

# **HUZOOR'S TOUR OF GERMANY & BELGIUM 2018**

## **Part 2**

### **A Personal Account**

*By Abid Khan*

## **Introduction to Part 2**

In *part 1* of this diary, I wrote about the first week of Huzoor's tour of Germany in September 2018. In this part, I write about the final few days of Huzoor's visit to Germany and then about his visit to Belgium, where Huzoor also graced the Jalsa Salana with his presence.

During the final days of the tour, Huzoor met with many guests, dignitaries, media, as well as hundreds of Ahmadis.

Many meetings were extremely emotional and faith inspiring. I consider a great blessing to have attended and to be able to recount some details in the coming pages.

### **A healing hand**

One day, during the Germany Jalsa, I heard Mansoor (Huzoor's grandson) had not been feeling well. When I saw him, later in the day, I asked him how he was.

In response, Mansoor said:

***"I wasn't feeling well at night and in the morning. I could not sleep at all until around Fajr time because I had a splitting headache. However, after Fajr, Huzoor came to see me and he gave me a glass of milk mixed with honey and also gave me paracetamol. After that, I was finally able to sleep and when I woke up I felt better."***

It was a beautiful and rare insight into how Huzoor continues to care for his family and loved ones and fulfils his familial duties despite being so busy.

In fact, anyone who has seen Huzoor from close range will testify to the fact that the way Huzoor cares and loves for his family is an example for all mankind.

Like in every other aspect of his life, Huzoor follows the noble example of the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) and the Promised Messiah (as).

I was glad Mansoor was feeling better and I said to him that I was sure Huzoor would have prayed for his quick recovery.

Upon this, Mansoor told me an incident from a few years before, when he was in *Year 10* at school.

Mansoor said:

***“I was selected to take my Maths GCSE exam a year early but the night before the exam I became very unwell. I had a terrible migraine and high fever. My mother (Sahibzadi Amtul Waris Farah Fateh) was very worried and so she informed Huzoor and later in the evening Huzoor came to our flat to meet me. He asked me how I felt and in reply I said ‘I feel awful’.”***

As he remembered telling Huzoor how ill he felt, Mansoor started to laugh and said:

***“I am not joking Abid chacha, I actually felt like I was dying!”***

Continuing to narrate the story, Mansoor said:

***“Then, Huzoor gently placed his hand on my forehead for a few minutes. After those few minutes, suddenly Huzoor said ‘Don’t worry you will be absolutely fine’ and then left me to rest.”***

Mansoor told me how sitting his exam was the last thing on his mind but soon after Huzoor left his room, he fell asleep.

Mansoor said:

***“I slept uninterrupted for some hours and when I woke up I was completely fine and cured and it was as though I had never been unwell at all! My mother asked me if I could do the exam and I responded saying ‘Yes, of course, I am completely fine!’ I went to school and took the exam and, with the Grace of Allah, I got an A-star grade in that GCSE exam!”***

It was remarkable and faith inspiring to hear Mansoor’s story. How, he had been so unwell and Huzoor came and touched his head and after doing so told him he would be completely fine.

Just as Huzoor had said, he woke up with no sign of illness and in the end received the best possible grade in an exam that just a few hours before seemed impossible for him to take.

### Lajna Session at Germany Jalsa

On 8 September 2018, we had reached the second day of the Jalsa Salana Germany, during which Huzoor's activities continued throughout the day.

Huzoor addressed *Lajna Imaillah* before delivering an address in English to the guests of the Jalsa and then in the evening Huzoor held various meetings.

During his address to Lajna, Huzoor spoke of the great and historic sacrifices made by women throughout history, which were attested to by the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet (sa). Huzoor gave the examples of Hazrat Hajrah, Hazrat Maryam and the wife of the Pharaoh.

Thereafter Huzoor presented the blessed examples of Muslim women, such as Hazrat Khadijah (ra) and Hazrat Ayesha (ra) during the time of the Holy Prophet (sa), before speaking of the sacrifices made by Ahmadi Muslim women since the time of the Promised Messiah (as).

After narrating various examples, Huzoor said it was not enough for today's Ahmadi Muslims to merely hear such stories or examples but it was incumbent that they strived to replicate the pious examples of the past.

***“Do not simply listen and read these historical incidents of sacrifice for momentary enjoyment and satisfaction, rather, be determined to fulfil the true purpose of your creation and guide your future generations in a way that they too come to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which is to attain the love of Allah the Almighty and the love of His noble prophet (sa).”***

### **A landmark address**

After a short break for lunch, Huzoor returned once again to the main Jalsa Gah to address more than 1,000 guests and dignitaries who had come to attend the Jalsa Salana.

There are many speeches and addresses Huzoor has delivered during his Khilafat which I am convinced that future generations will look back on as historic and monumental efforts to save the world from war and conflict. The address Huzoor delivered on 8 September 2018 at the Germany Jalsa is certainly one such address.

Throughout his Khilafat, Huzoor has warned repeatedly about the crucial need for justice in society and for all individuals and groups to play their respective roles in fostering long-lasting peace in the world.

Furthermore, Huzoor has urged mankind towards manifesting mutual tolerance and respect and towards an absolute rejection of all forms of racial prejudices. Yet, despite his warnings and great efforts to pull mankind back from the brink of catastrophe, the world has witnessed increased brutalities, injustices and conflict.

In the Western world, perhaps no issue has divided nations or people more than immigration in recent years. It could easily be argued that the election of President Trump in the United States or the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union were heavily influenced by this issue. Certainly, it is unquestionable that the re-emergence of the far-right in many Western

countries is intrinsically linked to a perception that ‘foreigners’ have changed their adopted nations.



Some countries have maintained very strict immigration policies and not permitted large numbers of asylum seekers or other immigrants to enter their countries. On the other hand, certain countries, such as Germany, have had much more generous policies in recent years. However, managing large-scale immigration and the sudden influx of foreigners has brought its own problems and challenges.

It was in the context of such a polarised and divided world that Huzoor delivered a landmark speech in which he directly addressed the issues surrounding immigration and the integration of foreigners into Western countries.

As always, Huzoor’s address was extremely fair and balanced. At the outset he made it clear that in his view, more than a fear of immigration, it was a fear of Islam and mass immigration from Muslim countries that existed in many Western countries. However, on the other side, Huzoor noted that some concerns and fears were genuine.

All the while, Huzoor made it categorically clear that it was wholly wrong to attribute any crimes or injustices perpetrated by immigrants upon Islamic teachings. Later, Huzoor gave solutions to the crisis facing the world based on Islam and the desperate need for mankind to recognise their Creator.

Outlining his belief that the fears of those who derided immigration stemmed from a fear of Islam, Huzoor said:

***“When the far-right and their supporters raise rallying calls against immigration, their actual target is Islam and their objective is to stop Muslims from entering their nations. They view Islam as incompatible with Western values, and strive to propagate their belief that Muslims are unable to successfully integrate into the West and are a threat to other citizens.”***

Huzoor said that Ahmadi Muslims had not been immune to the effects of such fears, whereby in Germany certain groups had actively campaigned against the Jamaat and sought to obstruct our efforts to build more Mosques.

Huzoor spent the next part of his address defending the true teachings of Islam and making it clear that Islam taught Muslims to be the best of citizens and to be faithful, law abiding members of society.

Huzoor said:

***“Before reaching a definitive conclusion about whether Islam’s teachings are of an extremist nature, you should investigate and see what the truth is. Analyse, whether the wicked acts of some so-called Muslims are***



***motivated by the teachings of Islam? Consider, whether Islam really does permit extremism? Or does it prescribe severe punishments for those who spread disorder and hatred?"***



Huzoor continued:

***“Does Islam permit Muslims to break the laws of the land in the name of their faith? What expectations does Islam place upon Muslims in terms of their conduct in society? Does Islam encourage Muslims to burden the State? Or does it encourage them to work hard, to be loyal and to contribute positively to the society in which they live? If it is proven that Muslims who do wrong are motivated by their religion, it can be said that the concerns of the far-right are justified. Yet, what if their actions have nothing to do with Islam? What if anti-Islamic groups are spreading hateful myths that are based only on fantasy rather than fact?”***

Huzoor quoted various verses of the Holy Quran which proved that Islam taught freedom of belief and freedom of conscience. He quoted verses that showed that it was the duty of a Muslim to strive to positively contribute to their society.

Huzoor refuted allegations that Muslim men were encouraged, God forbid, to abuse and harass women. Rather, such evil acts were categorically opposed to Islam's teachings and Islam had prescribed severe sanctions and punishments for such crimes. Huzoor spoke of the responsibilities of migrants towards their adopted homes.

Huzoor said:

***“No immigrant should enter another nation with a sense of entitlement; rather, they should ponder over what they can offer the local society. I have said many times before that immigrants should consider themselves indebted to the nation that has accepted them. They owe gratitude to both the government and the public and the way to repay this favour is that they should not waste time seeking only benefits and allowances from the state; rather, they should seek to contribute to the society as soon as possible.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Even if refugees are forced to do menial or basic jobs, which they consider themselves over-qualified for, it is better than remaining idle and expecting the state to cover all their needs. Otherwise, immigrants who fail to contribute to society will be a means of increasing***

***restlessness amongst the wider population. Furthermore, if governments do provide some benefits or financial aid to immigrants they should ensure that they do not neglect the needs of the local people.”***

After outlining the duties of immigrants, Huzoor urged well-off nations and their people to remain open-hearted and sympathetic to the suffering of others.

Very beautifully, Huzoor said:

***“Society should not reject genuine refugees who are suffering through no fault of their own. Society should not cast aside innocent people who only want the opportunity to live in peace and who desire to be good citizens and follow the laws of the land in which they live. Instead, we should be there to give a helping hand to those whose lives have been broken, who have been tormented and who are utterly helpless, vulnerable and defenceless. Let us prove our humanity. Let us show our compassion. Let us be there to shoulder the burdens of those who are in desperate need.”***

Huzoor concluded his address by expressing his desire that mankind pulled back from the path of ever-increasing materialism and came to accept the existence of God Almighty before it was too late.

Huzoor said:

***“Rather than coming together and seeking peace through the existence of God Almighty, mankind is embroiled in striving for peace through***

***material means alone. Day by day, mankind is moving further away from religion and spirituality and the results are terrifying.”***

### **34 minutes**

After that, Huzoor exited the stage escorted by Ameer Sahib Germany and they remained in discussion for a few seconds. I could see that both Huzoor and Ameer Sahib were smiling.

Suddenly, Huzoor looked towards me and said:

***“Was my speech delivered in twenty minutes?”***

In reply, I said:

***“Huzoor, it took 34 minutes.”***

Hearing this, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Probably, you are including the time spent on Tilawat. Anyway, today I spoke a little faster than normal purposely.”***

In response to Huzoor’s comment, I said:

***“Yes Huzoor. I thought that your address will last for 40 minutes given the length of the notes Huzoor had prepared.”***

Upon this, Huzoor smiled before resuming his discussion with Ameer Sahib and walked out of the hall towards his residence.

Later my wife Mala told me that those few seconds were shown live on MTA and upon this, our younger son, Moshahid started jumping up and down excitedly at home, whilst shouting 'Abba', 'Abba'. She said it seemed Moshahid thought I had been lost somewhere for days and he was the one who had found me!

### **Impact of Huzoor's address**

As Huzoor left the hall, I remained in the Jalsa Gah and took the opportunity to meet several guests. I was interested to hear what their views were on the issues that Huzoor had raised and their perspectives on Islam and immigration. The more people I met, the more I realised that Huzoor's words and presence had a profound effect on many guests.

One man I met was a German guest, *Norbert Wagner*, who was attending the German Jalsa for the eighth time. He told me that the reason he kept coming back was to hear Huzoor's address each year and that this time he had particularly valued Huzoor's guidance because professionally Mr Wagner was an *immigration* lawyer.

Mr Wagner said:

***"The comments of the Khalifa on this extremely complex issue of immigration were so balanced and are an inspiration. He has taken a very problematic issue and solved it by stating that no one party is to***

***blame for the immigration crisis, rather both sides, immigrants and hosts, have a responsibility to one another. I really liked how he said that immigrants must try to integrate and contribute to their new societies and that governments should not ignore the frustrations of the existing citizens. I like the style and personality of the Khalifa a great deal. He is very patient, calm and poised and spirituality emanates from him."***

Mr Wagner's wife, *Gulhein Wagner*, added:

***"I particularly feel and cherish the spirituality of the Khalifa. Just the way he speaks makes me emotional and I get goose-bumps when I see him because he is so peaceful, so dignified and spiritual. His words are profound and illustrate how the media has misinterpreted Islam and treated it extremely unfairly."***

A non-Ahmadi Muslim guest, *Mrs Massouneh*, appreciated Huzoor's address but was uncomfortable at why there was a need to defend Islam. She said:

***"I agree with everything the Khalifa said but why should he have to defend Islam again and again and keep reiterating it is a religion of peace? In the USA or other countries people also do terrible things but we do not blame them on Christianity or expect Priests to defend their religion."***

I understood her point but at the same time I told her that this was the world we lived in, where the media and opponents of Islam had unjustly falsely portrayed it. Thus, Huzoor was answering the critics and defending Islam

because it was necessary and because he was the true representative of Islam.

The lady remained irritated by the unjust portrayal of Islam in the wider society but understood better why Huzoor had spoken to defend Islam and appreciated it a lot.

Another guest who listened to Huzoor's speech was a German guest called *Andreas Herzog* who said:

***"Most emotional was the end, where the Khalifa said we should realise we are all the children of God and if we understand this point then there is no reason for hatred or division, no matter our differences. I really hope that people reflect upon his words."***

I also met a young lady from Lithuania called *Saule Bulavate*. Even though she was not a Muslim she had been translating some of Huzoor's speeches into Lithuanian for the past three years.

