil our duties of practicing Love for All, Hatred for None. We were also stunned by the openness, warmth and kindness of the Ahmadi Muslim women here and the way that Ahmadi Muslims have devoted themselves to the Jamaat. This is certainly something that other Muslims like us must emulate.”

Huzoor recalled that the lady had attended last year’s Jalsa.

Huzoor said:

“I was very impressed last year by your eloquence and the way you express yourself. No doubt Allah has given you a brilliant mind and an excellent memory because you are able to retain and keep in mind everything that you see. If we have more ladies like you in the world the world can be reformed. May Allah the Almighty bless you.”

A life of service

The final meeting of Tuesday morning was with a delegation from Uganda led by the Ameer Jamaat Uganda, *Muhammad Ali Kaire*.

After their Mulaqat with Huzoor, I asked Ameer Sahib Uganda, a *Missionary* who graduated from Jamia Ahmadiyya in Rabwah in 1978, about meeting Huzoor and about his life serving the Jamaat.

Ameer Sahib Uganda said:

“My father was a convert to Ahmadiyyat and his greatest wish was to have a child who could read, interpret and teach the Holy Quran. Consequently, in every holiday period during my youth, my father would send me to the Jamaat’s headquarters in Uganda so I could increase my knowledge. When I would return, my father would learn from me as he himself was illiterate and after learning from me he would go out onto the streets and do Tabligh and tell people about the death of Jesus (as) and the truth of the Promised Messiah (as).”

Ameer Sahib told me that after graduating from Jamia Ahmadiyya he was sent back to Uganda by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) as a Missionary.

However, he was worried because during his absence from Uganda, Idi Amin had ruled his country with an iron fist and spared no efforts in persecuting the Jamaat. For example, our Jamaat Mosques were seized and handed over to the *Sunni Council of Uganda*.

Explaining what happened next, Ameer Sahib Uganda said:

“I was extremely perturbed about the situation back in Uganda but Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) told me not to worry. He said when you go back to Uganda, Idi Amin will run away and just as Huzoor predicted within 3 months of my return in 1979 Idi Amin was overthrown. Thereafter, it was my duty and challenge to recover the properties of the Jamaat that had been seized and with the prayers of Khalifatul Masih this was amazingly done within just two weeks!”

Despite the political situation improving, the influence of non-Ahmadi Maulvis continued and so the persecution of the Jamaat in Uganda continued for some years.

Describing the state of affairs, Ameer Sahib Uganda said:

“Due to the false propaganda against us, people would spit on us in the street and would make ridiculous claims that if a person accepted Ahmadiyyat they would grow a tail! It was all nonsense but people believed it.

“I used to go with a few boys for preaching and wherever we went the Sunni leaders and their followers would try to intimidate us and a few Ahmadis were even arrested. However, Alhamdulillah, with the passage of time and due to the prayers and guidance of Khilafat, the situation has completely changed. Now we are free, we live openly and even have elected officials who are Ahmadi Muslims.”

I asked Ameer Sahib about his meeting with Huzoor and in response, he said:

“Every time I meet Huzoor I become overwhelmed. It is quite remarkable but I forget all my vocabulary when I am before him and cannot speak. Yet inside all I feel is pure, pure joy and elation. Huzoor’s voice, his words, his demeanour are all so beautiful. To look at him is to feel comfort in your heart and your mind. I am of a similar age to Huzoor but in reality, I am his child and he is my father. Whenever I face any difficulty, whether in Jamaat affairs or in my personal life, I think of Huzoor’s love and all my problems instantly melt away.”

Meetings with foreign delegations

On the morning of Wednesday 8 August 2018, Huzoor met with delegations from *Philippines, Mexico, Tanzania, Guinea-Conakry, The Gambia, Nigeria, Comoros Islands, Egypt, Morocco, Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Guatemala, Cuba, Argentina, Marshall Islands, Guyana* and *Bangladesh*.

So many countries and so many groups! If you had asked me to pinpoint all of them on a map, I would have struggled.

Nonetheless, all the meetings were proof that the love of Khilafat and the message of the Promised Messiah (as) had reached every corner of the world.

A journalist from the Philippines looked around Huzoor's office and the hundreds of books that were stacked on various shelves and book cabinets before asking Huzoor if he had read them all.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“I have not read them all cover to cover but some I have read fully, whilst others I use occasionally for references.”

The journalist asked Huzoor if he was up to date with the politics of Philippines.

In response, Huzoor said:

“For the last few days, I was completely cut off from worldly things and focused only on spirituality and our Jalsa Salana. Thus, if there is a very recent development, I will not be aware.”

Huzoor’s answer illustrated how he had set everything else aside during the Jalsa period and was focused only on fulfilling the objectives of the Jalsa itself.

Mexican delegation

Several Mexican converts to Ahmadiyyat also had the opportunity to meet Huzoor.

A Mexican convert told Huzoor that his parents were elderly and so it was difficult to preach the message of Islam to them due to their advanced age. He asked if Huzoor had any advice for him.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Just tell your parents that you are Muslim and the reasons why you have accepted it. Tell them about those things that attracted you to Islam. Apart from this, make sure you pray for them and care for them to the best of your abilities. This is enough.”

A Mexican lady told that her friends had warned her not to come to the UK Jalsa. She was warned that she might be being lured to an *'ISIS camp'*! Even her family had tried to warn her off.

Telling her actual experience, she said:

“Whilst they warned me that I could get stuck in a terrorist camp, all I found was a centre of peace, love and affection. All questions that existed in my mind were all answered in the most wonderful way during these few days.”



Huzoor appreciated her words and told her to show her family and friends videos of the Jalsa when she returned so they could see for themselves the event so that any lingering doubts would be removed.