Saule Bulavate said:

***"I have always been interested in language and ever since I attended the Jalsa for the first time in 2015, I had an interest to translate the speeches of the Caliph. I am not a Muslim, in fact I am not even religious but undoubtedly I have learned a lot through reading and translating the speeches of His Holiness. Without knowing, he has inspired me to read and study the Holy Quran. His speeches are brilliant and he is changing people's views, perceptions and above all changing people's hearts."***

Saule Vulavate continued:

***"I am actually a musician and there is something enchanting and moving about the voice of the Caliph. His tone is out of this world and just hearing his voice brings peace to my heart and mind. He is very calm and from his voice emanates love. I actually wish I could hear His Holiness recite or read some poetry!"***

I spoke to a politician called *Joachim Rodenkirch*, who was a local Mayor in Germany.

Mayor Rodenkirch said:

***"I am so glad he spoke about immigration, which is the burning issue currently in our society. He did not speak in a partisan way the way you would expect from politicians but presented an extremely balanced perspective. He made it clear that both sides have responsibilities to one another and peace won't prevail until both sides realise this and exercise their duties. If I had to sum up his speech briefly it is that we cannot have peace until we are united. I also appreciated the fact that he made it clear that women are not to be seen as 'second class' but are equal in all respects and he strongly condemned the abuse of women."***

Also attending the Jalsa was a young lady from Lithuania, *Vitalij Vilukyte* who was impressed by the way Huzoor did not shy away from confronting the controversial issues of this time.



Vitalij Vilukyte said:

***“It was very good that the Caliph addressed the things happening in the world today and did not hide them or brush them under the table. He is very direct and he is objective. He says it as it is.”***

Vitalij also commended Huzoor’s guidance to refugees and immigrants. She said:

***“Some refugees may feel a sense of entitlement, saying ‘I have come, give me money’ and so I feel like the Caliph was sending a message to the immigrants that they are not entering a paradise, rather they need to get up and work. Anyway, most of what I knew of Islam before was through the media and now I realise it was a lot of fake news and very important to understand each religion and culture before judging them.”***

A female Bishop from Georgia, *Bishop Rusudan Gotsiridze* of the *Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia* also listened to Huzoor’s address and was deeply affected.

Bishop Gotsiridze said:

***“I have never heard such a clear message and such clear instruction against the Islamophobic waves in Europe. I am excited about the recipe that His Holiness has given for refugees to integrate. Personally, I believe it was a mistake in recent years and decades of Europe that it did not pay proper attention to refugees. They were housed in ghettos and forgotten about and no attempt was made to help them integrate. The few violent***

***cases of refugees are presented by the media to justify their hostilities against Islam. Thus, I pray to God that more Muslim leaders speak clearly on this issue like His Holiness.”***

### **Albanian delegation**

Later that evening, Huzoor held meetings with two delegations, the first of which was a large group of Ahmadis and guests who had travelled from Albania.



One of the guests was a non-Ahmadi Imam from the *Alawite* community, who expressed his heartfelt emotions to Huzoor. He said:

***“I have been deeply moved and influenced by your Jalsa Salana. I do not know much about Ahmadiyyat but all that I have seen has shown me that you are extraordinary people. The way you are serving humanity and the***

***way you are serving the cause of Islam is simply astonishing. All Muslims are indebted to you.”***

An Albanian Ahmadi informed Huzoor about a dream he had seen in which he saw that there was a restaurant in the Kaabah.

After hearing the dream, Huzoor said:

***“In your dream you saw a restaurant, which is a business, in the Kaabah and this means that today the Kaabah is filled with materialism and those who worship there are devoid of spirituality.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Insha’Allah that day will come when the Kaabah is filled with Ahmadi Muslims but Allah knows better when. My only prayer is that when that day comes, the Kaabah is filled with worshippers who fulfil the true objectives of that sacred House of Allah.”***

### ***The depths of war, to the centre of peace***

Huzoor’s next meeting was with a large delegation of over 300 Arab Ahmadi Muslims and guests.

Some lived in Europe, whilst others had travelled from Arab countries to attend the Jalsa Salana.

With Allah's Grace, I have attended many of Huzoor's meetings in recent years.

Every meeting is fascinating, beneficial and forms part of the history of the Jamaat but certain meetings are especially inspiring and emotional and this proved to be one meeting those present were unlikely to ever forget.

Moments after Huzoor had taken a seat at the front of a large hall on the upper floor of the Jalsa complex, an Algerian Ahmadi Muslim took a microphone and said:

***"Huzoor, I have come especially from Algeria so that I could meet you and be part of this Jalsa Salana. I have never felt such spirituality, such purity and such love in my life. I wish for you to know that every Ahmadi Muslim in Algeria has sincere love for Khilafat and those who could not come all send their salaam to their beloved Imam."***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***"The Algerian Ahmadis are always in my prayers. May the circumstances improve for them and all the cruelties and injustices come to an end. May those who have been imprisoned be released and may the strength of faith of every Ahmadi Muslim in Algeria continue to grow."***

Addressing the organisers of the meeting, Huzoor asked:

***"I have heard there are some guests who are not members of the Jamaat present?"***

Upon this, the person who had the duty of translation, enquired from the audience:

***“Huzoor, is asking who are the non-Ahmadis present?”***

As soon as Huzoor heard this translation, he intervened.

Huzoor said:

***“I use the term ‘guests who are not members of the Jamaat’ (gher-az-Jamaat mehmaan) but you have translated as ‘non-Ahmadis’. So translate it again according to my words.”***



It was a very interesting point. I had heard many people say ‘non-Ahmadis’ to describe other Muslims in the past and had used the term myself but Huzoor preferred the term ‘gher-uz-Jamaat’. I later asked Huzoor about this point.



In reply, Huzoor said:

***“Some Muslims, especially amongst the Arabs, refer to the Holy Prophet (sa) as ‘Ahmad’ and so I did not wish to risk their feelings being hurt in any way by referring to them as ‘non-Ahmadis’. For this reason, it is better to use the term ‘gher-uz-Jamaat’.”***

As always, Huzoor’s care and consideration for others was of the very highest order.



Thereafter, a Muslim guest said:

***“I am from Ahle Sunnat sect and I consider Ahmadis as Muslims. How could I not? Everything I saw here was Islamic and there is no doubt that***

***you are a truly holy and spiritual leader. I have learned so from your speeches and the Jalsa generally.”***

After a few other people had the chance to speak, I heard the voice of a young Arab girl seated on the far side of the hall.

Her voice quivered with emotion, as she addressed Huzoor in English. She said:

***“I don’t have a question. I just want to say that it makes me very happy when I see you smile and I love you.”***

Appreciating the innocence and sentiments of the young girl, Huzoor responded by saying:

***“Allah Taalah bless you. And I love you too.”***

It was a beautiful and tender moment. No one present could help be affected by the loving interaction.

Thereafter, a young Syrian girl, aged 9, took the microphone and informed Huzoor that she wished to present Huzoor with a picture she and her sister had drawn for him.

After introducing herself, her voice began to falter and within a few seconds she was completely overcome with emotion. She began to rub her eyes to wipe away the tears.

At that moment, the emotions of everyone in the hall rose to the surface as we observed this young girl so emotional at seeing Huzoor.

Most lovingly, Huzoor called her to the front so she could present her drawings. As she approached him, Huzoor lovingly and tenderly showed a great deal of affection towards her and accepted her gift of the drawings.



That moment will forever stay etched in my mind and I am sure of all those who were present. As I saw the girl, I kept thinking that, as a Syrian refugee, she will have undoubtedly suffered and braved various hardships over the past few years.

Countless children, like this young girl, have had their childhood years destroyed by the war that has taken place in Syria, through no fault of their own. Yet, in that single moment, it was apparent that here the young girl's



emotions were overcome not due to war or conflict but because she was meeting her beloved spiritual father.

From the depths of war, to the centre of peace.

For a few minutes, the atmosphere of the entire hall became filled with a sea of emotion and spirituality. As I looked to my left and to my right, I saw elders of the Jamaat, who had travelled with Khalifatul Masih on dozens of occasions, wiping away their own tears.

Amongst the hundreds of Arabs, I saw many weeping, others smiling, all knowing they were in the company of that person who had been appointed by Allah the Almighty.

All the while, I kept glancing towards Huzoor and saw how he emanated spirituality, grace and kindness.

The meeting continued and the atmosphere became even more joyous and emotional, as an Arab man from Lebanon took the microphone and proclaimed:

***“Your Holiness, I am not an Ahmadi but tomorrow I will be! Any doubts I had have been removed during my experiences at the Jalsa and here in this meeting. I will take the Bai’at during the ceremony tomorrow!”***

The man explained that in his family, his mother had been the first to accept Ahmadiyyat some eight years previously. Thereafter, his father had accepted it and now he too was following in their footsteps.

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Mothers are always first! This is the Islamic teaching!”***

As the meeting concluded, Huzoor waved to the Ahmadis and said that he would now leave as it was time for *Namaz*.

Every moment with Khalifatul Masih is blessed. Every moment is different. Every moment is pure. Every moment is unique. Sadly, sometimes our memories fail us and with the passing of time, some experiences fade.

It is one reason why I write these diaries so that some of the experiences are recorded. Nonetheless, there are certain emotions, certain feelings that cannot be described with justice. Huzoor’s meeting with the Arab guests is one such example.

Neither words can do justice, nor can the cameras that recorded the meeting.

Only those who were there, who directly felt the love of Khilafat and the blessings of Allah rain down can understand the emotions that I am trying to describe.

### **Close to my Khalifa**

On 9 September 2018, the concluding session of the Jalsa Salana Germany took place. Upon arriving in the Jalsa Gah at 3.50pm, Huzoor led an emotional *Bai’at* ceremony, in which several people took *Bai’at* for the first time.

Thereafter, Huzoor led the Zuhr and Asr prayers, before proceeding to the stage for the formal session.



After Namaz, it took a few minutes for people who had prayed in overflow areas outside the main Jalsa Gah, to enter the main hall. During those few minutes, Huzoor remained seated in his chair looking towards the thousands of Ahmadis seated in front of him.

I was fortunate enough to be seated a few feet behind Huzoor and during those moments I kept thinking of the blessings of Allah and an old memory, from 2001, entered my mind.

It was the year when the international Jalsa was held in Germany, as the *foot and mouth* outbreak had meant that it was not possible to hold the Jalsa Salana UK that year. I was a university student at the time, with long summer holidays and so I had attended that Jalsa Germany with a cousin. I felt happy and privileged to attend the Jalsa, but at the same time, I remember feeling sad that I never once had the opportunity to see Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) from close during the trip.

Of course, I had no right to meet him but still my heart had yearned to see him, even fleetingly. I prayed a great deal on that trip asking Allah to enable me to be physically close to Huzoor during the Jalsa but it did not prove possible.

Now in 2018, I thought of how I was sitting at the feet of my beloved Khalifa, something I could never have comprehended or imagined during that trip 17 years earlier. In my heart, I thanked Allah for His Grace and Mercy. Surely, He never forgets.

Humans, on the other hand, often do and so I took a photo to remind me of the moment and the blessings of Allah.





## **Concluding address**

The Jalsa Salana concluded with a faith inspiring address by Huzoor in which he spoke of the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Promised Messiah (as) about the spread of Ahmadiyyat.

Huzoor presented the examples of people who had been guided to the truth of Ahmadiyyat in the recent past through dreams or the fulfilment of their prayers.



For example, Huzoor narrated an incident from Ghana, where over 90 people had accepted Ahmadiyyat after witnessing the fulfilment of a dream seen by an elderly woman.

Three Ahmadi Muslims went to her village and told the local people about Islam and taught them how to pray.

When the woman observed this, she said she had seen a dream seven years before in which three preachers came to teach people about Islam and the way to pray.

Upon this, her family and dozens of other people from her village joined the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Reflecting upon the truth of the Promised Messiah (as), Huzoor said:

***“Allah the Almighty manifests hundreds of thousands of signs of the truthfulness of the Promised Messiah (as) every year. Despite this, our opponents tell us that we are senseless and call on us to leave the one who has claimed to be the Promised Messiah. Yet senseless are those very so-called scholars and those people who, instead of fearing Allah the Almighty, fear the very clerics who have distorted the teachings of Islam.”***



Very emotionally, Huzoor concluded:

***“We, Ahmadi Muslims, will never forsake our efforts to spread the true and peaceful teachings of Islam throughout the world. This is our duty and this is our mission and so every Ahmadi Muslim must strive towards this and must bow down in prayer beseeching the Help of Allah the Almighty.”***

*Alhamdolillah* the Jalsa had concluded successfully and once again had proven extremely blessed.

### **A moment of fear**

Just a few minutes after leaving the Jalsa Gah, Huzoor held separate meetings with male and female new converts to Ahmadiyyat.

As Huzoor walked up the steps to the meeting room, he stumbled on the step before regaining his balance by holding the side hand rail.

Though Huzoor balanced himself, seeing Huzoor almost fall filled my heart with dread and panic. It was one of those moments that remind you that Khalifa-Waqt is a normal human being and not infallible or immune from injury or illness.

It was one of those moments that reminded me that beloved Huzoor is getting older, whilst the demands upon him and the pressures he faces increase by the day.

May Allah the Almighty grant Huzoor a long and healthy life and enable every Ahmadi to be his helper and servant.

### **Meetings with converts**

During his meeting with male converts to Ahmadiyyat, Huzoor noticed that an Arab man, who had attended the meeting with Arabs the evening before, was present.

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“You came in the meeting yesterday and now again today. You are trying to avail as many opportunities (to meet Huzoor) as possible.”***

In response, the Arab man said:

***“Huzoor, yesterday I was not an Ahmadi and met you as a guest. Today, I have accepted Ahmadiyyat and now meet you as a member of your Jamaat.”***



Another Arab convert said:

***“Huzoor, I have displayed your photo in my home and my biological father actually bears a resemblance to you. Thus, when people see your photo they ask ‘Is that a photo of your father?’ and I always reply that ‘Yes’ because you are my spiritual father!”***



A recent German convert to Ahmadiyyat said:

***“Huzoor, I came to the Jalsa to see you and to listen to you and your words and the effect you have had on my heart is the reason that yesterday I accepted Ahmadiyyat.***

A Tunisian convert to Ahmadiyyat asked Huzoor about his daily life. He said:

***“Huzoor, these days are exceptional as it is the Jalsa and so what is your routine in normal days?”***

In response, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“My routine is the same. Every day is like this. Seven days a week, morning to night, it is my work to serve the Jamaat. I don’t take holidays and so what you see here is a reflection of my daily life.”***

Upon this, the convert was visibly moved and said:

***“May God bless you Huzoor.”***

### **A flooded floor**

The meeting concluded shortly after 8pm and after a few minutes, Huzoor left Karlsruhe to return to Frankfurt.