Upon Huzoor asking how she was, another Mexican convert to Ahmadiyyat broke down in tears and struggled to compose herself.

As I stood a few feet away, I kept thinking how incredible the love of Khilafat was and how it had penetrated the hearts of people in all parts of the world and, with the Grace of Allah, I was seeing it with my own eyes.

As she continued to cry, Huzoor turned to someone else so that she could compose herself. Then after a few minutes, Huzoor gestured to her again and asked if she would like to speak.

Having composed herself, she said:

“I am emotional at being in your presence and all I request is that you pray for my three children. Only one has done Bai’at and so please pray that the others also see the light of Islam.”

In reply, Huzoor prayed for her and said:

“I pray that may you and your children go on to play great roles in the future success of your nation and may you be pioneers of Islam in Mexico.”

An affectionate moment

That morning, Huzoor also met a delegation of Ahmadis from Tanzania and as he entered, a Tanzanian student from *Jamia International* in Ghana approached Huzoor and sought to embrace Huzoor.

Graciously, Huzoor permitted him to do so but due to his emotion and love the student did not let go.

Finally, after a few moments, Huzoor lovingly told him to sit as the young man wiped away his tears. Seeing the emotion, he felt at meeting Huzoor and being able to embrace him was extremely moving.

Thereafter, when the meeting reached its conclusion, the same Jamia student came forward seeking to embrace Huzoor.

Huzoor smiled and said:

“Bass aik dafa ho gya hai bachay.”

Meaning that he had embraced Huzoor once and that was enough for the meeting.

Huzoor’s use of the word *bachay* (child) to address the Jamia student was very beautiful and was an illustration of how *Khalifa-Waqt* considers the Missionaries of the Jamaat and the students enrolled at Jamia Ahmadiyya across the world as his children and certainly the way Huzoor addressed the Tanzanian boy was like a father would lovingly address his child.

An African representative

One member of the Tanzanian delegation was *Bakri Abedi Kaluta (61)*, *Naib Amir Jamaat Tanzania* and a long serving *Missionary* who had studied at Jamia Ahmadiyya in Rabwah during the 1980s.

At this year's Jalsa, Bakri Abedi sahib had the honour of placing his hand directly at the hand of Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) during the International Bai'at ceremony.

Later, I asked Bakri Abedi sahib how it felt to take Bai'at directly at Huzoor's hand, as a representative of the African people.

Bakri Abedi sahib said:

“When I received the news that I will take Bai'at directly at the blessed hand of Huzoor I was shocked and struggled to comprehend it. I could never have expected or imagined I would be so lucky. Those moments when my wrist was placed under Huzoor's own wrist and under the ring of the Promised Messiah (as) which Huzoor wears, I felt so fortunate and blessed. During those moments I felt that my prayers should focus on the entire African Continent, for the progress of the people and nations.”

Bakri Abedi sahib continued:

“The love and respect the African people hold for Khilafat is observed at all times and is even seen in many non-Ahmadis. This is nothing new but has always been the case. For example, in 1954 when Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) was attacked and stabbed in the Mosque in Rabwah, an African Ahmadi, the late Yusuf Dunia sahib said to our Pakistani Missionary in Tanzania that ‘We have been hearing that the Punjabis are extremely brave people but if they can't protect our Khalifa then the Khalifa should move here to Africa and we will Insha'Allah protect him properly!’”

Whilst in Rabwah Bakri Abedi sahib had served in *Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Pakistan* and had assisted Huzoor, who at the time was serving as *Mohtamim Beiroon* in Khuddamul Ahmadiyya Pakistan, which meant he was responsible for Khuddamul Ahmadiyya in countries outside of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

Speaking of those days, Bakri Abedi sahib said:

“Even now, so many years later, I remember Huzoor in Rabwah and how he would go around Rabwah, sometimes on foot, sometimes on bicycle. I learnt so much from him that helped me so much in my future work. It was never easy to trace Huzoor’s emotions since he was very much composed and stable in all circumstances. One thing I always observed was that Huzoor was extremely regular always in attending prayers at Masjid Mubarak and he would often keep his son, Sahibzada Mirza Waqas sahib, with him.”

Meetings with Guinea-Conakry and Nigeria delegations

In a meeting with *Governor of Religion* from the African country *Guinea-Conakry*, the Governor spoke of how the Jalsa had impacted him.

The Governor of Religion said:

“I am a Muslim and what I saw at the Jalsa Salana was true Islam in every respect. I saw a reflection of Muslim unity and of universal peace like I have never seen before in my life.”

In response, Huzoor said:

“You are the Governor of 1.6million people and so now you should convey to them what you have seen here. Remember that for any nation or community to succeed it is essential that there is unity amongst the people and they work together. Until tolerance exists no society can thrive and nor can democracy succeed without mutual respect. It is for these reasons that Islam promotes tolerance more than any other religion.”

During a meeting with a delegation from *Nigeria*, an extremely tall and heavy-set Nigerian Missionary entered Huzoor’s office with a large smile on his face.

He appeared to be bursting with happiness at being in Huzoor’s presence. In his joy, he also appeared confused as to whether he should sit down or remain standing.

Noticing his confusion, Huzoor jokingly said:

“You should sit in the chair – but don’t break my chair!”

The *Missionary* and all the other people in the room laughed a great deal.

Huzoor’s affection for the African people was apparent throughout his meetings with African delegations. Huzoor would listen to them, answer their questions and affectionately joke with some of them in a way that was

captivating and a means of increasing the bond of love between all of the Ahmadis and Khilafat.