Thousands of Ahmadis remained to see off Huzoor and so after a silent prayer the Qafila members returned to their cars.

The Qafila arrived back at the Baitus Sabuh Mosque at 10.10pm and Huzoor very soon came to the Mosque to lead the Maghreb and Isha prayers. Thereafter, Huzoor returned to his residence, whilst the rest of us went to have our evening meal.

By the time I got back to my room, it was 11pm and I decided to iron my clothes for the next day. I filled the iron with water but instead of giving off steam, the water just poured out of the iron on my unsuspecting trousers!

The water soaked the trousers and flooded the floor below.

It was the end of the day and I was tired and so clearing up the water was not the most fun thing but had to be done! I got as many tissues as I could and tried to dry the floor. Yet the more I dried, the more wet the floor seemed! Finally, after what seemed like an age, the floor was more or less dry.

Yet my trousers remained soaked and they were the only clean pair I had for the next day, as I urgently required to do some laundry. I switched the iron on again and tried to dry the trousers with some heat but the water seemed to have penetrated the cloth and was unwilling to dry. In the end, I decided to hang them up and hoped they would dry naturally overnight.

The next morning when I checked they were drier but to call them dry would be an exaggeration.

Nonetheless, with no other trousers to wear, I put them on and wore them. I could feel the moisture and just prayed that no one else would notice!

## **A day of delegations**

It has become a tradition in recent years that the day after the conclusion of the German Jalsa Salana, Huzoor spends the day meeting various delegations and groups from many different countries.

During the meetings, Ahmadis and guests have the chance to share their Jalsa experiences with Huzoor and to seek his prayers and to ask him questions.

The meetings are a means of *Tabligh* and *Tarbiyyat*, as Huzoor takes every opportunity to spread Islam's teachings and to remove misconceptions of people who are not members of the Jamaat, whilst at the same time, Huzoor gives time to Ahmadis who have come from abroad to attend the Jalsa and to see him.

Hence, on Monday 10 September 2018, Huzoor's day was spent in such meetings. Some were held in the Mosque, others in nearby halls and some in Huzoor's own office.

During the morning session, Huzoor met with delegations from *Indonesia, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Mauritius, Niger, Congo Brazzaville, Guinea Conakry and Burkina Faso.*

## **Georgian delegation**

As many guests did not speak either English or Urdu, a translator was present in most of the meetings. In all but one meeting, the person doing the

translation was a Missionary. The exception was Huzoor's meeting with guests from Georgia.

There, the person who did the translation was *Reverend Malkhaz Songulashvili*, a *Christian Bishop* from *Georgia*. He had visited the UK Jalsa a few weeks before and the way he now took pride in translating at our Jalsa, was a reflection of true inter-faith harmony and mutual respect.

Amongst the Georgian delegation, was a Muslim leader representing Georgia's Sunni Muslim community. He informed Huzoor that he did not have much knowledge of Ahmadiyyat prior to his visit but now felt a strong connection with the Jamaat. He said:

***"Your Holiness, your addresses are guidelines for our daily lives and it is a challenge for us all to act upon whatever you taught. Having seen and experienced what Ahmadiyyat is, I wish to make it clear that we are delighted that there is an Ahmadiyya community in Georgia. We consider you as true Muslims and believe that all Muslims are brothers. We extend our hand of friendship to you and to your community."***

Upon this, the guest presented Huzoor with a painting of Georgia's capital city, Tbilisi, which he asked Huzoor to accept as a sign of their love for him.

After receiving the gift, Huzoor said:

***"Thank you for your kind words and considerate gesture. It is most crucial that, at a broad level, all religions and then within Islam, all the Islamic sects, work towards the betterment of humanity. It is essential***

***we all play our roles in establishing peace, love and harmony in the world. Our religious teaching is that we must recognise our Creator and fulfil the rights of His creation.”***

A guest from Georgia, by profession an engineer, asked Huzoor about the future of his country and the wider world.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“In today’s world, whether in Georgia or elsewhere, establishing peace is the dire and urgent need of the time. And if we want peace, it is incumbent that people from all religions and walks of life are tolerant of one another and sincerely desire to live together in harmony. It is very important that we listen to the views of other people and if people have different religious beliefs or views they should be respected. It is not right to say to someone else that he or she is a liar or spreading falsehood. Rather, respect each other and live together with a sincere spirit of freedom of belief. This is how we can develop unity in society and this is what Islam teaches.”***

A female Priest from the *Baptist Church of Georgia* also took the opportunity to narrate her experiences of the Jalsa Salana Germany. She said:

***“I feel that the contemporary world has been afflicted by many painful things including Islamophobia. What we all saw and felt at the Jalsa was a remedy for the pain of the world and I wish that more people were present to take benefit of this cure. I also wish to say I was extremely moved by your speech to the ladies at the Jalsa where you spoke about***

***the great status of women and the role they have played throughout history.”***

Appreciating the comments of the female Priest, Huzoor said:

***“You should spread this message of how women have served humanity and led the way in many things. As a non-Muslim and Priest, people will be interested to hear you speak about the way women have been honoured and respected by Islam.”***

Huzoor smiled before adding:

***“Thus, I would like you to be my spokesperson on this topic in your country!”***

A Georgian male guest was the next to speak. He said:

***“Your Holiness, I have watched MTA in the past and so I was not surprised by the peaceful and beautiful things that you said in your speeches. I knew you are a man of peace and you spread a message of humanity. I just want to tell you that it is a great honour to meet you and just to be in the same room as you is a great honour and privilege of my life.”***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“May Allah bless you for coming all this way just to learn more about Islam. Certainly, the Islam we believe and preach is the same Islam that was taught by the Holy Prophet (sa). We present nothing that is new or***

***different to what the Prophet of Islam (sa) taught. Thus, I hope it is clear to you and all of our guests that Islam is neither a religion of extremism nor one that fuels atrocities, rather it is a religion of love, tolerance and harmony.”***

### **Meetings with Eastern European groups**

A female guest from Lithuania asked Huzoor what his personal impression of the non-Muslim world was based upon his travels abroad.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“I live in a non-Muslim country – the UK – not in Syria or Iraq! Thus, I do not have to base my impression only on my travels but also as a citizen of a non-Muslim country. It is true that before I lived in Pakistan but they forced me to leave because I cannot publicly call myself a Muslim and so could not fulfil my duties as Khalifa if I remained there. At least here in the non-Muslim world, there is more tolerance and freedom of religion and as long as this continues, such nations will remain better in the eyes of Allah compared to those where there is no religious freedom.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“It is most regretful that the Muslims were directly taught to show tolerance and to foster religious freedom by Allah the Almighty and the Holy Quran, yet in today’s world, these qualities are seen least in the Muslim nations.”***

A female guest asked Huzoor why Muslim men did not shake the hands of Muslim women and vice versa.



In response, Huzoor said:

***“The fact that a Muslim man does not shake the hand of a Muslim woman is not a lack of respect but is actually due to the man’s respect for the lady. This is the means of respect that Islam has taught and in original Jewish teachings it is the same. Recently, a Rabbi serving in a Synagogue near our Ahmadiyya Mosque openly announced that he would not shake the hands of women due to his faith. Yet no one dares to condemn him because they do not wish to be accused of anti-Semitism.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“We should look at the bigger picture and focus on those common things amongst us, rather than only looking at the small differences that exist. Also, remember that where a Muslim man does not shake the hand of a***



***woman, Muslim women do not shake the hands of men. Thus it cannot be said there is gender discrimination, the teaching is the same for Muslim men and women alike.”***



A Jamia student from Eastern Europe, studying at Jamia Ahmadiyya International in Ghana, became very emotional as he spoke to Huzoor.

Speaking in Urdu, his voice quivering with emotion, the Jamia student said:

***“Huzoor, I love you so much and I owe everything good in my life to Ahmadiyyat.”***

The boy asked Huzoor to pray that his Urdu language improved.

Upon this, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“Masha’Allah, your Urdu is better than many Pakistanis who live here in Germany! Anyway, don’t worry, we will teach you Urdu well because I will***

***call you to London to spend three months with me after you complete your Jamia studies, Insha'Allah."***

The Jamia student, already emotional, was overwhelmed at Huzoor's kindness and love.

As Huzoor held a meeting with guests from Kosovo, a small boy, aged no more than two or perhaps three, left the area where his mother was sitting and came towards the front where Huzoor was seated.

As the meeting continued, Huzoor gestured affectionately to the toddler to come towards him. Repeatedly, the boy walked a few steps towards Huzoor before scurrying back, taking a sip of milk from his bottle and then repeating the process. After a few minutes, perhaps tired from standing, the toddler got down on his knees and repeated the process of approaching Huzoor whilst crawling.

His parents were evidently worried that he was causing disturbance or distracting Huzoor and so they tried to intervene. However, Huzoor told them to leave the child and let him play as he desired. All the while, Huzoor continued to listen to the experiences of the guests and to answer their questions.

As the boy continued to play, a Kosovan guest took the opportunity to speak to Huzoor. He said:

***"My young son has suffered with very weak legs and so it was suggested to me that I write to you for prayers. As soon as we received your letter of***

***prayers we saw an improvement and his condition has continued to improve ever since."***

Another Kosovan man informed Huzoor that he had taken *Bai'at* at this year's Jalsa Germany.

He sought Huzoor's advice about how to deal with the opposition he was sure to face from his family and relatives.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***"First, you should pray for your family members and second you should treat them with a great deal of love and set the best example. There is no other remedy or secret, otherwise we would have used such a remedy long ago to counter the opposition we face in Pakistan!"***

Huzoor continued:

***"Allah the Almighty has said that opposition is a means of testing a person's faith. If you are righteous and firm in your faith then a time will come when Allah will improve your circumstances. Always remember the blessed example of the Holy Prophet (sa) and his companions who were persecuted for thirteen years. Their prayers and sacrifices did not prove to be in vain, as in the end, Allah the Almighty granted the Holy Prophet (sa) a great victory."***

### **Mauritius delegation**

During his meeting with a delegation from Mauritius, most of whom were Ahmadis, Huzoor asked the standard of the hospitality they had received from the German Jamaat.

In reply, one of the male members of the group said:

***“Huzoor, the hospitality was exceptional!”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Well I think you all got special treatment then compared to the others!”***

Upon this, all present laughed and Huzoor himself laughed. I think Huzoor was perhaps sending a message to the members of Germany Jamaat who were present that even if the guests were happy, they should always seek to improve their service and hospitality.

A Mauritian Ahmadi informed Huzoor that they hoped to attend the 2019 Jalsa Salana UK and to bring enough Ahmadis that they could charter a plane.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Yes, you should come to the UK Jalsa and I hope more Ahmadis come but don’t charter a plane as it will cost more money!”***

Huzoor enquired from a Mauritian Ahmadi, who had attended both the UK and German Jalsa, whether the hospitality by the local Jamaat had been superior in the UK or in Germany.

In response, the Mauritian Ahmadi said:

***“Huzoor, in the UK I was accommodated in a hotel, whereas in Germany I stayed onsite at the Jalsa. Despite the comforts of a hotel, I preferred the latter because it meant that I could offer all five prayers, including Fajr, behind Huzoor. Our aim was to offer all our prayers behind beloved Huzoor and here in Germany this desire of ours has been fulfilled.”***

### **African delegations**

During a meeting with African guests, an Ahmadi from Niger asked Huzoor to pray as Ahmadis faced opposition in his home country.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“The Imams and Maulvis will cause you problems and this is a test of your faith. Nevertheless, the situation is better than in Pakistan where the Government is also party to the persecution. In your country, there remains a degree of decency amongst some clerics and so you should try to guide them and inform them of our beliefs. Do not hide away but seek to propagate the true message of Ahmadiyyat with wisdom.”***

In the same meeting, an Arab guest who was living in Africa took the opportunity to speak to Huzoor. He said:

***“Your Holiness, I appreciate your leadership, your simplicity and your humility. I am not an Ahmadi but I request your prayers that I can learn from your humility. I pray for you, I pray for your family and I pray for your Jamaat. To be here was a life-changing experience. I saw humility and love like I have never seen before. The Jalsa was like a whole new world of which I was previously deprived.”***



Appreciating his comments and inviting him to join Ahmadiyyat, Huzoor said:

***“After discovering this new world, now you should reflect upon whether you wish to join it.”***

A journalist who had travelled to attend the Jalsa from the African country, Congo Brazzaville informed Huzoor that he had broadcast news reports about the Jalsa in his home country and intended to broadcast further reports in the coming days.

Informing Huzoor of the response to his reports, the journalist said:

***“On social media there has been a lot of reaction to my reports. The public reaction has been overwhelmingly positive but the Maulvis are being aggressive and are angry that I am reporting on Ahmadis. Personally, I don’t have a personal link with any person or party. I am independent. It is my job to present the truth and so I am not scared or fearful and will not be pressured about what I report on.”***

The journalist continued:

***“Before I had only heard the theory of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, whereas now I have seen the practical reality. The Maulvis in my home country told me that Ahmadiyyat is a tiny group, yet here I saw with my own eyes that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a global Jamaat that is thriving and spreading far and wide. This is a fact.”***

Appreciating the integrity of the journalist, Huzoor said:

***“I am very happy to see your honest and unbiased approach. You are the first journalist I have met who has openly said that his sole objective is to present the truth, no matter the consequences. May Allah help you and enable you to remain firm in your pledge to always show the truth.”***

### **36 Nikahs!**

The meetings continued into the afternoon before there was a break for the Zuhr and Asr prayers.