A Nigerian Ahmadi informed Huzoor that he worked in the oil industry and, in response, Huzoor mentioned the huge corruption in the Nigerian oil industry.

Huzoor said:

“It is up to you as an Ahmadi Muslim to set an example of honesty and integrity. You must fulfil your pledge of loyalty to your nation and promote honesty amongst all people in the oil industry and amongst the rest of society. You should be a true patriot by leading the way in serving your nation and upholding the truth at all times.”

Ameer Sahib Nigeria showed Huzoor drawings of a *University* that the Jamaat in Nigeria desired to build. He informed Huzoor that they had built a gate on the land that had been purchased for the university.

Ameer Sahib Nigeria kept standing when speaking to Huzoor out of respect but Huzoor told him to remain seated. However, perhaps involuntarily, every time he spoke, he continued to stand.

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Ameer Sahib when you get excited then you stand! However, this is not yet the time to be excited. It is not enough to build a gate, rather the time to be excited will be when the first class of students graduate with honours from the Ahmadiyya Muslim University in Nigeria! My prayers are with you that Allah blesses this project and my instruction is that you should be vigilant and conscious to ensure that the cost of the project is kept to a minimum.”

An emotional few minutes

Huzoor met a delegation from Egypt and Morocco and spent a long period of time addressing them and answering their questions.

At the beginning of the meeting, Huzoor turned to an Egyptian Ahmadi, Fatih sahib. In the past, Fatih sahib had raised *naaray* (slogans) very passionately at Jamaat events but had not done so at this year’s Jalsa. Huzoor noticed this and asked why.

In reply, Fatih sahib said:

“In recent months, there had been some bad news received from Egypt regarding the Jamaat and so I thought it was not appropriate.”

Fatih sahib was referring to the fact that a few Arab Ahmadis, including a couple from Egypt, had left the Jamaat during the past year.

After hearing his reply, Huzoor said:

“That was more reason for you to raise slogans and to recite poems as it would demonstrate that most of the Ahmadi Muslims from Egypt are extremely sincere and devoted to the Jamaat.”

For the next few minutes, very lovingly Huzoor counselled the Ahmadis in attendance. Huzoor saw their pain and with his words and time, he comforted them and gave them reassurance.

Huzoor said:

“This is the way of the world that the vast majority of people can be sincere but a few who spread fitna (disorder) can cause great anxiety and disturbance. If you look at the world in general, the numbers of terrorists are few yet they have destroyed the peace of the world between them. In order to stop the fitna it is necessary that the sincere people speak out loudly to condemn the wrongdoing and mistakes of others. This is the way to drown out the false propaganda or claims that a few people try to spread.”

Huzoor continued:

“If there is anti-Ahmadi propoganda spread on social media then we should respond on social media and spread the truth. We should show the world that we are a united Jamaat and no matter what any individual desires or tries he can never break up our Jamaat no matter what. Consider such matters as an opportunity for Tabligh.

“Let people see both sides of the story and they can judge for themselves what is the truth. What is spoken or written from the heart has the most effect and so open up your hearts and show people the unparalleled love that Ahmadi Muslims have for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa).”

Huzoor further said:

“Just a few days ago, the ex-Foreign Minister, Boris Johnson mocked the niqab and our Lajna have sent over one hundred letters and the media pressure on him has increased. This is how the believers should respond – as one – and forever portray the truth. Every sincere Ahmadi Muslim should consider it his or her duty to respond to the lies or inaccuracies that are written.

“Where the Jamaat officially responds to something we do so in a factual way with the aim of educating but in personal capacities Ahmadis can speak much more openly, forcefully and emotionally and such efforts can have a hugely positive effect. At the same time, in your emotion do not ever go beyond what is decent. Your words should always be dignified, you should not mock others or use unpleasant language.”

Huzoor's reassurance and guidance was extremely touching and beautiful. It was apparent that the pain and grief felt by the Arab Ahmadi was being transformed into a spirit of positivity and hope through the love of Khilafat.

Thereafter, an Arab Ahmadi said:

“Huzoor, during your address on the first day of Jalsa, I felt as though I was swimming in heaven. You explained to us the beauty of prayer and though I am an Arab, I learned many new meanings of Arabic prayers.”

The man also informed Huzoor that his wife had said they should not name their new born son 'Masroor' as it was her opinion that it was not respectful to *Khilafat* to give their child Huzoor's name.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“This is wrong. Many Ahmadi children are called Masroor. The most honoured and respectful name is 'Muhammad' and yet we still give this name to our children. As far as 'Masroor' is concerned, I have myself named many boys this and so I am telling you that you should name your next son as 'Masroor'”

The Arab Ahmadi told Huzoor that he had not yet met with his new-born son, as he had been abroad at the time of birth.

Hearing this, Huzoor smiled and said:

“At least you know that your son has been born and is well. I was in Ghana when I found out that my daughter had been born in Rabwah whilst reading Al-Fazl one month after the birth!”

Huzoor continued:

“A few days before I read the Al-Fazl article, a person came up to me and actually said that ‘I heard you had a daughter’ and in reply I said to him ‘I do not know!’ and it was only from Al-Fazl that I received confirmation that Allah had blessed us with a daughter. Then, only after a further ten months did I meet my child for the first time.”

After Huzoor had narrated his personal story, another Ahmadi referred again to the fact that a couple of Egyptians had left the Jamaat recently. He said:

“Beloved Huzoor, please forgive us Arab people for our mistakes. We want to be servants of Khilafat and servants of the Jamaat so please do not ever turn us away from your love.”

The man was extremely emotional as he opened up his heart before his Khalifa. Huzoor’s response was even more emotional.

Huzoor said:

“My love has no nationality. Do not ever think that. I love every single Ahmadi, no matter from which country or ethnicity they come from. I pray for them all and worry for each one. My love is with you all and always will be, Insha’Allah.

“Even, I pray for those who have left the Jamaat or who have not yet accepted Ahmadiyyat that may Allah guide them. I follow the Promised Messiah (as) and he wrote in a couplet that he had enmity with no person and sincerely prayed for all mankind. I know you are worried but I also know the Ahmadis in Egypt are loyal and sincere.”

As the Egyptian delegation left Huzoor’s office, Huzoor told *Private Secretary*, Munir Javed sahib to wait a minute before sending in the next group. Then, Huzoor asked me to give him some water from a bottle that was placed on trolley behind his desk.

In between sips, Huzoor explained why the last meeting had been somewhat longer than some of the earlier ones.

Huzoor said:

“I gave the Arab Ahmadis more time than other groups because they needed reassurance and guidance on certain matters. Apart from this, I try to give more time to the poorer nations or where there are some local new converts to Ahmadiyyat like Mexico.”

Meetings with Eastern European delegations

Huzoor also held several meetings with guests from Russia and other ex-Soviet nations.



One of the guests to speak was a Russian Professor who mentioned how the Jalsa had deeply affected her. She said:

“The experience of being at the Jalsa was very strange – in a good way. I have never seen anything like it. The most amazing part was the mutual love amongst all the participants and I saw how Ahmadi parents and their children love one another. I saw how parents worry for the moral upbringing of their children and this is something that you do not see in much of the world.”

The Professor continued:

“In the heat, I wore a light scarf and found it very difficult and so I was shocked that Ahmadi ladies were wearing the burqa and had their faces covered. I kept wondering how is it possible for them to sit with such clothing but, at the same time, I also saw that these women were not suppressed or oppressed but were motivated by a firm faith and filled with a beautiful spirit. I saw that the Ahmadi women are independent and free – there is no doubt about it.”

As she said these words, Huzoor smiled and said:

“You had sympathy for our Ahmadi ladies but none for me, even though I had to wear this long coat and heavy turban all day long in the heat!”

As Huzoor said these words, everyone laughed and enjoyed Huzoor’s comment.

In reply to Huzoor’s comment, the Professor said:

“Your status is such that I knew you had no option but to wear the turban and coat!”

Two young sisters from former Soviet states, both of whom were less than ten, asked Huzoor if they could recite the Holy Quran. With Huzoor’s permission, they recited *Surah Al-Ikhlās* in a very melodious way. It was a very memorable few moments, where these young girls from Eastern Europe were able to recite a portion of the Holy Quran in front of Huzoor.

Huzoor was very pleased at their efforts and gave them each a pen and a chocolate as a gift.

As the meeting continued, another local Ahmadi convert from Eastern Europe began to cry silently, overwhelmed by his emotions at meeting Huzoor.

Though he was not speaking directly to him, Huzoor noticed his tears and so very quietly and thoughtfully, Huzoor took out a tissue and handed it to him so he could wipe away those tears.

Finding the right path

Whilst Huzoor's mornings were spent engaged in meeting the various delegations, the afternoon and evenings were spent meeting Ahmadi families.

Each evening, Huzoor would meet around 90 families in non-stop Mulaqat sessions.

Two of the people to meet Huzoor were two African-American ladies, *Khadija Ahmad (76)* from Dayton, Ohio and *Amatul Muid Anderson (65)* from Atlanta, Georgia. Khadija sahiba had attended the UK Jalsa after 33 years, whilst Amatul Muid sahiba was attending after 13 years.

Khadija sahiba told me she had accepted Ahmadiyyat over a half a century before in 1967. I asked her what had motivated her to accept Ahmadiyyat.

In response, Khadija Ahmad sahiba said:

“I accepted Ahmadiyyat as a result of certain dreams I saw and the books I read. I was particularly struck by the fact that the Promised Messiah (as) had said a person should pray sincerely for 40 days in their own language seeking the truth and they would find it. It took me just 15 to 20 days and I realised that Ahmadiyyat was the truth. I have now been Ahmadi for over 50 years and have faced opposition but never once did I doubt my faith in the slightest. All I can say is ‘Alhamdulillah’ that I found this path.”

Speaking about her Mulaqat with Huzoor, Khadija sahiba said:

“When I met Huzoor it was very difficult for me not to cry. It may sound strange to non-Ahmadis but I fully believe that Huzoor is the vicegerent of God and when I am with him, I feel in the presence of spiritual greatness. Just talking about Huzoor makes me emotional.”

Amatul Muid Anderson sahiba told me about what Ahmadiyyat had given to her.

Amatul Muid sahiba said:

“Since I found Ahmadiyyat, it has given me a new life. It has given me everything I ever needed. Growing up as a Christian, it never made sense to me that Jesus died for the sake of our sins as I was taught. I used to ask a lot of questions about this but I never received a satisfactory answer. Nevertheless, in my heart I always had a feeling that I would find a group

of people with whom God Almighty is pleased and they would worship God in the way that He likes. I also felt destined to meet people amongst whom there was no sense of racial superiority and having lived through the Civil Rights movement in the United States this was also important to me.”

Amatul Muid sahiba continued:

“When I first learned of Ahmadiyyat, I was determined that I would not be ‘fooled’ into a false doctrine like I had been with Christianity. However, every question I had was answered by Ahmadiyyat to my satisfaction and so I did Bai’at during the time of the Third Khalifa. I met him, I met the Fourth Khalifa and I have now met the Fifth Khalifa and they each had different personalities but common amongst them all was a spirit of love. And Allah has put the same love for each Khalifa in my heart. I do not know how Allah does that because it is not easy to love someone exactly the same but with Khilafat that is exactly what I found.”