Merely observing the non-stop meetings over the past four hours had left me drained and so I was looking forward to the lunch break. However, I then learned that Huzoor was to preside the *Nikah* (marriage) ceremonies of 36 couples immediately after Namaz.

I wondered how long they would take and also if this was a record number of Nikahs led by *Khalifa-Waqt* in one session. I certainly could not remember so many Nikahs before and so I asked Munir Javed sahib (*Private Secretary*) his opinion.

In response, Munir Javed sahib said:

***“I do not personally remember more Nikahs taking place but Huzoor told me earlier today that he was once present when Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III (rh) led 78 Nikahs at the Jalsa Salana in Rabwah!”***

Out of curiosity, I checked my watch when the Nikah ceremony started and again once they were completed and it took 33 minutes. My guess had been that it would take 45 minutes and so I was pleasantly surprised!

After the final Nikah was announced, Huzoor checked to see that no Nikah remained to be performed. Upon this, an elder of the German Jamaat, Haider Ali Zafar sahib, who is the *Naib Ameer* and previously a long-serving *Missionary-in-charge* in Germany, stood up.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“Do you also wish to have your Nikah?”***

Upon this, everyone laughed. It turned out that Haider sahib had stood up merely to confirm that all the Nikahs were complete!

### **Meetings with further delegations**

At 5.30pm, the group meetings resumed, as Huzoor met delegations from *Bulgaria, Bosnia, The Gambia, Macedonia, Albania, Hungary, Croatia* and *Kosovo*.

A member of the Bulgarian delegation informed Huzoor that he was originally from *Kashmir* but was now living in Bulgaria. He had taken *Bai'at* during the concluding session of the Jalsa Germany the day before. He informed Huzoor that he was going back to Kashmir to see his family in December and intended to announce that he was now an Ahmadi Muslim.

In response, Huzoor advised him not to tell his family yet and that he should tread carefully.

The new Ahmadi said:

***“Huzoor with your prayers, I have nothing to fear.”***

Whilst appreciating his spirit, Huzoor continued to advise caution and said that his circumstances were such that he should wait before telling his family members.

It was an example of how Huzoor pays attention to the pressures and issues faced by each individual and makes decisions accordingly. Perhaps, Huzoor

was concerned for his safety or perhaps he felt that the man should wait until his own faith in Ahmadiyyat and knowledge had increased.



Next to speak was a non-Muslim Bulgarian lady who said:

***“Your Holiness, I do not have any power but if I did, I would use it all to help you to fulfil your mission and to enable your community to spread even further because the message of peace and love that you practice and preach is unlike anything I have ever seen before.”***

A non-Muslim man thanked Huzoor for responding to his letters. He said:

***“Last year, I wrote to you and sent you a number of questions. Even though you are very busy, you wrote back answers to each of my questions and your answers completely satisfied my heart.”***

As I listened to the guest, I remember thinking how incredible it is that Huzoor finds the time to fulfil the needs of not only the members of the Jamaat but also the wider society.

At the time of writing it is early February 2019 and just a few days ago, Huzoor mentioned in passing to me that during the months of December and January, well over 70,000 reply letters were sent either directly in Huzoor's name or on his behalf by his office just in the Urdu language.

That is quite apart from the letters that are sent in English, German, Arabic and a host of other languages.

A Bulgarian non-Muslim man also presented a novel idea to help the Jamaat be officially registered in Bulgaria. He said:

***“Your Holiness, to be officially registered in our country you need to have a certain number of members. So, I am happy for me to say I am an Ahmadi and I am sure there are many more of your supporters who would register as Ahmadis so that your Jamaat can be officially registered.”***

Immediately rejecting the proposal, Huzoor said:

***“No matter what we must always be truthful. Thus, we can never permit for anyone to engage in falsehood no matter what.”***

During the next meeting, a Bosnian convert to Ahmadiyyat informed Huzoor of his personal experiences regarding the blessings of Khilafat. He said:

***“Huzoor, last year at the Jalsa Germany I asked you to pray that I get a job and just four days after I returned home I acquired an excellent job. Also, I had a very nasty hand injury that was causing me a lot of trouble***

***and anxiety. Alhamdolillah, I had the opportunity to shake your hand and thereafter the injury started improving immediately and by the time I reached home all traces of that injury had vanished.”***

A Bosnian guest expressed his experiences of the Jalsa and its effect upon him to Huzoor. He said:

***“I am leaving with only a positive impression of the Jalsa and I now fully believe that Ahmadi Muslims are the people who are demonstrating what true Islam is. It is a religion of beauty and peace and nothing like the violent and extremist portrayal often given in the media.”***



The guest also informed Huzoor that he intended to read the Promised Messiah’s (as) book, *Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya*.

After listening to his comments, Huzoor said:

***“Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya is a very good book to read but for you I would recommend that you first read The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam and Invitation to Ahmadiyyat. Both of these books will enable you to learn more about Ahmadiyyat and the prophecies of the Holy Prophet (sa) regarding the latter days.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“As far as hospitality is concerned, this is our duty because looking after your guests is a basic Islamic injunction. The Holy Quran has mentioned the hospitality of Hazrat Ibrahim (as) and from the Ahadith we learn of the unparalleled hospitality of the Holy Prophet (sa) towards guests.”***

A Bosnian guest, who worked as the *Director* of an *NGO* that sought to counter poverty, asked Huzoor why there was so much division and discord in the Muslim world.

In response, Huzoor gave a very detailed answer in which he explained that the Holy Prophet (sa) had prophesied about such division and conflict amongst the latter day Muslims and Ulema and that it was in such an era that the Promised Messiah (as) was destined to come.

Continuing his answer, Huzoor said:

***“It is a cause of great regret that today’s Muslims are riven with conflict. Everyone says ‘I am right and you are wrong’ and they have forgotten***

***Islam's basic teachings of love, kinship and brotherhood. Muslim leaders and governments pursue their self-interests with no regard for the consequences or the demands of justice. They perpetrate horrific cruelties and abuses of power in order to protect their regimes. The results have been devastating – civil wars or wider wars involving Muslim nations have destroyed the futures of their people.”***

Thereafter, Huzoor spoke of how Ahmadi Muslims were fortunate to have accepted the Promised Messiah (as). As a result, they had been saved from such conflicts and wrongdoing.

Huzoor said:

***“If you go to Africa, Indonesia, Europe, Asia, the Americas or any other part of the world you will see that Ahmadi Muslims are engaged only in spreading peace, tolerance and mutual respect. We are against all forms of sectarianism and our objective is to promote human values amongst all mankind. This is Islam.”***

During a meeting with a delegation mostly from The Gambia, there was an Ahmadi from Mali who informed Huzoor that the Jamaat's new Mosque in Mali was, in his view, ‘*the most beautiful Mosque in all of Africa*’.

Upon this, Huzoor jokingly said:

***“Don't say this in front of the Gambians as they will claim their Mosque is more beautiful!”***



Thereafter, the Malian Ahmadi said:

***“Huzoor, I met you over a decade ago but at that time I could not speak a word of English and I learned the language especially so that one day I could speak to you directly without the need for any translator. Today, I have fulfilled that dream of mine, as I am speaking to my beloved Khalifa and it is the greatest blessing of my life.”***

It was emotional to hear how he had learned the English language with the sole intention of being able to speak to Huzoor and how his desire to speak to Huzoor directly had been fulfilled.

Thereafter, the Naib Ameer of The Gambia Jamaat said:

***“Huzoor, we desire that you change your African citizenship from Ghana to The Gambia! By this, I mean we desire for you to consider The Gambia as your second home instead of Ghana!”***

Huzoor laughed and said:

***“For your desire to be fulfilled it would require that I live in The Gambia for several years, as I did in Ghana! Anyway, Jazak’Allah for your sentiments and I pray that I am able to visit your country soon.”***

### **Further delegations**

During a meeting with a group from South-Eastern Europe, an Albanian academic said:

***“This was the first time I have ever experienced an event like the Jalsa. Despite the fact it was such a huge gathering of people, no one deviated even one millimetre from justice or unity. I am ready to testify before the world that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is following the path of Allah! My question is when will the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community be in a position to lead the Muslim world because I believe only your community can bring unity amongst the Muslims.”***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“We are a religious community and the history of religion shows that they grow slowly. Each year hundreds of thousands are joining us and I am sure that one day we will be in the majority. The Promised Messiah (as) said that he was the Messiah of Muhammad (sa) and had come on the precepts of the Messiah of Moses (as).”***

Huzoor continued:

***“It took Christianity around 300 years to spread and the Promised Messiah (as) said that 300 years would not pass before his Community was in the majority. Thus, even though we remain relatively small, we are not depressed or hopeless, rather we are confident and hopeful for the future.”***

During the same meeting, a Macedonian lady said:

***“Your Holiness, your status is so high and your workload seems so difficult and never-ending. How do you manage it? How do you cope?”***

Movingly, Huzoor said:

***“It is the work of Allah the Almighty and so He helps me and enables me to fulfil my duties. Otherwise, without the help and support of Allah I could not do it but with His help anything and everything is possible.”***

A journalist from the Macedonian delegation asked Huzoor his view on *Imran Khan* and his newly formed Government in Pakistan and whether the new administration was likely to benefit Ahmadis.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“As long as the horrific 1974 and 1984 (anti-Ahmadi) laws remain there can be no change because those laws have effectively handed control to the extremist Maulvis (clerics) over the Ahmadi issue. Thus, Imran Khan will also have to follow the dictates of the Maulvis and we have already seen this.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“Just a few days ago, Imran Khan formed an Economic Advisory Council and sought the assistance of an Ahmadi Muslim Economics Professor but the Mullahs placed a great deal of pressure on the Government for including an Ahmadi. For a few days, a Minister in Imran Khan’s Government sought to resist the pressure but then they caved and asked the Ahmadi Professor to resign. This is a very recent example of the standards of justice in Imran Khan’s new Government and so you can***

***judge for yourself how much change he and his administration are going to bring.”***

Sharing his personal criticism of one aspect of the Jalsa, a non-Muslim guest from Eastern Europe said:

***“Huzoor, the food at the Jalsa was not according to our taste and so I wished to bring this to your attention. On the other hand, the intellectual standard of the speeches at the Jalsa was extremely high.”***

As the guest commented on the food, other members of his delegation became quite vocal and objected to his comments. Some of the women even covered their faces in embarrassment. It was clear that whilst he had not liked the food, his sentiments were not shared by the majority of his compatriots.

I have always observed Huzoor’s calmness in all situations and his extremely high threshold of patience. Thus, whilst some guests did not like the comment of their fellow guest, Huzoor’s response reflected his humility and desire for all guests to be treated in the very best way possible.

Huzoor said:

***“You did not like the physical food but at least you enjoyed the spiritual food at the Jalsa! Anyway, in terms of food served, the kitchen at the Jalsa is run by volunteers and so we try our best to ensure that food is prepared which caters for all tastes. However, I apologise for our weakness in this regard and we will certainly try our best to improve in future years.”***

In every aspect, Huzoor is an example for us and here he showed how to respond to criticism with patience and dignity.

An Albanian academic, informed Huzoor that many of his ancestors were from amongst the *Ulema* (Islamic clergy) and he had been raised in what he considered to be a 'traditional' Islamic way. He also told Huzoor he had read a lot about Ahmadis in the past.

The Albanian Professor said:

***“At this Jalsa, I realised that everything I had ever read about the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community were lies! Here I saw what I consider to be the pinnacle of Islamic practice. I honestly do not believe that you will have to wait 300 years for Ahmadiyyat to lead the world, rather much before people will come to realise its value and accept it.”***

It was very interesting and faith inspiring to hear the guest, who clearly had a high level of religious and secular knowledge, openly admit that everything that he had read about Ahmadis, had been nothing but false propaganda and distortion.

Another Eastern European guest asked Huzoor what would happen in the next life to those people who knew of Ahmadiyyat but chose not to accept it.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“It is for Allah the Almighty to decide how He treats each individual and we have no power or role in this. Our only task is to seek to bring mankind***

***together and encourage all people towards goodness, mutual love, morality and piety. This alone is our objective and aim. Regarding the Hereafter, it is all in the Hands of Allah the Almighty.”***

A guest from Albania mentioned that his two sons had accepted Ahmadiyyat and so he had come to the Germany Jalsa to see what they had accepted.

Referring to his experience, the guest said:

***“This Jalsa has shocked me. It was the most beautiful thing I have ever seen in my life and I am no longer sad that my sons have accepted Ahmadiyyat but am proud of them. I will also soon be an Ahmadi Muslim, Insha’Allah. My only fear is that my generation are predominantly atheist because religion was banned when we were growing up in our country and so I am worried it will be hard for me personally to integrate into the Jamaat.”***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“May Allah the Almighty enable you to accept Ahmadiyyat soon and to remove any reservations or fears that you may hold. Remember, no worldly figure, whether Stalin, Lenin or any other person who seems powerful in their era is immortal. Everyone comes and goes. The only Being who is Everlasting and All-Powerful is the One God.”***

Addressing Huzoor, an Albanian female lawyer gave her own unique take on Jalsa. She said:

***“Whilst at the Jalsa, I felt I was living in a bee hive and that every person understood their roles and responsibilities and were fulfilling their duties perfectly just like bees do. Also, the way people offered their Salat was incredible. I have never in my life seen such sincerity of worship. I could hear countless people in tears as they prayed. I will never forget it.”***

An Albanian man was next to speak. He said:

***“Last year, I came to the Jalsa and I was not an Ahmadi but now I am an Ahmadi Muslim. Huzoor, you are now my leader and so I wrote a letter to you and you wrote back to me and this was a reflection of true leadership that you are open to all people and do not limit your time to powerful or rich people. Last time, I spoke to you through a translator but this time I am speaking to you directly in English because you are now my spiritual guide and spiritual leader.”***

### **Old friends**

Amongst the many people of varying ethnicities, nationalities and religions meeting Huzoor was a Croatian lady who was a familiar face. She had attended the UK Jalsa on three previous occasions and had even attended the Qadian Jalsa. This was her first visit to the German Jalsa.