Meeting with National Presidents and Missionaries

On Friday 10 August, after leading the Friday prayers at Baitul Futuh, Huzoor returned to Fazl Mosque and held a two-hour meeting with *Missionaries, Central Office bearers and National Ameer*s and Jamaat representatives from around the world.

During the meeting, Huzoor took a report from the representatives of dozens of Jamaats from across the world in relation to their Tabligh and Tarbiyyat activities.

He asked about their various Jamaat projects and about efforts to make contact with Ahmadi Muslims who had lost contact with the Jamaat in recent years. In addition, Huzoor gave various instructions and answered many questions.



The Ameer Jamaat of Sierra Leone informed Huzoor that their Jamaat had re-established contact with over 10,000 Ahmadi Muslims with whom they had lost touch for a long time.

In response, Huzoor said:

“In Africa, there are many sincere converts and I see this through their letters but at the same time there are thousands who have lost contact. Sometimes where contact is lost it is actually the fault of the Jamaat that our representatives did not make the necessary effort to stay in contact with Ahmadi Muslims who lived at a distance. Now you have reconnected with these Ahmadi Muslims you should not repeat the mistakes of the past but must make every effort to maintain contact and bring them ever closer

to the Jamaat. Our Jamaat representatives and Missionaries should go on regular visits throughout their countries and regions to meet the Ahmadis.”

Huzoor asked various Jamaats about their Tabligh activities and the USA delegation informed that one of their Tabligh campaigns was called *Coffee, Cake and Islam*, in which members of the general public were invited to discuss Islam over coffee and cake.

In response, Huzoor said:

“I have already told the USA Khuddam and Lajna that this campaign is ok if it helps to make contact with new people but it should not be just a social event where people come away thinking Islam is coffee or cake or tea! Rather, the primary aim should always be to tell people about the true teachings of Islam.”

After listening to a report from a representative of the Norway Jamaat, Huzoor said:

“Atheism, immorality and immodesty are spreading with great speed in the Scandinavian countries and so our Jamaats in that region should work extremely hard to reverse these trends and bring people back towards belief in their Creator and following His teachings. Similarly, anti-Islam sentiment is very high in those nations and so make leaflets or publish articles that relate to contemporary issues that will arouse the interest of people, even if they are not previously religiously inclined.”

A Jamaat representative from Africa informed Huzoor that ‘*orthodox Muslims*’ accepted Ahmadis as ‘Muslims’ in his country.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

“Why do you call them ‘orthodox’ Muslims? We, who have accepted the Promised Messiah (as) and returned to the true teachings of the Holy Quran and Holy Prophet (sa) are the real orthodox Muslims. Remember this point.”

The Jamaat representative replied:

“Huzoor you are right. In the past, I called us the ‘pristine Muslims’ but we are not just pristine we are, as Huzoor said, orthodox.”

After receiving a report from The Gambia, Huzoor said:

“Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) once said that The Gambia is a small country and so he hoped that Ahmadiyyat would spread quickly and that one day we could show what a true Islamic Government was in The Gambia. However, currently there are only 49,000 or so Ahmadis in the country and so the Jamaat needs to speed up its Tabligh efforts much more, so that the desire of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra) can be fulfilled, Insha’Allah.”

During such meetings, Huzoor expresses his expectations from the different Jamaats and encourages them. If Huzoor feels that some Jamaats are not fulfilling their duties to the best of their abilities, Huzoor reminds them of their responsibilities.

Thus, after hearing a report from the representative of one Jamaat, Huzoor said:

“Your Jamaat must increase its Tabligh efforts. You should seek to reach every corner and every town in your country. In recent years there has not been a proper concerted effort in Tabligh and so I am not currently satisfied with your Tabligh activities.”

During the meeting, Huzoor enquired of Ameer Sahib USA, Dr. Maghfoor Ahmad sahib how many further Missionaries were required in the United States.

In response, Ameer Sahib USA said:

“Huzoor, as many you as you can give.”

Thereafter, Ameer Sahib Canada, Lal Khan sahib, who was seated next to Ameer Sahib USA, said:

“Huzoor, if you give all the Missionaries from Jamia Canada to USA, there will be none left for us in Canada!”

Upon this, Huzoor remarked:

“Ameer Sahib USA asked that I give USA as many as possible but you have now suggested he was asking for all the Missionaries!”

Huzoor then jokingly said:

“Ameer Sahib USA’s request was fair and just!”

Upon this, everyone laughed, not least Ameer Sahib Canada himself.

I think everyone also enjoyed the beauty of how Huzoor interacted with his elder brother and pointed out that his request had not been to take all the Missionaries but only as many as Huzoor could give.

The meeting concluded as a Missionary serving in South America said:

“The Promised Messiah (as) taught that where there are no Ahmadis and you want to spread Islam you should build a Mosque.”

Before he reached his actual question, Huzoor interjected knowing what was coming next.

Huzoor said:

“I have no objection. Find some land and then send a report to me about the feasibility. After quoting the Promised Messiah (as) to me do you think I would say anything different?”

Huzoor said this with a smile but I certainly felt that there was no need to quote the Promised Messiah (as) in this way. Rather, it would have been better just to make a request for permission to build a Mosque.

Huzoor's knowledge and understanding of the Promised Messiah's (as) teachings and his desire to spread Islam is such that Huzoor does not need any reference to support a Mosque project.

Huzoor just needs to know the ground situation and whether the costs and circumstances are feasible.