Huzoor was very happy to see her and her husband again and met them like they were his old friends.

For instance, the Croatian lady informed Huzoor that she was not keen on the beard that her husband had recently grown.

In reply, Huzoor smiled and said:

***“No, no! He looks much better with the beard and younger!”***

The lady said:

***“Your Holiness, as you approve then I will not tell him again to shave it off!”***

Thereafter, the Croatian lady began to reflect upon her various Jalsa experiences and spoke with great emotion. She said:

***“When I attended my first Jalsa a few years ago, I thought that nothing can be better but each Jalsa has proved more memorable and beneficial than the last. The spirituality, intellectualism and organisation continues to increase and the Jalsas have given me a new and far broader perspective on the entire world and shown me the great impact of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. I have realised that all of mankind is in dire need of the rope provided by God Almighty to reach Him.”***

As the lady continued to speak, she was visibly emotional. Addressing Huzoor, she continued:

***“Allah has placed a great and heavy burden on you. I pray for you a great deal that Allah lessens the burden on you but, at the same time, you are the chosen one and so you have to accept it and you have accepted it. You are leading the world towards peace and morality. I wish to ask you for***



***your prayers but I fear that is selfish because there are others who need your prayers far more than me."***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***"Of course, I pray for you. I pray for all people and all mankind."***

Thereafter, Huzoor asked the lady's husband how he was. In reply, he said:

***"In the past, I attended the Jalsas as a Muslim but this time I attend as an Ahmadi Muslim. I hope and pray that Muslims unite and then all of mankind unites under the banner of the Khilafat of the Promised Messiah (as). I am motivated to be a better Ahmadi and a better Muslim."***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***"There is no difference between 'Ahmadi' and 'Muslim'. They are not separate but the same and so you should say 'I am motivated to be a better Ahmadi Muslim'."***

By the time the final delegation had concluded it was 8.20pm. My hand was tired from all the writing of the past few hours and so I was glad to give it some rest. Yet, Huzoor's day continued as he returned to his office for a series of family Mulaqats.

It had proven an extremely blessed, faith-inspiring and memorable day in the history of the Jamaat. So many people, from so many nations had the

opportunity to meet Huzoor and to seek his prayers and guidance and to express their emotions.

It has been a privilege and honour to attend those meetings and to see first-hand the blessings of Khilafat and its great impact upon the people of the world. *Alhamdolillah.*

### **Meeting with Finance Committee**

The following day, the final full day of Huzoor's tour of Germany, Huzoor held morning and evening sessions of family Mulaqats. Furthermore, Huzoor also held a meeting with Germany Jamaat's *Finance Committee*.

The *Finance Committee* oversees the finances of the Jamaat and its members include Ameer Sahib Germany, the National General Secretary, the National Finance Secretary and the National Missionary-in-charge.

During the meeting, Huzoor was informed that it was not possible to find consensus amongst the committee members regarding certain Jamaat expenditures or other finance related issues.

Upon hearing this, Huzoor said:

***"In all circumstances, you should give a report to the National Majlis Amila. Where there is a lack of consensus amongst the Finance Committee, you should apprise the National Amila and present both sides of the argument to them. The Amila members can discuss and seek to***

***resolve the issue but if agreement remains out of reach then you should send the report to Khalifatul Masih for guidance.”***

Huzoor also said that Jamaat finances must remain ‘transparent’ and that Ahmadis had a right to know how the Jamaat spent the money collected through Chanda and for this the institution of *Majlis-e-Shura* was established in the Jamaat.

During the meeting, Huzoor also said that it was very important that Missionaries were given due respect by the Amila members and office bearers of the Jamaat.

Huzoor said:

***“Some of the Missionaries are very young and the President of the Jamaats where they serve or their Amilas are made up of people who are much more senior in age. As a result, there has been a tendency of some to disrespect the young Missionaries or to not listen to them. This is wrong and it impacts the Jamaat in many ways, including in terms of Chanda collection. I do not care if a Missionary is only aged 25 or even less, you must inculcate a respect for them amongst the National Amila and the regional and local administrations. For the long term Tarbiyyat of the Jamaat this is very important.”***

After giving further guidance on various issues, Huzoor again spoke about the need for working with a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect.

Huzoor said:

***“Each Amila member should realise that they are not in competition with other Amila members but that they have a moral and religious duty to help and support one another. If you work together with a spirit of love and respect for one another, much more can be achieved and you will not waste time in needless arguments or debates.”***

The meeting with Finance Committee was a reflection of how closely Huzoor guided the Jamaat on administrative matters.

Being present in that meeting was a stark reminder that being an *office bearer* in the Jamaat was not something to take pride in or to take lightly.

Rather, Huzoor desires for the office bearers to be servants of the Jamaat and to maintain the utmost humility.

### **Departure from Germany**

On the morning of 12 September 2018, after a silent prayer led by Huzoor, the Qafila departed from Baitus Sabuh in Frankfurt and drove straight to the Belgian Flemish city of Alken, where Huzoor was to commence his visit to Belgium by inaugurating the Baitur Raheem Mosque.

Though Huzoor had stopped briefly in Belgium on the way back from his recent visits to Germany, this was the first time in a number of years that Huzoor was staying in Belgium for a number of days.

One of the early lessons I learned when travelling with Huzoor's Qafila is that when there is a car journey it is better to utilise the bathroom wherever possible and to be careful with fluid intake. During long journeys, the intervals between such stops can vary!

Early in the journey to *Alken* one of the passengers in our car mentioned he needed the bathroom and so he was hoping (and praying) for a stop at a service station or petrol station. However, the journey continued uninterrupted and the longer the journey went the worse the situation became. Myself and the other people in the car tried our best to distract him but about 30 minutes from Alken he mentioned that he could wait no longer!

Thus, our car radioed Ahmad bhai (*Head of Security*) and informed of the issue! After, a moment, in which I'm sure Ahmad bhai will have apprised Huzoor of the matter at hand, we received an instruction to stop at a petrol station, whilst the rest of the Qafila would continue directly to the Mosque.

We stopped at a nearby place for a few minutes whilst Huzoor and the other Qafila cars went on ahead. As we resumed our journey, Nadeem Amini who was driving our car, made it his mission to catch up with Huzoor's car before Huzoor reached the Mosque.

It seemed highly unlikely as the Mosque was only a few miles ahead but Nadeem was determined and concentrated like never before! He changed lanes repeatedly trying to ensure that not a second was wasted and took advantage of the relatively lenient European speed limits. To our pleasant surprise, his efforts proved fruitful and so just a mile before Huzoor reached

the Mosque we saw the Qafila cars and resumed our set position in front of Huzoor's car.

Nadeem beamed happily at the fact that we had arrived with Huzoor and, in his own way, it illustrated how seriously he took his duty to drive a Qafila car.

### **Inauguration of Baitur Raheem Mosque, Alken**

The new Mosque was situated in a very picturesque area. Greenery pervaded the Mosque plot, as well as the surrounding areas. The Mosque itself had been converted from a festival hall.

Upon arrival, Huzoor was greeted by the *Mayor of Alken*, Marc Penxten, whilst hundreds of Ahmadi Muslim men, women and children recited *tarany* to welcome Huzoor to their Jamaat.



Huzoor formally inaugurated the Mosque by leading a silent prayer and unveiling a commemorative plaque. Thereafter, Huzoor led the Zuhr and Asr prayers before addressing the members of the Jamaat.



Huzoor began his address by emphasising the increased responsibilities of the local Ahmadi Muslims following the opening of the Mosque.

Huzoor said:

***“With the Grace of Allah, the Almighty has blessed the local Ahmadi Muslims with this new Mosque and with its opening, your responsibility to abide by the true teachings of Islam has further increased. The local (non-Muslim) people should come to observe the true peaceful teachings of Islam through your conduct and behaviour.”***



Huzoor reiterated the need to fulfil the rights of one another and to demonstrate the spirit of unity the Promised Messiah (as) sought to inculcate within the members of his Jamaat.



Huzoor said:

***“The Promised Messiah (peace be upon him) repeatedly drew our attention towards fulfilling the rights of our fellow human beings. Indeed, Allah the Almighty says that the worship of those people who do not care for their fellow man will never be accepted and such prayers are merely superficial. Thus, Ahmadi Muslims should treat each other with great love and develop true brotherhood. Show the world that we are a united community who manifest only love and peace.”***

### **Inspection of Baitur Raheem complex**

After the formal proceedings concluded, Huzoor inspected the Mosque premises. Apart from the Mosque itself, there was a very large kitchen, a dining area, residence and various other facilities.



Momentarily, Huzoor walked outside onto a balcony on the upper level of the Mosque building and enjoyed the view.



Huzoor was also shown a large industrial sized freezer which came with the property. Huzoor specially called Ameer Sahib Germany and showed him the freezer and spent a few minutes in conversation with him.

Huzoor knew that the Germany part of the tour was now complete and Ameer Sahib Germany and most of the German team were about to return to Germany and out of his grace, Huzoor spent those extra few minutes with Ameer Sahib Germany and then personally met all the German Jamaat members who were present.

Huzoor's visit to Alken concluded as he gave chocolates to the local Ahmadi children before departing for Brussels at 4.30pm.

After seeing off Huzoor, Ameer Sahib Germany and his team returned to Germany, whilst Ameer Sahib Belgium, Dr. Idris Ahmad sahib and other

officials of the Belgium Jamaat hosted Huzoor and the Qafila for the rest of the tour.

### **Odeh sahib's phone!**

Huzoor arrived at the *Baitus Salam Mosque* in Brussels early evening and upon arrival Huzoor was greeted by many Ahmadis, mostly from Belgium but also some Ahmadis who had come from other European countries such as the UK, Germany and Holland.

Shortly after arriving, Huzoor went to his residence and as there was some time until the next programme, a few of us decided to take our luggage to the nearby hotel where we were staying and when I returned to the Mosque an hour later, I was greeted by a scene that will live long in the memory!

I was about to enter the office I was sharing with other members of the Qafila when I saw, to my complete surprise, Huzoor standing in our office near *Ameer Sahib Kababir*, Sharif Odeh sahib, who was also in Belgium to attend the Jalsa.

I saw Huzoor laughing and Sharif Odeh sahib and the other people in the office laughing as well. It was also very noticeable that Sharif Odeh sahib was bright red!

As soon as Huzoor had left the office, all those who remained started to laugh and discuss the previous few minutes.

Explaining what had transpired, Abdul Majid Tahir sahib said:

***“We were working in the office and Sharif Odeh sahib was also sitting here looking at his phone. Suddenly, to our surprise, Huzoor came out of his residence and into our office. We all stood up in respect but Sharif sahib was so involved in his phone that he did not realise that Huzoor was in the room!”***

Majid sahib continued:

***“Huzoor himself immediately noticed Sharif sahib had not realised and so Huzoor walked towards Sharif sahib and stood next to him smiling and even then for a few seconds Sharif sahib did not realise Huzoor was right next to him and continued to look at his phone’s screen! Huzoor looked at us and remarked that ‘Sharif sahib is engrossed in his phone!’ Then suddenly, Sharif Odeh sahib looked up and was completely shocked and startled to see Huzoor standing right there in front of him! He jumped up and upon this, everyone, including Huzoor began to laugh.”***

As Majid sahib recounted what had happened, Sharif Odeh sahib laughed, whilst remaining red with embarrassment.

As he continued to laugh, Sharif sahib said:

***“Majid sahib, why were all of you silent? Why did no one tell me Huzoor is in the room?!”***

In reply, Majid sahib said:

***“When Huzoor is present we remain silent!”***

It was a memorable incident that we spoke about a few times during the rest of the trip. Each time, the same look of embarrassment combined with joy was apparent on Sharif Odeh sahib’s face.

Embarrassment for not realising Huzoor was present but joy to have shared a light moment that brought laughter to beloved Huzoor.

### **A red mark**

After Namaz and dinner, I returned to the hotel where I was staying. The hotel was convenient as it was very close to the Mosque but I was slightly nervous when I saw some strange red marks near the door handle of my room.

The marks looked suspiciously like blood stains and so on that first night, I woke up three or four times and checked the room to ensure that everything was safe and secure.

My initial apprehension gradually subsided, and so by the second night in Belgium I was able to sleep much sounder and eventually I was just about able to remove those rather strange red marks from my mind entirely! In hindsight, I doubt very much they were bloodstains and more likely just red marks!

### **An incomplete library**

We returned to the Mosque for Fajr and after leading Namaz, Huzoor went to his office. It was immediately apparent that Huzoor was displeased that certain Jamaat books were not present in his office or residence.

Huzoor spoke with Ameer Sahib Belgium and the Missionary-in-charge before calling another Missionary, Asad Mujeeb a graduate of Jamia Ahmadiyya UK, who was now serving as the National General Secretary of Belgium Jamaat.

Narrating Huzoor's instructions at the time, Asad sahib later told me:

***"After Fajr, Huzoor called Ameer Sahib Belgium and our Missionary-in-charge and said that a number of books were missing from the residence which had been present on his previous tours to Belgium. They were unsure where the books were and so Huzoor called me and instructed that the books containing the sermons of the Khulafa-e-Ahmadiyyat should be in his office by Zuhr time. Thereafter, Huzoor returned to his residence."***

Asad sahib continued:

***"Thankfully, most of the books Huzoor required were present in our other Jamaat library. However, we only had the first 8 volumes of the compilation of the sermons of Hazrat Musleh Maud (ra), as the remaining volumes are printed in Qadian and not London. Thus, I called Holland Jamaat and France Jamaat to see if they had the remaining***

***volumes but they also did not have them. I then called the German Jamaat and, Alhamdolillah, they had one full set which they were able to send to us that morning.”***

Asad sahib further said:

***“A couple of days later, Huzoor called me to his office for a few moments and said that even if it is the duty of the National Ishaat Secretary to stock the libraries in the Jamaats, when Khalifa-Waqt is visiting the central Missionary should personally check that all books are present because they have more experience than the office bearers, particularly in smaller Jamaats like Belgium.”***

I have served as a *Waqf-e-Zindighi* for 12 years and it is extremely rare to see Huzoor express any anger or displeasure.