Following the meeting, Huzoor graciously sat for photos with all the delegations and central offices. As I serve in the *Press & Media Office*, I also had the opportunity to have a photo with Huzoor. I felt embarrassed to take a few more seconds of Huzoor's precious time but at the same time very grateful to have the opportunity, *Alhamdulillah*.

Eating less

Following the meeting, Huzoor had dinner with the delegates. Over the weekend, Huzoor also attended two lunches hosted by the UK Jamaat and by the Pan-African Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK.

Recently, I mentioned to Huzoor that where possible I prefer to eat at home, rather than at Jamaat events. I said that even if it means eating late, I prefer to eat at home.

Hearing this, Huzoor said:

"Yes, I also prefer to eat at home. Sometimes, people say 'We eat so much whenever there is a dawat (invited dinner) but for me it is the opposite.

When I am in front of people, I cannot bring myself to eat much at all. Whereas, if I am at home, I eat more freely.”

When Huzoor said this, I thought of how there are many sacrifices he makes for our sake that we are unaware of.

This was just one example, where for the sake of the happiness of the members of the Jamaat, Huzoor would regularly attend dinners hosted by various departments within the Jamaat or the wedding dinners of many Ahmadis.

The average person has plenty of personal time to spend with their family or in privacy but for Huzoor one of the only times he may have for privacy or family time are meal times and even those he regularly leaves in order to fulfil the request of the Jamaat or individual Ahmadis.

Meetings with foreign delegations

On Saturday, August 11, Huzoor’s meetings with various delegations continued. Huzoor met with delegations from *Guadeloupe, Paraguay, Uruguay, Jamaica, Ghana* and a group of Missionaries or Jamaat workers serving under *Raqeem Press* in various African countries.

One of the people to meet Huzoor was a new convert from Guadeloupe, who told Huzoor that the Jalsa had been like a ‘huge machine, working without any flaws or breakdown’.

After hearing this description, Huzoor replied:

“Now you are part of the machine and should be our representative in Guadeloupe. So along with your own moral training you should immediately focus on spreading the message of Islam to your people.”

The new convert said that the task Huzoor gave him was ‘not easy’ as Christianity was the dominant religion in Guadeloupe.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Do not think this is only a challenge in Guadeloupe, rather this is the challenge facing our Jamaat in all parts of the world. However, we will never take a step back but we accept this challenge and consider it our duty to manifest the truth of Islam to the people of the world. This is our mission and we will not give up.”

Huzoor continued:

“For you, I would suggest that you start Tabligh to your family and friends and then move on to others. There is no compulsion in religion and so everyone is free but your own personal example should be so good that people are naturally attracted by your personality like a magnet. This is the way to draw them towards Islam.”

Paraguay and Uruguay delegations

During his meeting with guests from *Paraguay*, a young Ahmadi convert, Raquel, a final-year medical student, introduced herself to Huzoor. She said:

“I am from a Jewish background and I converted to Ahmadiyyat this year. Reading the books of the Promised Messiah (as) was a life-changing experience for me. In particular, his book *The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam* was the most beautiful thing I have ever come across in my life.”

Another guest from Paraguay informed Huzoor that women were routinely maltreated in Paraguay and that domestic violence was prevalent.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“May Allah protect you and protect all the women of your nation from such abuse and violence. Our Ahmadis should speak up and tell people that, irrespective of religion and belief in God, we must all uphold the basic human values and treat one another with compassion and love.”

Turning towards the Ahmadi men in the room, Huzoor said:

“All of the Ahmadi men in Paraguay once married must set the highest and best examples of treating their wives with love and kindness. This is what I hope and expect from all of you.”

A 61 year old Paraguayan convert informed Huzoor that he had reached an age where he could retire and take a pension. He said his desire was to serve the Jamaat full time, whilst funding himself and not taking a penny from the Jamaat for his service.

Appreciating the spirit of the Ahmadi convert, Huzoor said:

“Your desire and spirit is very good Masha’Allah. Now you should go back to Paraguay and increase your knowledge of Islam and then I will give you the duty to go out and serve Islam by spreading its teachings to the people of your country. May Allah the Almighty bless your efforts in every respect.”

The man, a recent convert, seemed extremely emotional to have received this task directly from Huzoor and determined to fulfil Huzoor’s instructions.

An Ahmadi convert from South America asked Huzoor if he ever had any inkling in his life that one day he would be elected as Khalifatul Masih.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Never once did I have any such thought. I was a humble Waqf-e-Zindighi (life devotee) who was posted to Africa and sent to serve in our Ahmadiyya schools and to develop some agricultural projects. Then suddenly I was re-posted to Rabwah by the Fourth Khalifa and served in the Maal (Finance) office for some time. Then I got the order to take charge of the Taleem (education) department in Rabwah and so I started work there. After some time, I was then instructed to take charge of our

Jamaat's central body in Rabwah as the Nazir-e-Aala and so I did this duty. During that time, I was sent to jail for some days as well on false charge and I believed that I would be in jail for the rest of my life."

Huzoor continued:

"Allah had mercy and so I was released from jail and the magistrate who had charged me, rescinded the case himself. In fact, the magistrate actually became my friend and if he ever comes to London he contacts me. I now joke with him that because of you I got stuck in jail!"

Continuing to narrate his personal story, Huzoor said:

"In 2003, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) passed way and I was a member of the electoral college and so I came to London for the election but intended to return to Rabwah after a few days. It never entered my mind even for one second that I will be elected as Khalifatul Masih but this was Allah's Will and so since that time I am here in London discharging this duty to the best of my abilities."

Huzoor continued:

"Apart from my Jamaat duties, in my life, I always considered myself to be a humble farmer and so how could I ever have thought that such a heavy duty will be placed upon my shoulders one day?"

A guest asked Huzoor about his time in Ghana. Specifically, he asked whether Huzoor had more time to pray in isolation whilst in Ghana.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“My workload in Ghana was extremely heavy. I used to have to regularly travel 60 miles on a very slow tractor on uneven roads for my work. The conditions in Ghana were much worse than they are today. It was a tough life and not easy. Yes, there were many opportunities for me to pray and worship but the opportunities for prayer and worship are everywhere. No matter where in the world I am, I bow down before my Creator and always have.”

A pioneer Ahmadi

After the meeting, I met with *Raquel Garcia*, the medical student who had accepted Islam. I asked her how she had come to accept Islam and the challenges she had faced.

Raquel sahiba said:

“I was born in a Jewish family and went to a Catholic school but neither of these religions ever satisfied me. I felt lonely all my life. I researched Buddhism and then took interest in the Protestant Church but I always found those religions to be rigid, whereas in my mind I always believed that God Almighty was a Loving God.”

Raquel sahiba told me that she took an interest in Islam after a visit to Egypt and so upon returning to Paraguay she started to research further and came across our Jamaat through social media.

She began to meet our Missionary and his family and, as she had told Huzoor, it was reading *'The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam'* that altered the course of her life and brought her towards Islam.

Raquel sahiba said:

"All the questions that I had struggled with in my life were answered in that book. Everything written seemed right and it motivated me to start reading the Holy Quran and to learn Salat. After 7 or 8 months, I realised that Ahmadiyyat was true and I took Bai'at. Of course, there were many challenges I faced and still face. My father is Jewish and he told me that all Muslims were 'bad' and initially he was shocked and disapproving when he saw me observe Hijab. Thankfully, after some time, my family's tone became softer and they said that 'if Islam makes you happy then you are free to live your life as you choose'."

Speaking about how *Hijab* was viewed in Paraguay, Raquel sahiba said:

"Now I observe Hijab, my fellow Paraguayans look at me as though I am weird and strange. Occasionally, I get comments such as 'Go to Arabia!' but such comments have made me stronger in faith. They are judging me without knowing me and so it is my job to educate them and I am trying. Initially, it was very difficult but over time people came to realise that I am a good person and some have even praised me and said that they see decency in me and that they have learned from me that there is no extremism in Islam and that I am not someone who has been brainwashed, as they had feared. In the hospital where I work people ask questions and so I consider it an opportunity to do Tabligh."

Having accepted Ahmadiyyat in Paraguay, where the Jamaat remained small and in its early stages, Raquel sahiba had been amazed and overwhelmed by the scale of the Jalsa Salana UK.

Raquel sahiba said:

“Attending the UK Jalsa was perhaps the single most beautiful experience of my entire life. It has increased my faith many times over and I am now more certain than ever that Islam is the right path and the path on which I am determined to live my life. At the Jalsa, I met so many people, from so many countries, each with their own culture, yet we all prayed and worshipped in the same way. I have made new sisters from all over the world and many people have invited me to visit their Jalsas in different parts of the world. I am just sad that the time is coming to return back home and that this experience is almost over.”

Regarding her meeting with Huzoor, Raquel sahiba said:

“I was so nervous to meet Huzoor. I felt as though my heart had stopped when I was in his presence. I swear I have never met anyone in my life who has given me such feelings of inner peace. In my field of work, I see a lot of tragedies but Huzoor has given me the feeling that everything will be ok. He is so bright, so calm and so humble. He has unified us and truly cares about us. In our meeting, Huzoor gave time to every person and asked us about our experiences and our lives. In front of me, Huzoor told the men that they must treat women with respect and I could feel how much Huzoor values women.”

Raquel sahiba continued:

“Huzoor has given me the power and inspiration to tell the world that Islam has given full rights to women. My Khalifa has said that women are precious and he teaches us with his example and is not just speaking words but acting upon them. He is a true leader.”

Our meeting ended as Raquel sahiba told me about her passion and determination for Tabligh. She said:

“I want to tell others how perfect Islam is and how it has transformed my life. If you have something precious you want to share it with others and this is how I feel about Islam. I want my countrymen and women to know Islam’s beauty. We have just started in Paraguay and there is a long way to go but already we are seeing the blessings of Huzoor’s guidance. In our Jamaat, apart from the Missionary and his wife, all the Ahmadiis are local Paraguayan people and we are supporting each other. We feel proud that we are the pioneers of Ahmadiyyat in our nation.”

Also present was our Missionary in Paraguay, *Ghalib Baten*, a graduate from Jamia Ahmadiyya Canada.

As I got up to leave, Ghalib sahib said:

“I am a very fortunate person because I was able to spend 6 or 7 months with Huzoor here in London after graduating from Jamia Canada. Our class had long meetings with Huzoor and saw and felt his love and learned so much from him. Now, as a Missionary, I do not fear anything

or anyone or any punishment except I fear disappointing my beloved Huzoor. If ever I disappointed him I know that my grief and sorrow would be unbearable.”

Hearing this, Raquel sahiba said:

“I have just met Huzoor once and already I feel that I never ever want to disappoint my Khalifa. Huzoor is a gift from Allah and you love him the moment you see him and my heartfelt desire is for my Khalifa to be happy with me. That is all.”

Meeting with Ghanaian delegation

Huzoor’s meetings continued when he met a delegation of Ahmadis from Ghana, including a Ghanaian lady who praised the food served at Jalsa Salana UK.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“Yes, but I am sorry we could not serve you your traditional Ghanaian foods like fufu, yam and cassava!”