Here, Huzoor did express some displeasure but it was not due to any issue pertaining to his personal comfort but an expression of his love and respect for the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) and the Khulafa-e-Ahmadiyyat. Furthermore, it was an illustration of Huzoor’s desire for all Jamaats to have well-resourced libraries containing the books of the Promised Messiah (as) and the Khulafa.

### **A roll and an egg**

After Fajr, it became a routine for most of the Qafila members staying in the hotel to have breakfast early. On the first day, we were told by the hotel staff to go to a separate dining room that had been set up for us.

Initially, we were quite pleased to hear of this ‘*separate dining room*’, as it sounded quite promising. However, when we entered the room, any excitement gave way to a rather underwhelming feeling.

The breakfast had been laid out in small individual portions, where each person had been allocated one bread roll and one boiled egg.

The pre-made plates reminded me of the type of plate we might have been given on a school trip in childhood.

I was ok because the bread was brown and normally I eat brown bread for breakfast with butter and jam. However, a look of alarm on the face of some of the elder Qafila members was inescapable. They were each used to something warm for breakfast and so the prospect of a cold roll and cold boiled egg for breakfast for the next five or six days was probably not the most appetising of thoughts.

One of our group members inspected the plate carefully, perhaps hoping that he had missed something and there was some alternative hidden underneath the roll or the egg!

Anyway, just as everyone was about to start, a hotel staff member entered the room and rather frantically said:

***“No, no! This is not for you. This breakfast is for a Turkish group who are staying in the hotel. Your breakfast is in the normal dining area!”***

As he said these words, the look of relief on the face of the elders was clearly palpable!

Munir Javed sahib perhaps spoke for everyone when he looked at me, smiled, and quietly said:

***“Shukar hai!”***

Without needing a second invitation, we all walked briskly across to the main dining hall and had breakfast there where the choices were plenty.

Most of the Qafila members had fried eggs or omelettes, whilst a few others, including me, had traditional Belgian breakfast waffles.

### **Emotions of Ahmadis**

During his stay in Belgium, apart from his many other activities and engagements, Huzoor held several sessions of family Mulaqats.

One person to meet Huzoor was *Tahir Mahmood (41)*. During the preceding months, he had dedicated his time and services to the Jamaat to work on the Alken Mosque, which Huzoor had inaugurated the day before.

Speaking moments after meeting Huzoor for the first time in his life, Tahir Mahmood sahib said:

***“I consider it the greatest honour of my life to have been able to devote the last 7 or 8 months to serving the Jamaat. The contentment and peace***



*of mind from working on such a blessed project that Khalifa-Waqt himself was to inaugurate was a privilege and blessing of the highest order. Yet, my Khalifa is so gracious and humble that today when I told him about my involvement he said 'Jazak'Allah' to me, when it should be me saying 'Jazak'Allah' to him for the opportunity to serve."*

Another person to meet Huzoor was *Kashif Rehan Khalid (44)* who had lived most of his life in Belgium after leaving Pakistan with his family in 1990.

Visibly emotional, Kashif sahib said:

*"For many years, I felt devastated that Huzoor would travel each year through Belgium on his way to Germany but would not stop here. Surely, this was due to our weaknesses that we were not deserving of Huzoor staying with us. This time, Huzoor has blessed us and I plead and beg to Allah the Almighty that it is not long until Huzoor comes again. Rather, we desperately yearn for Huzoor to visit us again and again and we know that the progress of our Jamaat in Belgium depends on our attachment to Khilafat."*

Kashif sahib continued:

*"In just two days, I feel like Huzoor has brought a spiritual revolution amongst us that we could not have achieved in many years without him. Being close to Khilafat and obedient to Khalifa-Waqt is the only way that we can save our future generations so that they remain firm in their faith forevermore."*

Another person, I met was called *Abid Karim* who had met Huzoor after a period of fourteen years. Abid sahib then introduced me to his son and told me his name was 'Mahid'.

Hearing that not only did we share a name but also his eldest son had the same name as my elder son was somewhat of a surprise!

I did not ask the name of his wife or other children, as I think if they had matched with my family it would have been too much for me to take!

### **Inauguration of Jalsa Salana Belgium**

On Friday 14 September 2018, Huzoor inaugurated the 25<sup>th</sup> Jalsa Salana Belgium, which was held at the nearby *Brussels Kart Expo Convention Centre*. Upon arrival at the centre at 2pm, Huzoor raised the *Liwa-e-Ahmadiyyat* (*Flag of Ahmadiyyat*) before delivering his weekly Friday Sermon.

During the sermon, Huzoor mentioned how he was attending the Jalsa Salana Belgium after several years and that many Ahmadi Muslims had come to Belgium from Pakistan during the intervening period.

Huzoor said it was incumbent upon them to remain firm in their faith whilst living in the West.

Huzoor said:

***"Of course, it is necessary to earn a living so you can support your family and loved ones, however a true Muslim should never become fully***

***immersed and engulfed by materialism. Your first priority and true objective should be following your faith and abiding by Islam's true teachings. Every day that passes and every step we take should be better than the preceding day and the preceding step."***



Thereafter, Huzoor spoke about the importance of the Jalsa Salana and fulfilling its objectives.

Concluding, Huzoor prayed:

***"May Allah the Almighty enable all of the participants to act upon what they learn here at the Jalsa Salana and to derive all possible blessings and be the true inheritors of the prayers of the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him). May we be amongst those who portray the true and noble image of Islam to the rest of the world through both our words and our deeds."***

### **Emotions of Ahmadis**

Later in the day, after the conclusion of the first day of the Jalsa Salana, Huzoor held further family Mulaqats.

Amongst those to meet Huzoor was a young Khadim, *Ikramullah Joya (26)*, originally from Sargodha in Pakistan, who was serving in the Khuddam security team. When I met him, his eyes were extremely red.

Explaining, Ikramullah sahib said:

***“For the past five or six days I have only slept between two or three hours each night, as I have been doing duty at the Mosque. I might look tired to you but I do not feel it. Every second to serve Huzoor is a great honour and the spirit of unity amongst the Khuddam and the sense of brotherhood we have achieved in just a few days, we could never achieve without the presence of Khalifa-Waqt.*”**

***“A worldly person might think that people like me are crazy to give up so much time for a voluntary duty but they do not understand the reality. They can mock or curse me and my response will always be that my beloved spiritual leader is here and so how could I contemplate being anywhere else?”***

As we concluded our brief conversation, Ikramullah sahib spoke of his delight at Huzoor’s presence in Belgium. He said:

***“In recent years, we always felt devastated that Huzoor would pass through this country on his way to Germany but would not stay here. Yet, Allah has now accepted our supplications and I am sure that it will lead to the progress of our Jamaat. Wherever Khalifa-Waqt lays his feet the land is destined to be blessed.”***

### **Address to Lajna Imaillah**

On Saturday, September 15 September, Huzoor addressed the members of *Lajna Imaillah* at the Jalsa Salana Belgium.

In his address to Lajna, Huzoor narrated the faith-inspiring examples of several Ahmadi Muslim women who had demonstrated exemplary patience and made great sacrifices for the sake of their faith.

For example, Huzoor narrated the incident of a convert to Ahmadiyyat from India, who displayed the highest levels of bravery in the face of cruel persecution. When her husband died, the local Maulvis refused permission for him to be buried in the local cemetery. However, if their desire was to weaken the faith of the Ahmadi lady they were left frustrated. Rather than bowing down to the pressure she faced, she took the body of her husband and buried it in the garden of their family home.

Huzoor also cited the example of a highly qualified and educated Ahmadi Muslim lady living in Canada who struggled to find work only because she observed Hijab.

Huzoor said:

***“Hers was an example of true faith and she is not alone. In many Western countries, there are local women who become Ahmadis and observe Hijab without hesitation or any complex. Such women are setting an example for others that there is no need to have any inferiority complex when it comes to your faith.”***

### **An unfortunate disturbance**

After his address to Lajna Imaillah, Huzoor proceeded to the men's hall where he led the Zuhr and Asr prayer.

Unfortunately, during Namaz there was a lot of background noise. Some of the noise was from children, some due to people entering the hall late and one or two phones were heard ringing as well.

Thus, after Namaz, Huzoor called the *Afsar Jalsa Salana* and gave instructions regarding the disturbance.

Huzoor said:

***“We have Jalsas in UK and Germany where there are 18,000 people in one hall and they are able to maintain silence during Namaz but here, where the numbers are far less, there was so much noise. In other countries, there are children present and so it is no excuse to say that the noise was due to children. From now on, regular announcements should be given regarding the importance of silence during Namaz and the Jamaat administration should pay special regard to ensuring that there is no disturbance from now on.”***

### **Re-arranging the office**

Following the conclusion of the second day of the Jalsa Salana Belgium, Huzoor met various local dignitaries and answered questions during a *Press Conference* attended by various media organisations.

The meetings were initially scheduled to take place at the Jalsa site, however some members of Huzoor's staff were of the opinion that there was no need to return to the Jalsa site and that the meetings could be held at the Mosque to save Huzoor's time.

Thus, in the late afternoon, two rooms were readied. It was decided that the meeting with dignitaries would take place in the office where Huzoor's staff members worked. It was cleared of desks and tables and some extra chairs were brought in.

It was also decided the Press Conference could take place in the Mosque itself and so MTA brought in an appropriate backdrop and set up their cameras and lighting, whilst chairs were placed in rows for the journalists.

A few minutes before the meetings were due to start, Huzoor came out of his residence and was then informed that that the meetings would take place at the Mosque, rather than at the Jalsa complex.

*Alhamdolillah*, to our relief and happiness, Huzoor seemed pleased by the decision.

### **Meeting with dignitaries**

Amongst the people to meet Huzoor were senior representatives of the Catholic Church, various Mayors representing different districts of Brussels, parliamentarians, councillors and other community leaders. Each guest introduced themselves to Huzoor and had the opportunity to seek Huzoor's advice and counsel on various issues.

One of the dignitaries asked Huzoor why he lived in London and upon this, Huzoor gave a detailed answer about the persecution faced by the Jamaat in Pakistan and how Hazrat Khalifatul Masih IV (rh) had been forced to migrate in 1984 to England and how Huzoor himself had lived in London since being elected Khalifatul Masih in 2003.



Thereafter, some of the discussion was with the Mayor of Molenbeek, Francoise Schepmans. Her district of Belgium had become infamous as the 'hub' for Muslim extremists and terrorists who had planned and carried out terrorist attacks in France and Belgium in recent years.

Speaking about Molenbeek, Mayor Schepmans said:

***"The people of Molenbeek have been branded as extremists and terrorists but the vast majority are good citizens. It is true that a few individuals lived here who were terrorists but it is wrong to defame the***



***entire district. Most of our community members just want to live in peace and for their children to attain good education and to live a quiet life.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Generally people, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, religious or non-religious, are good natured people but just a handful of likeminded evil or hateful people can disrupt and destroy the peace of the entire society. This is what has happened in Islam as well. The vast majority of Muslims are peaceful but a tiny minority of extremists have sought to hijack the religion and have defamed it across the world.”***

Huzoor continued:

***“I always say that immigrants should be grateful to their adopted country. Hence, immigrants to this country and their future generations should be loyal and faithful citizens of this nation, rather than involve themselves in criminality, fanaticism and violence. Certainly, I am of the view that new immigrants should be encouraged to take part in community service initiatives as this will help them integrate and to understand the values of the local people.”***

Upon, this another guest said:

***“We need ‘extremism’ in society – but not bad extremism, we need extreme love!”***

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“Sadly, the word ‘extremism’ is now used almost exclusively in a negative context and I think new dictionaries would now give a definition that suggests a negative connotation for this word. Whereas, you are right, extreme love and kindness is positive and what is needed in society.”***

Just a brief cursory look at the dictionary and thesaurus proved Huzoor’s point. The most common synonyms for ‘extremism’ that I came across were ‘bigotry’, ‘hatred’, ‘intolerance’ amongst others.

The *Mayor of Molenbeek* informed Huzoor that apart from being the ‘Mayor’ she was also affiliated with Belgium’s National Parliament.

Mayor Schepmans said:

***“In my capacity as a national representative, I wish to formally welcome Your Holiness to Belgium. It is a great honour for our nation that you are here to attend the Jalsa Salana Belgium after a period of fourteen years.”***

In response, Huzoor said:

***“It is rare, as far as I am aware, for someone to be the Mayor and a member of the national parliament at the same time and it shows that you are a person of great potential and capability. It shows that the people in this country value and trust you. We Ahmadi Muslims will always be ready to assist you and the other leaders of this country in***

***creating true and long-lasting peace in society and to help this nation progress.”***

The Mayor was extremely appreciative of Huzoor’s gracious comments and thanked him.

### **Press Conference in Brussels**

Thereafter, the meeting ended and Huzoor walked a few metres across to the Mosque where members of the media were waiting.

The first question of the Press Conference was from a Pakistani journalist who asked Huzoor his views on ‘Islamophobia’ in the Western world and also about the recent appointment and subsequent removal of an Ahmadi Muslim economist, Atif Mian, to Pakistan’s *Economic Advisory Council*.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“In terms of Islamophobia, our method of countering it is by manifesting the true teachings of Islam. We strive to show that Islam promotes freedom of religion, tolerance and teaches us to be good, moral citizens who serve their people and communities. This is the true Islam that the Ulema (Islamic clergy) across the world need to practice and preach. They should be reminded that the Holy Prophet of Islam (sa) was sent as a source of everlasting mercy for all of mankind. He spent his life spreading love and compassion. He was mercilessly and violently opposed and yet his response was patience and to forgive those who inflicted cruelties upon him and his followers.”***

Responding to the question about Atif Mian sahib, Huzoor said:

***“As Muslims, we should look at the Treaty of Medina as an example and this is something that Prime Minister Imran Khan has himself said he will base his Government on. The Treaty of Medina required for people of all faiths to co-exist peacefully and to work together with a spirit of mutual cooperation. Yet, in today’s Pakistan, after just a few days of pressure from the Mullahs, the government became fearful and withdrew their support for Atif Mian’s appointment.”***



A representative of *GEO TV* asked Huzoor if he held any hope that the condition of Ahmadi Muslims would improve in Pakistan. The journalist also mentioned the role of Chaudhry Zafrullah Khan sahib in the creation of Pakistan as an ‘Islamic Republic’.

In response, Huzoor said:

***“Only if the new government (in Pakistan) shows courage can it affect real change but I don’t know if they will be able to show it, even though it***

*is said that Imran Khan currently has the support of the Pakistani army and judiciary to a limited extent at least. The problem remains that Mullahs have street power and until their platforms to spread extremism are removed no government will be able to work freely. Thus, the government needs to act firmly to stamp out all forms of extremism, otherwise the situation will not get any better in Pakistan."*

Huzoor continued:

*"As for Chaudhry Zafrullah Khan sahib, he championed freedom of religion for all communities and all people. This was the vision he shared with Qaid-e-Azam and was an inherent part of the true Islamic Government they sought to establish upon Pakistan's creation."*

Upon being asked what he advised Ahmadis in Pakistan, Huzoor said:

*"It is not possible for all Ahmadis to leave Pakistan. Those who continue to live in Pakistan face a life of daily persecution and some are forced to endure extreme brutalities but in every aspect of our lives we seek to follow the noble example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). He and his followers faced the most horrific cruelties in Makkah but they did not retaliate and so we should also show patience in the face of adversity."*

Another journalist sought to challenge Huzoor on the Jamaat's claim of 'Love for All, Hatred for None'. He asked *how* and *why* should a person love his enemy.

In reply, Huzoor said:

***“The Holy Prophet (sa) said that you should even help he who is a cruel oppressor or tyrant. When they heard this, the companions of the Holy Prophet (sa) asked how it was possible to help the cruel and evil and Holy Prophet (sa) said that the way to help was to prevent them from committing further atrocities. And so this is what we mean when we say ‘Love for All, Hatred for None’ that we want to save our opponents from their cruelties so that they may be saved from the Wrath of Allah. If we don’t have the ability to stop them then at least we should pray that they withdraw from their cruelties and injustices.”***



Another journalist asked Huzoor whether he objected to the law and constitution of Pakistan. Huzoor’s answer was very emotional and illustrated his complete and utter devotion to Islam and the teachings of the Holy Prophet (sa).

Huzoor said:

***“The Holy Prophet (sa) said that a person who recites the Kalima is a Muslim. During an expedition, a companion killed a person who recited the Kalima at the last second because he thought that he was reciting the Kalima merely as a pretence to be saved. Upon learning of it, the Holy Prophet (sa) was greatly angered and said ‘Were you able to open his heart to see if he was telling the truth?’ Thus, if I say I am a Muslim what right does any person or any assembly have to declare me as otherwise? Have the members of the National Assembly of Pakistan opened the hearts of Ahmadis to see what is inside?”***

Huzoor continued:

***“In terms of following the laws of Pakistan, Ahmadis are law abiding citizens but when it comes to the basic elements of our religion we can never leave them. No matter what I will always offer Namaz and they can take me to jail if they want but they will never separate me from the worship of Allah. In fact, I have been to jail already! I will tolerate anything and everything for the sake of Islam. Thus, the laws that seek to deny Ahmadis their basic religious rights are cruel laws and diametrically opposed to Jinnah’s vision of Pakistan, which was to be a nation open to all people and all faiths.”***

At the end of the *Press Conference*, some of the dignitaries and journalists asked Huzoor if they could have a photo with him. Amongst them was a Pakistani politician, serving as a local councillor in Belgium, who became visibly emotional as he met Huzoor.



As he met Huzoor, with tears in his eyes, the Pakistani councillor said:

***“I had heard so many negative things about you from Maulvis but today, after meeting you and hearing you, I have realised that everything I was told were lies and false.”***

### **A word of wisdom**

Later that evening, after *Maghreb* and *Isha*, I returned to the hotel where I was staying. An elderly Ahmadi gentleman, with a rather deep rasping voice, kindly gave me a lift in his car. I felt uncomfortable that this elderly man was doing a duty, in which he was transporting a *Khadim* like me.

I said to him I was embarrassed that he was the one who had been given this duty.

In reply, the elderly man, whose name I never asked, said:

***“There is no need for you to be embarrassed or to apologise. The blessings we are receiving these days due to the presence of our Khalifa are unlike anything else in the world. I am fortunate and lucky that I have been given the opportunity to provide some service by transporting the guests who have come with our beloved Huzoor.”***

The Ahmadi told me that he had converted to Ahmadiyyat in the year 2000. At the time, his paternal uncle was an Ahmadi and though he was delighted that his nephew had accepted Ahmadiyyat, he also gave him a warning.



Narrating the advice his uncle had given him, the Ahmadi man said:

***“When I accepted Ahmadiyyat, my uncle said ‘Now you are an Ahmadi, I wish to give you one piece of advice. Do not think that every Ahmadi is perfect or angelic. Every person has flaws and personal weaknesses and so if you see something in another Ahmadi that you do not like, never let it weaken your faith. Your only goal and objective should be to be an angel yourself and to be the best Ahmadi you can be. Your role model and example is Khalifa-Waqt, forget everyone else!’”***

He told me that during his first two or three years as an Ahmadi he did have the occasional negative experience but he always kept that comment of his uncle in mind. As a result, his faith never weakened and he came to recognise the high levels of morality and spirituality found within the Jamaat. He said:

***“After a few years, I realised that though every Ahmadi is not a perfect angel, generally Ahmadi Muslims have far better morals and are following the path of the Holy Prophet (sa) far more than other Muslims. Thus, where I am grateful for the sage advice of my uncle, I can also say that Ahmadis are the best of mankind today and I am very fortunate that Allah enabled me to accept the Promised Messiah (as).”***

### **A changed heart**

In the afternoon of 16 September 2018, Huzoor returned to the *Jalsa Gah* at the *Expo Convention Centre* to preside the concluding session of the 25<sup>th</sup> Jalsa Salana Belgium.

Prior to Huzoor's address, guest remarks were presented by a *Member of the European Parliament* followed by a brief remarks Christian De Coninck, the *Commissioner of Police in Brussels*.

The remarks of the *Police Commissioner* were particularly interesting as he mentioned how seeing first-hand the devastating consequences of a terrorist attack had shaped his view on Islam.

Christian De Coninck, Police Commissioner of Brussels, said:

***"To come here for me was a 'confrontation' – in the good sense of the word. I was one of the responders after the terrorist attack on 22 March 2016 at the Maalbeek Metro station in Brussels and I saw there awful things. I saw people dying at my feet. I saw people badly injured and I could not understand that this happened in the name of religion. What religion it is? And I became very angry with Islam."***

The Police Commissioner continued:

***"Now, I'm here (at the Jalsa Salana) and I want to thank your community. I'm honoured that you have given me the opportunity to speak to you and thanks to you I have come to peace and I can rest again. I can now embrace Islam and your community because your slogan of 'Love for All, Hatred for None' has touched me in the heart and this is the real essence of religion."***

Though his comments were brief, the words of the *Police Commissioner* were powerful and showed how, under the guidance of Khilafat, our Jamaat was changing hearts and defending Islam by manifesting its true teachings.

The Commissioner's anger towards Islam upon seeing his countrymen being killed in its name was entirely understandable. Yet, through Ahmadiyyat he had seen that what had happened on 22 March 2016 in Brussels was nothing to do with Islam.

### **Rights of local Ahmadis**

Before the formal session began with Tilawat, Huzoor addressed the people seated before him in the hall.

Huzoor said:

***"In the front area of this hall, those people who are from Belgium should raise their hands."***

The result confirmed to Huzoor that the vast majority of people sitting at the front of the hall were Ahmadis from other countries, notably the UK and Germany.

Huzoor's sense of justice was immediately triggered upon seeing this and he made it clear that it would have been better if the German and UK guests had let the Belgian Ahmadis sit at the front, given that the UK and Germany Jalsas are blessed with Huzoor's presence each year, whereas he was attending the Belgium Jalsa after 14 years.

Huzoor said:

***“Those at the front from the UK and Germany should have let the Belgium Jamaat members sit at the front. The (Belgian) hosts have displayed patience that they have not objected to the fact that those who very recently attended the UK and German Jalsas have taken the rightful place of the Belgium Jamaat members at the front, whilst the hosts are at the back.”***

Later in the day, Huzoor also mentioned to Ameer Sahib Belgium that the numbers of Belgian Ahmadis in both the men’s and ladies’ halls were few compared to Ahmadis who had come from abroad.

Upon this, Ameer Sahib mentioned that quite a number of Belgian Ahmadis were engaged in Jalsa duties and so during the sessions they were not seated in the Jalsa Gah.

Upon this, Huzoor said:

***“You should have asked the German Jamaat to provide you with some Ahmadis to assist with Jalsa duties.”***

Huzoor’s words during the Jalsa, and also in his later conversation with Ameer Sahib, were a stark reminder that when he visits a Jamaat after a long time, Ahmadis who come from the UK or Germany should be respectful of the rights of the local Ahmadis.

I do not think Huzoor meant that at every Jalsa the hosts should be at the front. Rather, Huzoor's comment was in relation to Jalsas held in countries he visits less frequently.

For example, just a few days earlier, at the Germany Jalsa, Huzoor had specifically stated that the hosts should give preference to those Ahmadis who had come from abroad and were attending a Jalsa Salana graced by Huzoor for the first time.

### **Conclusion of Jalsa Salana Belgium**

The Jalsa Salana Belgium concluded with a faith inspiring address delivered by Huzoor during which he spoke about the unity of Ahmadi Muslims across the world.

Huzoor said:

***"In this day and age, when the world is riven by disorder and lacks any true direction or leadership, and at a time when people are struggling and oblivious to the solution that lies before them, we, Ahmadi Muslims, are truly fortunate to have been able to accept the person sent by Allah the Almighty to guide us upon the path of salvation. We have accepted that person who taught us to establish a bond of love with God Almighty and to fulfil the rights of His Creation."***

Huzoor presented various extracts of the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) in which he laid down his expectations and desires from the members of his Jamaat.

Huzoor said:

***“We must understand the deep and heartfelt anguish that the Promised Messiah (as) felt for the sake of his followers and his hopes for them. Certainly, it is impossible for the prayers of the Promised Messiah (as) to be accepted in our favour until we understand his longing for us to attain true piety and unless we are ready to live our lives according to his teachings.”***



Concluding his address, Huzoor said:

***“The Promised Messiah (as) has given us the duty to spread the truth of Islam and its peaceful message to every corner of the world. Thus, whether people accept it or not, we must never weaken in our resolve to ensure that the true message of Islam reaches every single person, in every single country of the world. This is the great task given to us by the Promised Messiah (peace be upon him)!”***

After leading a silent prayer, Huzoor announced that, with the *Grace of Allah*, more than 3,800 people from 24 countries had attended the Jalsa Salana Belgium.

## **Emotions of Ahmadis**

Where many of the attendees of the Jalsa returned to their homes, Huzoor continued to give time to the members of the Jamaat and so that evening and the next day further sessions of *family Mulaqats* took place.

Indeed, Huzoor's return to London was set for 18 September 2018 and some of us thought that perhaps the Qafila would leave Brussels in the morning. However, Huzoor instructed that even on that day of travel he would hold an extra session of family Mulaqats in the morning before the return journey to London later in the day.

One person to meet Huzoor was *Wakizimana Sadola (54)*, a Rwandan Ahmadi Muslim who had moved to Belgium in 1992, having accepted Ahmadiyyat in his home country in 1982.

After meeting Huzoor, Wakizimana Sadola sahib said:

***"I have been an Ahmadi Muslim for 35 years and never have I had cause for any regrets. Ahmadiyyat has given me everything. It has given me a true understanding of Islam. It has given me knowledge. It has given me life. These past few days have been enchanting and extraordinary. Since Huzoor has been here, this country Belgium has been the centre of the world! We cannot control our smiles and our delight whenever we see Huzoor! These are the best days of our lives. I would give up everything if it meant that Huzoor would come and live permanently here in Belgium!"***

Another person to meet Huzoor was *Muhammad Azam Bhagat (57)* who accepted Ahmadiyyat whilst living in Abu Dhabi in 1998, before moving to Belgium in 2002. His wife had also converted to Ahmadiyyat.

As tears rolled down his face, Muhammad Azam Bhagat sahib continued:

***“I swear if you tear open my heart, you will see nothing but love for Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya. Each night, I cry and weep before Allah praying that He continues to protect and give strength to beloved Huzoor. We, Ahmadis, are the fortunate ones, whilst the rest of the world is deprived. If I spend every minute of my life in thanks to Allah for showing me the light of Ahmadiyyat, I will still remain ungrateful for the blessings He has given me.”***

I also met an Ahmadi, *Safeer Ahmad (33)* shortly after he had met Huzoor for the first time. Originally from Quetta, he had to flee his home suddenly whilst studying medicine because anti-Ahmadi extremists had targeted him. They had even sent someone to kill him at his home but he had managed to escape.

His journey to Belgium had been long and convoluted. From Quetta, he went to Punjab before travelling to China, Mongolia, Vietnam, South Korea and Japan. From there, he flew to Finland before finally arriving in Belgium more than two and a half years after he had first left his home in Pakistan.

Safeer Ahmad sahib said:

***“Since I left Pakistan, both my father and mother have passed away and I never got to see them or attend their funerals but it does not matter.***



***Allah has given me so much already and today He gave more than I could ever dream of. He enabled me to meet my beloved Khalifa! Huzoor is the most pure and spiritual person I have ever seen and I felt as though he is a reflection of God Almighty. My hands are still shaking from the experience."***

Another person I met was *Isyfi Gani (43)*, an Eastern European convert to Ahmadiyyat who was brought up in Macedonia but whose family were ethnically Albanian. Describing himself as previously 'irreligious', he had accepted Ahmadiyyat in 1994, the same year that he moved to Belgium.