Huzoor continued:

“At the Ghana Jalsa, the cooking is done by the women whilst here at the UK Jalsa it is done by the men. Even at Jalsa, the Ghanaian men do not give you ladies a break so that you can listen to the Jalsa in peace!”

Huzoor also mentioned that at the Ghana Jalsa food was not provided centrally but people used to bring their own food or each local Jamaat brought their own food.

Upon this, Ameer Sahib Ghana said:

“Huzoor, since last year we have started serving food at the Jalsa centrally and have established a langhar (kitchen) at the Jalsa for this.”

In response, Huzoor said:

“I am very happy to hear this. This is how it should be at our Jalsas that food is provided centrally to all the participants.”

A Ghanaian Ahmadi said that the Ahmadis in Ghana were anxiously waiting for Huzoor to come to Ghana.

In reply, Huzoor said:

“For how long do you wish that I come to Ghana?”

Without pause, the Ahmadi eagerly said:

“Huzoor – you should come for life! Come and live in Ghana!”

Huzoor smiled and said:

“I don’t think I will come for life but I do like the Bagh-e-Ahmad site where you hold the Jalsa and so if I come to Ghana I can stay there, as that will enable the Ahmadis living in rural areas to come and to see more easily and for us to be together.”

A few moments with Huzoor

In my Mulaqat with Huzoor later in the day, I began by giving some media reports and news stories but after a minute Huzoor told me to stop.

Huzoor said:

“Aaj kal Jalsa ke din hai, iss liya tum meray saath Jalsa ki baatein kiya karo.”

Meaning:

“These days are the Jalsa days and so you should talk to me about Jalsa.”

Huzoor’s comment reflected his love for the Jalsa atmosphere and spirit and how he did not desire to talk of worldly matters.

I informed Huzoor that an Ahmadi journalist had written an article about the Jalsa but that his editor had been unwilling to call the Jalsa a ‘Muslim’ convention.

The Ahmadi journalist had been perturbed by this and during the week he had spoken to me on a few occasions, asking whether it was worth publishing and expressing his frustration that the media organisation he worked for had taken this stance.

After hearing of the issue, Huzoor said:

“Don’t worry that they did not say ‘Muslim’ convention, at least the article was a good introduction to our Jamaat. We should always act with wisdom, rather than insisting that everything the media writes is perfect. They are not our brothers or family that we should expect such sincerity from them.”

I also informed Huzoor that my wife Mala and our two children Mahid and Moshahid had gone away for a couple of days with my in-laws who had come to attend the Jalsa.

I mentioned how in the morning, before they had left, Mahid had said something that had both made me laugh and also rather scared!

As they were leaving, I had said to Mahid that I would see him in two days, *Insha’Allah*.

In reply, Mahid had said:

“No, I want to go for 100 days!”

Upon this, I had said:

“Mahid, if you go for 100 days then I will be sad and miss you.”

At this, Mahid said matter-of-factly:

“Don’t worry, because in the end we will all be together with Allah Mian!”

Hearing Mahid’s comment, Huzoor laughed and joked:

“Mahid bara naik ban gya hai!”

That:

“Mahid has become very pious!”

T.I. College Moshaira

One of the final formal events attended by Huzoor during the days of Jalsa UK was a *Moshaira (poetry session)* held in the Mahmood Hall at the Fazl Mosque on the evening of 14 August.

The event was hosted by the *Talim-ul-Islam (TI) College Old Students Association*.

I was kindly invited to attend the event by the well-known Ahmadi poet, Mubarak Siddiqi sahib, however I did not initially plan to attend because a lot of Urdu poetry goes over my head.

However, later on I learned that there was a chance that Huzoor might grace the occasion with his presence and so I changed my mind immediately and decided to attend.

By chance, a few hours before the event, when I entered Huzoor's office for Mulaqat, Huzoor asked me if I was invited to the Moshaira.

After I told Huzoor that I was, Huzoor smiled and said:

“Will you be one of the poets representing the Markaz?”

In reply, I said:

“Huzoor, if I am one of the poets, I can guarantee that the event will be a disaster!”

Upon this, Huzoor laughed and said that he would attend the *Moshaira* for a few minutes after the conclusion of Mulaqats.

With the confirmation that Huzoor was going to attend, I looked forward to the event and at 8.05pm, Huzoor arrived and stayed for 25 minutes and listened to the poetry of several Ahmadi poets from various countries.

Some couplets I understood, others I did not but for me the highlight was to look in the direction of beloved Huzoor and seeing his beautiful and radiant smile and his appreciation of the poetry being recited.

Conclusion

Alhamdulillah, Jalsa Salana UK 2018 had proven extremely blessed. With each day that passed, the number of Jalsa guests steadily declined, as Ahmadi Muslims returned to their home countries.

In the preceding days and weeks, I had watched and observed as Huzoor had exhibited his love to people of all ages, of all races, of all nationalities.

Where the faith of thousands of Ahmadi was reinvigorated through the blessings of Jalsa, many other people from outside of the Jamaat were drawn towards Islam and towards the truth of the Promised Messiah (as).

Over the next days, Huzoor's schedule remained extremely busy. On 22 August 2018, Huzoor led the Eid-ul-Adha prayers and then a few days later a dinner was held, especially on Huzoor's instruction, for the thousands of volunteers who had done duty at the UK Jalsa.

As the sun set on this year's Jalsa Salana UK, one thing was for certain, that the blessings of Allah the Almighty would continue to rain down upon our Jamaat. Indeed, just a few days later, Huzoor would travel to Germany and to Belgium to grace their Jalsas with his presence.

I hoped and prayed I would be able to accompany my beloved Khalifa on what was sure to be a very blessed tour.

End of Part 2

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