A few moments after his meeting with Huzoor, Isyfi Gani sahib said:

***"Whenever I have the fortune to meet Huzoor I feel shaky and touched because Huzoor is so holy and pure. I had many things I wished to say to Huzoor but when I saw him I felt mesmerised and entranced by the beauty and radiance that emanates from him. His gentle demeanour is reassuring, his voice is so soothing and his humility stands apart."***

Isyfi Gani sahib told me that he and his children were Ahmadis but his wife had not accepted it.

Very openly and honestly, Isyfi Gani sahib reflected on some challenges and personal failings he had experienced. He said:

***"During my 24 years as an Ahmadi Muslim, there was one period where my faith weakened. I had gained a lot of knowledge of religion but that knowledge had made me arrogant. Thus, after a few years of 'Paradise',***

***I spent the next few in 'hell' and could feel myself moving away from Ahmadiyyat. However, in my heart of hearts I knew that there was no other way of refuge other than Islam Ahmadiyyat. Our beliefs are not based on superstition or magic, but are based on logic and reason. Alhamdolillah, I passed through period of 'hell' and came out the other side and now my greatest passion is to preach the message of Ahmadiyyat. I enjoy debating with others because I know that there is no allegation or objection against us that cannot be answered satisfactorily."***

Speaking about what Ahmadiyyat had given him, Isyfi Gani said:

***"This world we live in is very deceptive, especially for the youth. There is so much propaganda and falsehood that is spread and ingrained into people. There is corruption at every level of society. Even most of the cartoons are no longer innocent. I worry for the youth but, at the same time, I am so grateful that I found Ahmadiyyat. It has changed my life. It has made me aware of God."***

As he spoke, I noticed that Isyfi Gani sahib was becoming emotional. His voice began to crack, as he spoke about his faith in Ahmadiyyat.

Isyfi Gani sahib said:

***"There is no other way than Ahmadiyyat. I don't know if I would have the strength of Hazrat Bilal (ra) who when they dragged him along burning stones and beat him he continued to say 'Ahad, Ahad' but I do know that there is nothing that can wipe away my faith in Ahmadiyyat. No one in***

***the world today can match the teachings of the Promised Messiah (as). The Mullahs, who say we are false, are themselves empty and the only Muslim leader today from God is Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the person who I just met, Alhamdolillah."***

It had been an emotional few minutes in the company of Isyfi Gani sahib. I was glad to have met him and to have heard of the personal challenges he had faced in his life. As we said *salam* he told me that he had never expected to become emotional whilst talking to me but the more he had reflected on the blessings of Ahmadiyyat and Khilafat, he had been unable to hold back his emotions.

### **Mrs Hendrick**

On our final night in Belgium, I met another convert to Ahmadiyyat, a very warm and kind elderly widow, *Mrs. Elena Hendrick* who was now 87 years old. It was a meeting that will remain firmly etched in my memory for a long time to come.

Having been raised a Catholic, she had lived the vast majority of her life devoutly attached to the Church, yet in 2006 at the age of 75 she left behind all that had come before and accepted Islam. It was genuinely inspiring to hear Mrs. Hendrick speak of her love for Islam and to meet someone who was willing to make such a transformative change so late in her life.

When I met her, she was sitting with an Ahmadi Muslim, *Qamar Ahmad*, who had first introduced Islam to her and as we began our conversation, she told me about the chance encounter that had changed her life.

Mrs. Elena Hendrick said:

*“It so happened one day I had taken my dog out for a walk in the park and I saw two Asian men taking photos. It occurred to me they might wish to have a photo together and so I offered to take it for them so that they would also see the good manners of the Flemish people. One of the men was Qamar Ahmad, who is sitting with us now and I asked him why he was in Belgium and he said it was because he was an Ahmadi Muslim and so he had to leave Pakistan.”*

Mrs. Hendrick continued:

*“Thereafter, I spoke with Qamar for a long time and he told me many things about Islam. For example, he explained the death of Jesus Christ (as) and I found it fascinating. I started to read books and continued my discussions with Qamar over many hours in the coming days and weeks. I started to pray to God asking Him to guide me. Also, for a long time, I had terrible backpain but when I prayed to Allah that I be relieved from it I was soon cured! Soon, I had complete certainty in my heart that Islam was true. I had lived all my life as a practicing Christian but still I never quite felt as though I had found God until that day when I accepted Ahmadiyyat. That day I found calmness and serenity.”*

Speaking of her personal relationship with Allah the Almighty, Mrs Hendrick said:

*“Ahmadiyyat has given me knowledge that God is a Living God and He is always listening. I have been Muslim for over ten years and Allah always*

***responds to my prayers! In fact, there has been no prayer I have made since accepting Islam that was not fulfilled within two weeks! Today, whenever anyone asks me my religion, I do not merely say that I am a 'Muslim' but I make it clear that I am an 'Ahmadi Muslim'. I am proud of my faith and have complete belief in it. I have faced prejudice but that only increased my faith and resolve. I have met Sunnis, I have met Shias, I have met them all and I tell them all that they should accept Ahmadiyyat!"***

It was amazing and inspiring to hear of the firm resolve of this elderly lady. Despite her gentle demeanour, she clearly did not hold back when it came to *Tabligh* and continued to seek to propagate the message of Islam.

Despite her advanced years, Mrs Hendrick was serving the Jamaat and spreading the message of Islam in Belgium. She told me she longed for the day that all the Belgian people would know the truth of Islam. For this purpose, she herself translated passages from the *Review of Religions* into Flemish so that her fellow citizens could learn and take benefit.

Mrs Hendrick also told me about her experience of meeting Huzoor and attending the Jalsa. She said:

***"I am a frail old lady and so when I went to the Jalsa, I needed two people to help me get from the car to the hall. Yet, as soon as I saw Huzoor with my own eyes, I felt an inner strength and I no longer needed support and was able to walk independently! I also met Huzoor in his office and met his respected wife in their home for almost two hours and I was very taken by their kindness and compassion. Huzoor is our father and there***

***is no representative of God on earth today except him. Huzoor treated me with such kindness, patience and respect. He even stood for a photo with me, even though I am nothing.”***

As our meeting ended, I asked Mrs Hendrick if she had any advice for me based on her long life and experience.

Very tenderly and kindly, she responded:

***“Just always be grateful that you believe in Allah and never underestimate how fortunate you are to be an Ahmadi Muslim. From my side, I will pray that Allah grants you a long life.”***

I was grateful for her kind prayer and her advice resonated a great deal.

### **A sudden visit**

On the morning of 18 September 2018, we gathered our luggage from the hotel and brought it back to the Mosque and packed the cars ready for departure.

That morning, Huzoor visited the home of *Ismael Khan*, the *former Sadr Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* in Belgium.

As it was not a ‘scheduled’ visit, Huzoor’s car was not ready when Huzoor came out of his residence and so, rather frantically, Mahmood Khan sahib (*Huzoor’s driver*) took the car keys and got Huzoor’s car ready.

As he waited, Huzoor joked with Belgium's *Missionary-in-charge*, Hafiz Essan Secundar sahib about the standard of Belgium's fruit.

Huzoor said:

***"Here in Belgium, you Europeans eat fruit that is not at all ripe! Especially the bananas are not ripe!"***

As Huzoor said these words, I remember thinking how I must be amongst those 'Europeans' Huzoor was referring to because I had thought that the fruit in Belgium was excellent and had complimented it to various people!

With that, Huzoor's car was ready and he visited the nearby home of *Ismael Khan (35)*, who lived with his family, his mother and his three brothers. His father had passed away in Rabwah in 1989.

Later, in the morning, after the visit was complete, Ismael sahib told me about those few moments, where he and his family were blessed by Huzoor's presence.

Ismael Khan sahib said:

***"I met Huzoor in London in December and asked that he would visit our home on his next visit to Belgium. In June, I again met Huzoor and requested him to visit. Now this visit was almost over and it seemed as though Huzoor would not have time but last night I wrote to Huzoor again asking if he would bless our home with his presence. This morning, as I was on my way to the Mosque, I suddenly received a call that Huzoor***

***is on his way to my home! I immediately turned my car round and returned home as fast I could and just a few minutes later Huzoor arrived."***

Ismael sahib told me that when he entered their home, Huzoor met all the family members and on Ismael sahib's request, Huzoor graciously looked around our house. Then, Huzoor went outside into the garden where the family kept six sheep and nineteen chickens.

Ismael sahib said:

***"Huzoor took great interest in our garden and the animals we were keeping and asked why we had not kept any goats and advised to also keep them. Most graciously, Huzoor planted a fig tree in our garden and, as he did so, Huzoor turned to my daughter and said 'Now you should eat lots of figs in future!'"***

Describing what Huzoor's visit meant for his family, Ismael sahib said:

***"After Huzoor left our home, none of us could control our emotions. My mother was completely overwhelmed at Huzoor's extraordinary grace and kindness. No doubt my father's spirit will be happy today! At a personal level, at one point, Huzoor held my hand with great love and those moments of pure joy will remain forever in my memory."***

Till the last moment, Huzoor continued to bless members of the Jamaat with his love and affection.



## **Return to London**

Shortly, after leading the Zuhr and Asr prayers, Huzoor and Khala Saboohi (*Huzoor's respected wife*) came out of their residence. Many members of the Belgium Jamaat were present to see Huzoor off. Invariably, their emotions were mixed - joyous that Huzoor had been with them for the past few days but desperately sad that he was now leaving.

After a silent prayer, the Qafila departed and proceeded directly to Calais before crossing into the UK via the Eurotunnel.

As we drove back to London, I thought about different aspects of the tour.

How Huzoor had graced the Jalsa Germany and Jalsa Belgium so soon after gracing the UK Jalsa. How, Huzoor had met dozens of groups or delegations from many different countries.

I thought of the way Huzoor had answered the questions of media and guests with such wisdom and dignity. I thought of the thousands of Ahmadis who met Huzoor for the very first time in family Mulaqats.

I thought of the young children who had faced great trauma and hardship in their lives and had sought solace from their Khalifa. Every moment of the tour was precious, every day historic.

As Huzoor's car returned to the *Fazl Mosque* early evening and he was greeted by hundreds of Ahmadis, I knew that there would be no respite in Huzoor's engagements and duties over the next few weeks and months.

### **A failed recording**

Over the next few weekends, Huzoor was to address the *Annual National Ijtemas of Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK, Lajna Imaillah UK and Majlis Ansarullah UK*. Then, Huzoor was to travel abroad again for another tour that proved to be historic.

*Alhamdolillah*, during those days after Huzoor's return to London, I had the blessed opportunity to serve Huzoor.

After returning from Germany, Huzoor called me to his office to take dictation for his forthcoming concluding address at the *Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya UK Ijtema*.

Whenever I have this privilege and opportunity to take dictation from Huzoor, with Huzoor's permission, I take an audio recording. Many a time, the audio recording has proven beneficial, as I may have missed a few words or misunderstood something. I always listen back to the recording and make any corrections before presenting the printed text to Huzoor.

On that day, Huzoor's dictation speed at certain points was quite fast and I knew that I had missed a few points. Huzoor had also quoted some excerpts of the Promised Messiah (as), which I knew I would have to listen to again as I had missed some parts.

Thus, after leaving Huzoor's office, I went to listen to the audio but to my horror, for some reason the recording had failed. My heart sank. I felt

devastated and was worried all day about how I would complete this task that Huzoor has given me.

I tried in vain to remember Huzoor's words at those points where the typed text was incomplete but as the day progressed, I realised I would have to go back to Huzoor and tell him that the recording had failed, and as a result, several parts had been missed.

It was not as though Huzoor had handwritten his speech, rather, Huzoor had dictated the entire address. Furthermore, the excerpts of the Promised Messiah (as), Huzoor wished to quote were taken from different books and so it would surely take Huzoor a lot of time to find the relevant passages again.

With no other option and with great trepidation, I informed Huzoor about the failed recording. In reply, Huzoor instructed that I come to his office the next morning.

As instructed, I entered Huzoor's office at the due time and kept my eyes down fearing Huzoor's anger or disappointment. Yet, I was immediately reassured by the kindness in Huzoor's tone, as he said:

***“Kyun itnay pareshan ho? Kya huwa hai?”***

That:

***“Why are you so worried? What has happened?”***

With that, Huzoor asked which parts were missing and, despite the fact, Huzoor was preparing for his *Friday Sermon*, Huzoor dictated various points to fill in those parts that I had missed.

Furthermore, Huzoor patiently found the quotes of the Promised Messiah (as) that he wished to reference one by one. Huzoor read them but just to be on the safe side I took Huzoor's permission to take a photo of the extracts, as a back-up.

I felt relieved but still regretful that I had wasted Huzoor's time.

I was expecting Huzoor to tell me to now leave but instead Huzoor said:

***"Now I will give some more dictation. I would like to revise and add to the latter part of the address."***

Thereafter, for the next 8 or 9 minutes, Huzoor dictated, as I stood to his side. Instead of typing up, Huzoor told me to keep a watchful eye over my phone to ensure that this time the audio recording was working.

Hence, I listened, as Huzoor added a very poignant and faith inspiring section to his address.

After he concluded the dictation, Huzoor asked me to check if the audio had recorded properly.

I played a few seconds back and *Alhamdolillah* it had worked.

Thereafter, Huzoor said:

***“Perhaps, Allah Ta’ala wanted me to add to the final part of my speech and improve it and so it was better that the recording failed yesterday so that I could extend the conclusion.”***

Huzoor’s humility and grace is boundless. As Huzoor said this, all I could say was ‘*Alhamdolillah*’. I had entered Huzoor’s office, fearful that he would be disappointed in me, yet instead Huzoor showed only kindness and considered the extra use of his time as a blessing in disguise.

### **Looking forward**

*Alhamdolillah*, Huzoor’s tour of Germany and Belgium had proven blessed in all respects.

I looked forward to the days that followed and the prospect of being with Huzoor during his forthcoming tour of the United States and Guatemala.

May Allah the Almighty grant Hazrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) a long and healthy life and enable all Ahmadi Muslims to remain forever obedient to Khilafat-e-Ahmadiyya.

### **End of Part 2**

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